



SPRING/SUMMER 2018

# ALLIANCE

The magazine for the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance

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**What You  
Need to Know  
About CETA**

page 12





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john@cre8publishing.ca  
Editor: Kevin Bottaro  
kevin\_bottaro@yahoo.ca  
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Sales Manager: John Pashko



# Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance: Comings and Goings

*By: Leo Muise, Executive Director  
Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance*

Who doesn't like a good bargain? The Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance has recently launched a new service for our member companies. Sara Rankin, who designs and maintains the NSSA website, has created a Buy and Sell page. This feature allows members an opportunity to advertise surplus equipment for sale to a primary audience of similar businesses, thus increasing the prospect of successful transactions.

Placing an offer is easy to do: If you wish to post an article, simply go to the Buy and Sell page at [novascotiaseafoodalliance.ca](http://novascotiaseafoodalliance.ca) and click on the button to add an item. After you answer a few questions about the article you are selling, you can also upload one or two photos of the item. That's all; Sara will take care of the rest. You will be invoiced for \$25.00 for a 30-day posting, and reminders of what is available will be sent to the membership periodically. Membership in the alliance continues to expand and grow. Currently there are 69 Regular members and 21 Associate members, and there is always room for others.

2018 promises to be an eventful year for the seafood industry in Nova Scotia. Reaction to the plight of the North American right whales will be top of mind. Harvesters are implementing gear modifications, season adjustments and the reporting of whale inter-

actions in the effort to avoid entanglements. Also, 2018 will see the beginning of consultations aimed at meeting the federal goal of 10% marine protected areas before 2020.

The export of Canadian seafood to major markets around the world can be an exciting opportunity. Trade agreements establish the rules, and can facilitate the entry of product into other countries. Canada has recently announced its intent to enter into a trans-Pacific partnership that will build on existing agreements like NAFTA and CETA. Developing profitable markets overseas, finding the human and capital resources needed to service these marketplaces and establishing transportation links is what members of the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance do on a daily basis.

Nova Scotia seafood is valued all over the world. Working together, NSSA member companies provide high-quality, reliable, safe and healthy fish products that are good value for the customer. The men and women of the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance are contributing to the wellbeing of all Nova Scotians by creating jobs in our coastal and rural communities, by fairly compensating our harvesters for their hard work and by contributing to the social fabric of our communities. *Working together works!*





## What are the Benefits of GFSI Certification for Seafood Companies?

Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) certification is gaining momentum in many food sectors. Larger retailers are requiring this type of certification as a condition of doing business with potential vendors. Customer requirements are what motivates the type of food safety program companies implement and which standards are followed. The most popular GFSI recognized certification programs in North America are Safe Quality Food (SQF) and the British Retail Consortium (BRC). Currently in the Nova Scotia seafood sector there are seven companies certified under BRC and four companies certified under SQF.

A strong food safety program is what customers are looking for in today's world. Food safety is becoming more stringent and at the forefront of all programs. Consumers and customers expect the foods they purchase to be consistently safe and of high quality. Customers are more educated about food safety and are becoming more conscious when it comes to purchasing food products.

GFSI certification ensures that your customers are receiving safe products as this benchmark is above Codex, HACCP and national regulations. These certifications contain prerequisite programs/good manufacturing practices, HACCP systems/food safety plans and other requirements including but not limited to biosecurity and food fraud.

Once a certification program has been decided it is important to get to know the standard. You can download the SQF Food Safety Code ([www.sqfi.com](http://www.sqfi.com)) or BRC Food Safety Standard ([www.brcglobalstandards.com](http://www.brcglobalstandards.com)) from the websites. Reviewing the certification process and standard requirements is imperative and the first step in moving forward. It's important to note that these standards take time to develop and implement properly, as well as time and resources to maintain and improve upon the program throughout the year.

Each of these standards require an annual third-party audit. During this assessment the auditor reviews that systems in place are being followed, monitored and are effective. The requirements to be met are set out by each of the certification programs. These requirements are demanding and take time to develop and implement. Non-conformances found during the audit must be effectively corrected prior to the issuance of certification. Audits are a tool for companies to determine areas that require improvements and tighten controls already in place.

GFSI certification is globally recognized. Having a GFSI certification gives your customer greater confidence in your company's food safety program and the products you produce. It ensures continuous improvements and increases competitiveness. When a customer has the choice to choose between a company with a GFSI certification program versus a company without, chances are that customer will choose the company with the most stringent food safety system. This not only protects their name but reduces risk downstream. These programs ensure safe food, which is assessed to confirm companies are following the rigorous standards set forth. These demanding standards increase opportunities for reducing food recalls and ensuring the safety of our food from boat to throat.

Perennia's Quality and Food Safety Specialists can help you identify gaps, coach you through the development and implementation of your program as well as assist with validation of a GFSI food safety program and provide food safety training. If you wish to speak to me directly, call (902) 210-8115.

### **BRC contains 12 fundamental requirements:**

Senior management commitment and continual improvement;

The food safety plan (HACCP);

Internal audits;

Management of suppliers, raw materials and packaging;

Corrective action and preventive action;

Traceability;

Layout, product flow and segregation;

Housekeeping and hygiene;

Management of allergens;

Control of operations;

Labeling and pack control;

Training

### **SQF contains 9 elements for food manufacturing:**

Management commitment;

Document control and records;

Specification and product development;

Food safety system (HACCP);

SQF system verification;

Product identification, trace, withdrawal and recall;

Food defence and food fraud;

Allergen management;

Training

*This is followed by a module specific to the food sector category.*

# Investing to Support Our Fisheries in Nova Scotia

When you're digging into a feast of fresh Nova Scotia lobster you probably aren't thinking about energy efficiency.

But chances are energy efficient products helped ensure that crustacean stayed fresh until it could reach your plate.

Reduced operational costs and increased productivity are just a couple of things those in the aquaculture industry can land when they cast their nets toward energy efficiency.

For instance, chilled water pumps and refrigeration systems powered with the latest in energy efficiency can help extend the life and freshness of seafood for their customers.

An energy efficient product can pay for itself, so businesses that still use equipment and machinery they've had since they launched their operations should consider energy-efficient alternatives.

The seafood industry employs more than 7,800 Nova Scotians, many of those in the lobster sector – one that has greatly benefitted from energy efficient technology. Efficiency Nova Scotia worked with lobster companies to retrofit chillers used to achieve optimum water temperatures for lobster holding tanks. Other projects have

included adding new intake water lines to reduce the need for chilling water, improving the efficiency of heat exchangers, pumping systems, and water filtration. Efficiency Nova Scotia has been successful in helping lobster facilities see a collective savings \$5 million in electricity costs annually.

*Efficiency Nova Scotia  
has been successful in helping  
lobster facilities see a  
collective savings \$5 million in  
electricity costs annually.*

Land-based aquaculture operations can save on their electrical bills by installing high-efficiency pumps, heat exchangers, aeration and lighting.

The seaweed industry has also reaped benefits from practicing energy efficiency. Acadian Seaplants in Charlesville, Shelburne Co recently converted their fluorescent lights of their grow room to LED lights and saw production increase by 240 per cent.

Nova Scotia aquaculture businesses are enjoying the good things efficiency brings. Efficiency Nova Scotia makes energy projects easy to implement by working with businesses directly to provide technical expertise. This empowers business owners to learn more about efficiency while cutting costs and reducing their carbon footprint. For more information about how your business can enjoy the good things efficiency brings, contact [efficiencyns.ca/business](http://efficiencyns.ca/business)



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# Air Freight Logistics: A Challenge for Nova Scotia Seafood

News flash! Nova Scotia seafood has now been discovered the world over. Demand for our very best products increases on an annual basis. Like Lana Turner at the soda fountain in 1933, the discovery which propelled her to HOLLYWOOD, our discovery places us on some of the finest plates the world over. It's pretty much all good news when you analyze it carefully...

...Well, nearly. Now that we have been discovered, and now that the world has become a very small place indeed, we need to find more and better air-freight logistics to effectively and reliably carry our goods. The seafood community got a taste of the challenge in the winter of 2018, when demand in certain markets exceeded our ability to get there. As a result, key players have met, identified the primary challenges and agreed to work cooperatively. This means that perhaps for the first time ever, seafood shippers, freight forwarders, airlines, couriers and airport management will all increasingly pledge to work on this file together.

The key to international logistics is appropriate capacity, reliable service on a weekly basis, and rates that are at least somewhat competitive with those offered by Montreal, Toronto, New York and Boston. This is no small request from the lesser population base of Halifax, Nova Scotia, but the Halifax International Airport Authority and Gateway facilities are committed to providing the finest perishable cargo handling anywhere. We now have the infrastructure in Nova Scotia; it is a matter of strategic planning and encouraging more

players to step up to the plate to get some of these very expensive additional flight options underway.

It is too soon to suggest how these enhanced logistics will play out, but we recognize it is critical to provide world-class service to our international clients. All of the key players agree that enhanced logistics are essential moving forward. It will be fascinating to see what can be created as the model becomes more inclusive and transparent, while we focus on growing new markets. Please stand by for a progress report as more and better routes kick in over the course of this year. We are very optimistic.



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# Food Safety Training for Fish Processors in Today's World

In today's world for fish processors to succeed they must take all the necessary precautions to ensure the products that they produce are safe and consistently meet buyer's specifications with very little room or tolerance for non-compliant product in the marketplace.

The world's food retailers agreed to a unified approach to food safety in the late 1990's and in May 2000 the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) was created. Now both the US Food and Drug Agency and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency are following the GFSI initiative by enhancing the USA and Canada's regulatory requirements with the USFDA in 2017 developing and implementing the "Food Safety Modernization Act" and the CFIA having just developed their new inspection program, "Safe Food for Canadians" currently targeting 2019 for its implementation.

One area all food safety programs have in common is the requirement for all processing plants' personnel to receive food safety training.

The USFDA actually requires very specific training as at least one person must be trained and certified as a "Preventative Controls Quality Individual" (PCQI).

Back in the 1970's and 80's there was not much effort or expense given to food safety training as most personnel were hired to perform a specific duty and were only trained in the areas needed for them to perform their duties be it a fish filler, can seam operator, packager in the warehouse, salting fish, etc. This all began to change with the implementation of the HACCP based "Quality Management Program" by the Fish Inspection Branch of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans where there was an emphasis put on additional training.

The GFSI certification programs such as BRC (British Retail Consortium), SQF (Safe Quality Foods) and FSSC22000 (Food Safety Service Certification) have definitive requirements for training that must be performed as part of their program. A training program

under the GFSI program requires the following:

- **All new staff must receive orientation training**
- **All staff must receive annual refresher training**
- **All staff involved in Critical Control Point (CCP) monitoring must receive annual CCP training**
- **All contractors and Visitors must receive similar training that the plant staff receive.**

The training requirements for fish processors in today's world are very comprehensive with numerous topics that are included as part of the training program. The topics that are considered essential in any food safety management system, including fish and seafood processors include:

1) Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP's). Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP's include a variety of subjects and is one of the key elements in any food safety program. GMP's



include Disease Control, Personal Hygiene, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Usage, Sanitary Operational Procedures, Sanitary Facilities (Washrooms and Lunchrooms) Controls, Equipment and Utensils sanitary controls and Visitor and Contractor Controls

## 2) Applying "Food Regulatory" requirements

All staff must know the appropriate government's requirements and ensure they are complying to the regulatory requirements at all times

## 3) HACCP Training - the 7 principles

Members of Food Safety Team must have certified HACCP training with all staff receiving the basic HACCP training annually.

4) CP Monitoring Specific training in the monitoring and verification elements of all CCP's for those staff responsible for this part of the plant's food safety program. Staff must be assessed in some format to ensure they understand the requirements.

5) Food Defense Procedures adopted to assure the safety of raw materials and products from malicious contamination or theft.

6) Basic Microbiology There is a need for all staff to understand how their actions could possibly cross contaminate

product through microbial contamination

7) Allergens Allergen training is mandatory, as all processors must assess their production practices for the possibility of allergen cross-contamination

8) Food Fraud and Vulnerability In 2015 food fraud and food vulnerability became a mandatory element of all food safety systems and all staff must be knowledgeable of the understanding of

what needs to be done to prevent food fraud.

The above is just a sample of the common training required as all fish processing plants have their own plant specific "Standard Operating Procedures" (SOP's) such as health and safety procedures, raw material receiving controls, final product inspection procedures, etc.

*... continued on page 15*



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## What You Need to Know about CETA

**Nova Scotia Business Inc. sits down with Sanjeev Chowdhury, Director of the Free Trade Agreement Promotion Task Force at Global Affairs Canada.**

The Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) is changing the global business landscape for two of the world's largest economies, Canada and the EU. Canadian businesses of all sizes and from all sectors will be able to access the European market like never before — but what does this mean for Nova Scotia companies? How can we take advantage of the province's proximity to the EU, its cultural similarities, and this new free-trade opportunity to grow Nova Scotia businesses?

**NSBI:** Given Europe's incredibly diverse market, how can small companies get started with an export plan?

**Chowdry:** First-time exporters may find the process daunting at first, but it doesn't have to be. There are many services, most of which are free, that the provincial and

federal governments offer to help small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) develop a robust export plan before they go to a foreign market like the European Union (EU). The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service ([tradecommissioner.gc.ca](http://tradecommissioner.gc.ca) —represented through our regional office in Halifax) can provide Canadian companies with practical advice on foreign markets and on-the-ground intelligence to help them make informed business decisions. Other national and local organizations, such as NSBI, EDC, BDC, CCC and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, can also provide advice and assistance to businesses looking for help in understanding government programs that support exporters in their international business endeavours abroad.

***NSBI: What is a common myth about doing business in Europe?***

**Chowdry:** Many people believe that one point of entry in the EU is just like any other. In reality, the EU comprises 28 different member states, each with its own specific-



ties and unique tastes. What might sell well in one-member state could be of little interest in another, so making informed choices about which markets to enter is critical to attaining export success. The TCS and its partners have a wealth of market intelligence to help you target your business plans overseas — use it!

### ***NSBI: What makes European customers different than North American customers?***

Chowdry: European consumers expect good quality products at fair prices. Canadian products are generally considered to be of higher quality than those from other import markets but have historically held higher price tags due to duties levied upon importation. Under CETA most of those tariffs are now gone, giving Canadian producers a more competitive advantage to uphold the reputation.

### ***NSBI: For those who don't know where to get started, what's the best first step to take?***

Chowdry: Helping companies take advantage of CETA is a major priority of Canada's Minister of International Trade, the Hon. François-Philippe Champagne. The TCS can help you find importers and connect you with business partners in the EU, including partners specific to your particular sector(s). If you have never exported before, consider talking to another local business that has previous experience. Personal testimonials offer an honest account of what challenges and rewards await in a foreign market. Finally, contact the TCS for tips and other tools of the trade. We have trade commissioners located in the major cities of each Atlantic province with a first-hand understanding of doing business internationally. The TCS can give you the assistance you need to prosper in the EU and there is no cost for our services.

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***NSBI: What sectors or industries offer the greatest opportunity?***

Chowdry: CETA is a progressive free-trade agreement that covers all aspects of Canada-EU trade, and all sectors of the Canadian economy can benefit from this ambitious deal. Global Affairs Canada has nevertheless specifically targeted twelve sectors which may hold the most promise for companies ready to enter or expand in the European market:

- 1. Aerospace**
- 2. Agriculture and agri-food**
- 3. Automotive**
- 4. Clean tech**
- 5. Fish and seafood**
- 6. Forestry**
- 7. ICT**
- 8. Infrastructure**
- 9. Medical devices**
- 10. Metals, mining and minerals**
- 11. Oil and gas**
- 12. Pharmaceuticals**

NSBI: What's the biggest hurdle that companies should prepare for when exporting to Europe?

Chowdry: The European Union is a very promising foreign market for Canadian businesses and CETA's benefits make expanding to Europe easier than ever before, but there are few non-CETA factors that potential exporters need to consider before going to market. These factors include member state-specific value-added tax (VAT) obligations, certifications and labeling requirements including CE markings, and the newly announced EU-wide General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). To better understand and overcome these hurdles and others, contact the TCS today.

***NSBI: What makes CETA such an important opportunity for businesses?***

Chowdry: One in six jobs in the Canadian labour force is related to exports. Under CETA, Canadians now have easier access to the world's largest integrated economy encompassing over 510 million new consumers with unique tastes. CETA will increase jobs, strengthen economic relations and promote new business opportunities for businesses on both sides of the Atlantic. Since coming into effect on September 21, 2017, 98 percent of tariff lines have already been eliminated on merchandise traded between Canada and the EU, while select products will see their tariffs gradually drop to zero over the next seven years. The benefits are just waiting to be realized.

***NSBI: What makes Nova Scotia uniquely positioned for success?***

Chowdry: As a native Haligonian myself, I understand the risks and challenges that Nova Scotians face when exporting to an unknown territory. But did you know that the EU is already Nova Scotia's second-largest export destination and second-largest trading partner? Nova Scotia is well-positioned for increased trade with the EU under CETA, thanks in large part to its geographic proximity. The Port of Halifax is two days closer to Europe than any other port in North America, giving Nova Scotian businesses preferential maritime access to the EU by ensuring delivery of fresher, higher quality products across the pond.

***NSBI: Is there anything else about CETA that companies should keep in mind?***

Chowdry: CETA is the first of a new generation of free trade agreements, because it makes progressive provisions and commitments. Progressive trade means doing everything possible to ensure that all segments of society, both in Canada and abroad,



can take advantage of the economic opportunities flowing from trade and investment. CETA was not negotiated with only the “big leagues” in mind — it was made to enhance and strengthen our middle class and the people who work hard to join it, including women, youth, and indigenous entrepreneurs.

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***... continued from page 11***

To operate a fish processing operation in today’s world is no simple task with training just one of each processing plant’s elements requiring significant time and resources to deliver. Hopefully, the above information sheds some light on the training aspect of the food safety programs. For further information and/or questions please feel free to contact me.

Prepared by, Freeman Libby,  
President Ocean Agri-Food Solutions Ltd.  
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# Continuous Improvement Manufactures Productivity: The Business of Culture in Nova Scotia

The business world is large, complex and constantly evolving. As markets grow and/or shift and new innovations present further opportunities, we can be at the forefront of taking advantage. However, being ready for the challenges needs, before anything, the right mindset and plan.

In an effort to meet private-sector demand for increased capacity in production facilities, the Seafood Producers' Continuous Improvement Initiative Pilot (SPCIIP) project was created – one based on similar initiatives in other Atlantic provinces. The Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance, Province of Nova Scotia (departments of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Labour and Advanced Education), Nova Scotia Business Inc., Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Western Regional Enterprise Network partnered to create a pilot project in response to private-sector needs; the latter took the lead due to its successful BusinessNow program.

After the project's 2017 launch, seven firms - Gidney Fisheries, Evan's Fresh Seafoods, Tri-Star Industries, Eel Lake Oyster Farm, IMO Foods, A.F. Theriault & Son and Riverside Lobster and Seafood - ended up taking part. Each received 30 days of on-site training over 52 weeks. While they all had different metrics for performance and success, those metrics measured a broad enough range of performance indicators to work well across the board. The pilot was an absolute success for all involved.

Of all the benefits of SPCIIP, perhaps the best was simply a change in thinking. Each of the seven participating firms had a psychological shift in perceived barriers to growth, and could now consider a series of tools for producing to market demand. When self-belief meets further opportunity, doors swing wide open.

With the world of business (and otherwise) changing as fast as it is, collaboration is more important than ever to evolve with it. Nova Scotia being a small province, it's especially of immense benefit here. When it comes to seafood processing, new markets have developed, rules are changing and volatility is a constant. Together we can share ideas and resources, and grow the sector for the better. The sharing of best practices among this cohort of firms is evidence that, by working together, Nova Scotia firms are globally stronger.

Response to SPCIIP was overwhelmingly positive, and led to the current incarnation of Manufacturing Productivity. It has spots available for 32 rural Nova Scotian companies to participate in a three-year program, with trainers ensuring continuous improvement culture. For more information and to enroll, contact Michel Raymond at Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters: (902) 802-2662 or [michel.raymond@cme-me.ca](mailto:michel.raymond@cme-me.ca). (As a testament to the power of the project's predecessor, A.F. Theriault & Son is having one of its own train to become a certified lean facilitator!)

Technology has made the world a smaller place, and that's incredibly beneficial for business. New seafood markets are developing overseas, and when it comes to that sector Nova Scotia is a main captain of the ship. Harnessing our strengths and adapting our methods starts with people - utilizing the local workforce, and creating a culture that fosters sustainability and growth. The Seafood Producers' Continuous Improvement Initiative Pilot showed we can do it,

and as Western REN Economic Development Officer Victoria Brooks added: "Working with the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance really added credibility from a client perspective, seeing the public and private sector working together."

Together. That is how we will truly create continuous improvement, and manufacture productivity.



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# Waste-Into-Profit Efforts succeeding in Cape Breton

When seafood waste is given a second life, the benefits are reaped by both industry and the environment. Louisbourg Seafoods is turning said waste into profit.

While the overall project began many years ago and involved crab processing, it was ACOA funding announced last summer that put the process at the forefront of current initiatives. Louisbourg Seafoods' Northsyde Processing was provided a loan for more than \$293,000 to implement a filtering system for shrimp shells, while Cape Breton University's Verschuren Centre received almost \$750,000 for a facility to convert waste.

Repurposing waste has become necessary in part due to the sheer amount of it. The amount of seafood that actually sells can be relatively small, and disposal of the unused by-product is quite costly. Current Louisbourg Seafoods efforts with shrimp shells include dehydration, then stabilization to head elsewhere for processing. China, Denmark, Iceland and other countries end up turning the waste into vehicle paint, medical bandages and a host of other items. It's really quite amazing what seafood waste can become.

The next step in Louisbourg Seafoods' efforts will look at crab shells. They differ from shrimp by being harder, as well as having more tissue and protein. Like shrimp, crab shells have liquid waste streams (Omega-3 fatty acids are being washed away, for instance) that need to be properly handled. Before a dedicated treatment plan can be created, having the proper volume of waste material is necessary.

At a recent conference on seafood quality, held by Fisheries Minister Keith Colwell, Louisbourg Seafoods Manager of Science Adam Mugridge was among those who took part in a discussion panel on waste-into-profit. In recounting experiences with waste utilization and processing, he noted that everyone was on the same page about one thing: collaboration. Local plants are only so big, and pooling resources together is the best way forward for all involved. (Perennia was pointed to as an organization that could lead the way on waste repurposing in Nova Scotia.)

While Louisbourg Seafoods, Perennia and other companies play pioneering roles in repurposing seafood waste for financial and environmental benefit, the contributions of local universities cannot go unmentioned. Beyond the aforementioned Verschuren Centre at CBU, researchers at Acadia and beyond provide invaluable knowledge and expertise as they partner with the industry to provide innovative solutions to utilizing waste by-products.

It's greatly important to exploit and maximize revenue streams in any business. In seafood processing, what doesn't reach the consumer often outweighs what does. Instead of simply disposing of waste and leaving things there, repurposing it not only means better access to material for other items and benefitting the environment, but adding to our financial wherewithal. In this case, everyone wins and nothing goes...to waste.

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