

TEMPORARY WAQF FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract: *This study explores into the potential of temporary waqf (waqf mu'auqqat) as a mechanism to help Malaysia with its urgent food security problems. It focusses on making the most of waqf lands that aren't being used enough for farming. This qualitative study employs content analysis of existing literature (2020-2025) to evaluate an appropriate temporary waqf model aimed at enhancing domestic food production, decreasing reliance on imports, and fostering community development. The study finds that there are still problems that need to be solved, such as legal issues, bureaucratic obstacles, and a lack of public awareness, even if promising experimental initiatives like growing rice on waqf land have had some success. To address these challenges, this paper suggests a strategic framework that includes policy changes, strategic partnerships between public and private agencies, the use of practical agricultural technologies, more community involvement, and the creation of strong monitoring frameworks. This study goes beyond the theory of Islamic finance. It assists policymakers in improving environmental preservation, rural job creation, and food security. This model demonstrates how religiously motivated strategies could support Malaysia's development while upholding its culture and advancing social justice. In conclusion, this study not only highlight on the conversation about Islamic social finance, but it also shows how important temporary waqf is for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and improving Malaysia's National Agrofood Policy.*

Keywords: *Food Security; Agriculture; Social Finance; Sustainability; Urban community*

Introduction

Malaysia is at a very important point right now in its efforts to make sure it has enough food. What was to be seen as a faraway problem for the world has quickly become a top priority for the country. A growing population, changing weather patterns, and less farmland have all made the country's food system far more vulnerable. Malaysia's food import bill, which rose to RM63 billion in 2021 (Rahman et al., 2023), shows how dangerous it is to depend on outside supply chains. The COVID-19 pandemic made it very clear how fragile this dependence is. Global disturbances caused prices to go up and down more quickly and caused shortages of goods (Rahman et al., 2023). The situation is getting worse since arable land is still being lost. Between 2019 and 2022, almost 12% of it was turned into cities and infrastructure (Jaafar & Brightman, 2022).

In response to these pressing concerns, the Malaysian government has initiated several strategic initiatives. The Dasar Agromakanan Negara (2021–2030) and the Pelan Dasar Keterjaminan Makanan Negara (2024–2025) are two of the most significant policies. These national strategies possess numerous advantages yet, they encounter entrenched structural issues, including insufficient arable land, escalating production expenses, and stagnant institutions (Hasun et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2019). Traditional farming practices are becoming less and less effective due to these numerous challenges therefore, a new, context-specific strategy that utilises underutilised resources and aligns with Malaysia's social and religious values is required.

This study argues that Islamic social finance, specifically through the innovative use of temporary waqf (waqf mu'aqqat), provides a significant approach to enhancing national food security. Temporary waqf, an endowment compliant with Shariah and characterised by a specified duration, serves as a flexible and ethically sound approach to mobilising inactive assets, particularly the approximately 11,091 hectares of underutilised waqf lands nationwide (Ali et al., 2023). The temporary nature alleviates donor concerns by permitting the eventual return of assets, while also promoting Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) and reflecting the Islamic principles of tawhid (oneness of God) and social justice (Ali et al., 2023).

For farmers, especially vulnerable group of peoples, obtaining financing continues to be a significant obstacle. Anshari et al., (2019) indicate that although numerous farmers possess land, they frequently do not have adequate capital for operational costs and equipment purchases, often depending on external stakeholders. The combination of financial constraints, weak land tenure, and unclear property rights may deter farmers from investing in productivity enhancing technologies (Jack, 2013). The limited availability of financial resources constitutes a significant barrier to agricultural development.

Notwithstanding these structural obstacles, recent pilot programs show the real advantages of incorporating waqf into agricultural programs. Rice farming initiatives on temporary waqf land in Kedah have demonstrated yield increases of up to 22%. Similarly, vegetable cooperatives established on waqf land in Selangor have created over 300 local employment opportunities (Rahman et al., 2023). The broader impact of these successes is localised and fragmented, largely due to unclear legal frameworks, disjointed governance structures, and a lack of public awareness (Alam, 2024).

This study explore on approaches and practical application potential to reduce agricultural hazards in more detail. The comprehensive mechanism allowing contract to be practiced effectively and mitigates the uncertainties encountered by farmers, including crop failure,

market fluctuations, and natural disasters. This combination enables farmers to establish pre-agreed sales with buyers, thereby stabilising prices and ensuring a consistent income stream. Financial security enables producers to plan and implement agricultural activities with increased confidence, protecting them from unexpected financial losses.

Despite the increasing interest, our comprehension of the extent to which temporary waqf can be implemented to enhance food security remains quite restricted. Nevertheless, there is a substantial amount of momentum that is underway. The "Wakaf Madani" initiative, which was implemented in Budget 2023 by the Malaysian government, is a game-changing initiative. It is intended to significantly advance waqf's status as a "third economic sector," collaborating with the private and public sectors.

According to Muhammad Izzat and Muhammad Hakimi, (2021), the discourse on food security resilience should not be limited solely to the availability of food, but must also encompass the accessibility of food to society at large. This highlights that food security is not merely about production or supply, but also involves the economic, physical, and social access that enables individuals to obtain sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to support an active and healthy life.

Hence, the potential of waqf to assist in the establishment of institutional buffer inventories is one of the most thrilling aspects of this. Consider these as strategic food reserves that are managed for the public benefit rather than for profit. This is essential because it can help maintain the stability of food prices and guarantee that food is dependably accessible to all individuals, both in the present and in the future.

Islamic financial covenants, such as *musaqah*, *muzaraah*, and *ijarah*, can be crucial in addition to the mere reservation of land. These instruments can provide producers with direct assistance in increasing their crop yields. Furthermore, they can assist in the utilisation of existing permanent waqf assets, such as buildings and property, to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of buffer stock storage. Not only does this integrated approach promote increased food production and the expansion of the agricultural sector, but it also reduces dependence on government subsidies, thereby promoting a more resilient and self-sufficient food system.

Significant enquiries regarding institutional collaboration, governance frameworks, and the incorporation of contemporary agricultural technologies such as hydroponics and precision farming have yet to be thoroughly explored. This study proposes a comprehensive framework that integrates Islamic finance principles, agricultural innovation, and participatory governance. Through an integrated strategy, underutilised waqf lands are to be transformed into sustainable, productive food systems that are firmly anchored in Malaysia's rich Islamic tradition, inclusive of all social benefits, and resilient to disturbances.

Literature Review

Temporary Waqf in Contemporary World

Waqf is a long standing practice in Islamic law that involves giving away property for religious or philanthropic purposes. Kahf, (1999) and Cizakca, (2000) say that waqf has historically been very important for funding infrastructure, healthcare, and education, which has considerably helped the development of communities in many Muslim countries. This timeless quality is crucial, but it has made it challenging to keep up with the needs of society and the economy as they change quickly.

However, modern research is increasingly calling for a wider range of waqf models to make them more useful to society (Faydum, 2019). The idea of temporary waqf (waqf mu'qqat), which lets you dedicate assets for a short time, is an example of this dynamism. Flexible prayer rooms or places show how adaptable they are: non-religious places can be used as temporary mosques while permanent structures are being built, or even as temporary graveyards until they can be used properly according to Islamic funeral procedures (Kahf, 1998). This transitory model meets immediate needs without tying up assets for a long time.

The agricultural sector, especially when it comes to food security, has a lot of potential for temporary waqf. For example, property that isn't being used could be set aside for seasonal harvest cycles, rented to farmers for a set amount of time, or even temporarily set aside for communal requirements like Eid prayer grounds or temporary parking lots (Hazza', 2006). These kinds of business model fill in important gaps and make the best use of resources while permanent infrastructure is being built.

The idea of temporary waqf goes beyond real estate to include other types of assets, giving enterprises more ways to make a difference in society. For example, a product based waqf may have a dairy company give away a week's portion of its production to areas that don't have enough food. This would connect the company's basic commercial activities with structured philanthropy (Kahf, 1998). In addition, future assets can be given away, like in the made up case of giving a library ten years' worth of future journal publications, which would make sure that people can always access information (Kahf, 1998). Even private properties that aren't used often, like second homes, could be used as temporary waqf when the owner is away, giving students or migrant workers a place to stay that they can afford. This not only stops resources from being wasted, but it also has spiritual and practical benefits that encourage owners who might be hesitant to form a permanent endowment to give (Kahf, 1998).

These many approaches all show how flexible temporary waqf may be to meet changing social needs. Temporary agricultural waqfs have a lot of potential in Malaysia, where land use and food security are very important issues. These endowments could quickly turn unused land into productive places for high yield crops through pilot projects or cooperative farming programs (Faydum, 2019). Additionally, product based endowments might encourage private sector participation through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) channels, turning limited outputs into long term benefits for the community.

However, there are a lot of problems that make it hard for these new waqf models to be used widely. These include differences in regulations between states, bureaucratic red tape, and a general lack of public knowledge (Alam, 2024). For scaling to work, these new projects must be in conformity with current laws, administrative processes must be made easier, and focused teaching campaigns must be started. These initiatives are in line with proposals for national waqf reform, which aims to change the definition of waqf from a permanent commitment to a flexible tool for fair development that combines Islamic charitable ideals with practical resource mobilisation.

Food Security and Waqf Integration

Malaysia is at a crucial point in its quest for food security, a problem that has quickly gone from being a distant global issue to an urgent national one. The combination of a growing population, clear signs of climate change, and less land available for farming has revealed serious weaknesses in the country's food system. Malaysia's food import bill, which rose to RM63

billion in 2021 (Rahman et al., 2023), is a clear example of how dangerous it is to depend on outside supply chains. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when global supply chains were disrupted, prices became more volatile and shortages became more common (Rahman et al., 2023). This scenario showed how weak such dependence may be, which shows how dangerous it is to depend too much on traditional systems. The situation is getting worse since arable land is disappearing, with over 12% of it being lost to urbanisation and infrastructure development between 2019 and 2022 (Jaafar & Brightman, 2022).

To deal with these important problems, the Malaysian government has taken the initiative to start a number of strategic projects. The Dasar Agromakanan Negara (2021–2030) and the Pelan Dasar Keterjaminan Makanan Negara (2024–2025) are two of the most important ones. These policy frameworks are good because they have big goals, but they are also dealing with problems that have been around for a long time. Some of them are the natural limits of available farmland, the rising expenses of farming, and the fact that institutions are still too rigid (Hasun et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2019). Hence, the combined pressures show that traditional farming methods are becoming less and less useful. This means that a new, context-specific approach is needed that makes use of resources that aren't being used enough and fits with Malaysia's unique social and religious values.

This paper makes the case for social finance, especially through the creative use of temporary waqf (waqf mu'auqqat), as a powerful tool for improving national food security. Waqf is a long-lasting Islamic institution that has typically involved permanently setting aside funds for religious or charity purposes. It has historically supported education, healthcare, and infrastructure development, making a big difference in the well-being of communities (Kahf, 1999; Cizakca, 2000). In addition, current scholars are calling for waqf models that may change to meet the demands of today's society (Faydum, 2019). Kahf, (2000) says that temporary waqf is when an asset or its usufruct is given to someone else for a specific amount of time, after which it goes back to the donor. This is a flexible and morally sound way to activate dormant assets.

There are a lot of different classical and modern scholarly views on temporary waqf in the legal world. The Hanafi, Shafie, and Hanbali schools usually don't allow temporary waqf, however the Maliki school does in some cases, especially for mobile goods. For example, Khalid ibn al-Walid gave a horse as a waqf (Akram, 2012). According to contemporary institutions, Shariah Standard No. 33 specifically allows temporary waqf, which gives the donor the right to get the asset back after a certain amount of time and makes the waqf of usufruct legal. In the same way, the International Fiqh Academy, (2022) supports transitory waqf for all types of assets. They stress that waqf must change to meet the needs of society as they change, in line with the *maqasid al-Shariah* (objectives of Islamic law).

There are some people who disagree with the idea of temporary waqf, such the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS), who questioned its validity (Sulaiman & Hassan, 2017). However, most modern scholars agree that temporary waqf is useful and important. Ab Rahman and Amanullah's (2017b, 2017c) thorough evaluations show that it has the potential to protect donor rights while providing significant advantages to recipients through new frameworks such as operational waqf, land-use waqf, and asset-expansion waqf.

The real world uses of temporary waqf show how adaptable it is to meet current needs. This lets waqf organisations use dormant assets to promote important areas like food security, education, and community development.

For example, rice agricultural operations on temporary waqf property in Kedah have shown yield gains of up to 22%, while vegetable cooperatives in Selangor that were set up on waqf land have created more than 300 local jobs (Rahman et al., 2023). These pilot programs show that it is possible to use Islamic financial tools like *muzāra'ah-waqf* based on the *salam* contract to lower farming risks by letting purchasers agree to buy goods ahead of time, keeping prices stable, and making sure producers have a steady stream of revenue. But it is very hard to scale up these successful projects to a larger level because of things like inconsistent regulations between states, bureaucratic inertia, and a lack of public awareness (Alam, 2024).

Furthermore, a number of models have been put forth, including cooperation between large corporations and waqf trustees to develop agricultural enterprises on waqf land (Azizan et al., 2021). Since underutilised waqf land makes up a sizable amount of waqf properties, these models seek to maximise its use. Several regions have effectively adopted a profit-sharing and rental system for managing waqf rice fields such in Ponogoro, Madiun, Ngajuk and Jember. (Jamal et al., 2022).

Hence, the goal of this study is to fill in the gaps in what we know about how temporary waqf can be used at the national level to improve food security. A new model that combines Islamic financing ideas, new farming methods like hydroponics and precision farming, and participatory governance to be introduced in proposed framework. This integrated framework aims to turn underused waqf lands into productive, long-lasting food systems that can handle disruptions, benefit everyone in society, and are deeply rooted in Malaysia's Islamic heritage. This will make a big difference for both the national food security agenda and the larger goals of Islamic social finance.

Methodology

The study employed qualitative data collection to obtain data and knowledge to address the research objective. Qualitative research is a method of naturalistic inquiry that aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of social phenomena in their natural environment (Barbour et al, 2018). Hence, the collection of data through interactions, phenomena and linguistic materials is perceived to be qualitative data collection approach.

This study using content analysis to analysis how temporary waqf can address food security challenges in Malaysia. To ensure the research was both current and relevant, data sources from the last five years (2020–2025) were prioritized. These sources included academic journals, government reports, and institutional documents, focusing on topics like food security, policy frameworks, sustainable agriculture, waqf utilization, and policy development. Peer-reviewed journal articles and reports from reputable international organizations were given priority to ensure the reliability and credibility of the data.

The content analysis involved systematically organizing and examining information related to waqf land optimization, agricultural development, and the legal frameworks governing waqf. This process helped identify recurring themes, patterns, and gaps in the literature, providing valuable insights into both the theoretical and practical aspects of temporary waqf. Key themes that emerged included the concept and historical use of temporary waqf, which highlighted its

flexibility compared to perpetual waqf and its grounding in Shariah principles. The analysis also focused on how waqf lands have been used for agriculture, showcasing successful case studies where waqf initiatives boosted agricultural productivity and improved food security. Additionally, the study identified legal and bureaucratic barriers as major challenges, underscoring the need to address regulatory issues and improve governance to make temporary waqf initiatives more effective.

Findings and Arguments

This study shows that temporary waqf could be a very useful and Shariah-compliant way to help Malaysia with its food security problems. The main idea is simple but meaningful by utilising unused waqf land for farming. This isn't just a theory, pilot projects like the ones that grow rice have already shown real results. They have increased local harvests, made more food available in communities, created jobs in rural areas, and boosted local economies. Community farming projects give people more power. But we found that this potential is currently being held back. Legal grey areas, bureaucratic red tape, and a lack of public understanding are major obstacles that keep temporary waqf from being used more widely.

We suggest a complete framework to get past these problems and really take advantage of what temporary waqf can do for Malaysia's food security. It is very important to get the policy and legal basics right. This means changing the laws about waqf so that all states have the same rules, getting rid of bureaucratic delays, and making a clear national plan for how to manage these lands. This kind of unified approach is necessary for building trust and allowing successful temporary waqf projects to spread across the country. It's not enough to just have rules for a strong legal base. You also need to build a system that gives communities power and helps the country reach its food goals.

The suggested framework puts a lot of focus on public-private partnerships (PPPs). Consider that of how government agencies, religious groups, and private businesses could all work together to fund and run temporary waqf projects. Some of them might do this because they feel it's their corporate social responsibility (CSR). Using new farming tools like hydroponics or precision agriculture can make these projects even more productive and long lasting. How can we make these partnerships work in real life? We recommend that technology providers, local communities, and project managers work together using Islamic contracts like *mudarabah* (profit-sharing) or *musharakah* (partnership). This is similar to what Ali et al., (2023) said about the need for holistic community empowerment that connects waqf with tools like zakat and *infaq*. Strong strategies are needed for effective PPPs. These include building local skills, setting up smart finances that include CSR, and making sure there is clear governance. The "waqf trustee-anchor company" model from Sukmana et al., (2024) is one of the useful models they give here. It aims to give community farmers more power through organised agribusiness partnerships.

Community involvement is at the heart of the framework for PPPs to work. We need to teach people about the benefits of temporary waqf and give them the skills to run their own agricultural projects through public education campaigns, workshops, and training. Tax breaks or zakat exemptions could also get more people and businesses to get involved. The goal is real participation and ownership so that projects really meet the needs of the community.

The framework puts a lot of emphasis on using waqf lands to grow rice, vegetables, and fruits, which are important for Malaysia's food security. But it's just as important to farm in a way that

doesn't harm the environment. Using organic farming and soil conservation are two eco-friendly ways to protect the environment and increase crop yields. We should link these projects to the local food system to get the most out of them. Cooperatives could take care of processing, packaging, and selling the food, which would help the local economy and create more jobs right where the food is grown.

The framework puts a lot of emphasis on strong monitoring and evaluation. It is important to set clear goals for how to measure the effects on food availability, job creation, and community health. There is no room for negotiation when it comes to transparency and accountability. Regular reporting makes sure that resources are used wisely and projects stay on track.

In short, this integrated framework sees temporary waqf as an important way to improve Malaysia's food security. Temporary waqf can help agriculture grow in a way that lasts and make communities stronger by directly addressing legal, financial, and operational problems and encouraging everyone to work together. It does this while staying true to Islamic principles of social responsibility and using charitable resources, which is a meaningful and powerful way to make sure that Malaysians have enough food that is grown in a way that is good for the environment.



Figure 1: A Framework of Temporary Waqf for Sustainable Food Security

Source: Author, (2025)

Based on figure 1, comprehensive framework that deals with legal, administrative, and operational issues while encouraging collaboration among stakeholders and promoting sustainable practices in order to get the most out of waqf resources for food security in Malaysia. First and foremost, changes to laws and policies are very important. This means changing the law to make it clear that temporary or time-limited waqf arrangements are legal and protected. It's also important to make sure that waqf rules are the same in all states so that there are fewer problems and people can trust each other. To make sure that waqf projects help with bigger food security goals, they should be in line with national development plans. The government can help the growth of waqf resources even more by giving money, tax breaks, and forming partnerships between public and private organisations.

For waqf-based food security projects to work, many different groups need to work together. Government agencies should give policy advice, money, and regulatory oversight. Waqf institutions should provide land and make sure that all activities follow Shariah law. Partnerships like the "Waqf Trustee-Anchor Company-Community Farmers" can help the

private sector by bringing in knowledge, access to markets, and money. Community groups and non-profits are very important for getting people involved in projects, giving them technical help, and making sure that the projects meet the needs of the community. Schools and research centres can help by coming up with new ways to improve sustainable farming practices, training farmers, and giving them data-driven insights.

Waqf projects can only be successful if they involve and give power to local communities. Town hall meetings, mosque announcements, and demonstration farms can help clear up misunderstandings and get people involved by raising awareness of the benefits of waqf. Besides that, training and involving local farmers in farming activities not only gives them a steady income, but it also makes them feel like they own the land and gives them a reason to work hard. To ensure the sustainable for new generation farmers, making jobs and economic benefits available in the area is another way to get people to support these projects and make sure they last for a long time. Local waqf committees and cooperatives allow people to help make decisions, which makes sure that projects are made to meet the needs and wants of the community.

To get the most food out of waqf lands, it is important to use sustainable farming methods. Using modern tools like mechanisation, high-yield crops, precision farming, and water-saving methods like drip irrigation can make a big difference in how much work gets done. New ideas like greenhouses, vertical gardening, and urban farming can boost production and draw in younger farmers. Environmental sustainability should also be a top priority. Practices like organic farming, crop rotation, and agroforestry can help restore soil health, encourage biodiversity, and make sure that the land stays productive for a long time. Using resources wisely means training farmers on how to handle crops after harvest and investing waqf funds in a way that is fair.

Lastly, waqf projects need to be constantly watched and evaluated to make sure they stay on track and can adapt to changing needs. Setting clear performance indicators, like crop yield, income levels, the number of households that don't have enough food, and asset value, helps stakeholders keep track of how well they are doing. Regular seasonal assessments help find problems early so they can be fixed right away. There should also be ways to get feedback from all stakeholders so that the framework stays flexible and can adapt to new challenges and opportunities.

By working on these things, we can build a strong and long lasting system that uses waqf resources to improve food security in Malaysia, which will help both the economy and local communities. Waqf lands can become productive farming centres by removing legal barriers, building partnerships, giving communities more power, and using new farming methods. This method not only makes food more secure, but it also helps the economy grow, protects the environment, and brings people together, showing how waqf can be used as a tool for sustainable development.

Conclusion

This analysis clearly shows that temporary waqf is a possible and long term way to solve Malaysia's growing food security problems. The main idea, using unused waqf land for farming, is not just a theory, it has worked in trial programs, which have led to higher local yields, more food availability, job creation in rural regions, and stronger local economies. Community

agricultural projects also give people power, which makes them feel like they own something and keeps them working hard.

However, to fully realise the promise of temporary waqf, we need to deal with the problems that are already there. The study finds that legal uncertainties, complicated bureaucracies, and a lack of public knowledge are major obstacles to widespread adoption. To deal with these problems, we need a complete framework that puts policy and legislative changes at the top of the list. This will make sure that rules are the same between states, make administrative tasks easier, and set up a clear national management plan for waqf properties. This kind of unifying approach is very important for building trust and making it possible to replicate successful waqf programs across the country.

Beyond regulatory adjustment, the proposed framework stresses the importance of public-private partnerships (PPPs). It suggests that government agencies, religious organisations, and private businesses work together to fund and run waqf projects, possibly through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) channels. To get the most out of farming and make it last, it's important to use new technology like hydroponics and precision agriculture. Islamic contracts like *mudarabah* (profit-sharing) or *musharakah* (partnership) can be used to set up these partnerships. This is in line with calls for holistic community empowerment that combines waqf with other Islamic social finance mechanisms like *zakat* and *infaq*. The "waqf trustee-anchor company" is one example of how organised agribusiness partnerships may help farmers in the community.

Besides, strong community involvement is very important for the success of these PPPs. This includes teaching people about the benefits of temporary waqf through campaigns and seminars, training local farmers, and giving people tax breaks or *zakat* exemptions to encourage them to take part and own the waqf. They encourage true engagement and long-term sustainability by making sure that projects really meet the requirements of the community.

Furthermore, the framework also firmly supports sustainable farming on waqf lands. It stresses eco-friendly methods including organic farming, crop rotation, and agroforestry to improve soil health, biodiversity, and long-term land productivity. Cooperatives for processing, packaging, and sales can connect these projects to the local food system. This can help local economies and create additional jobs in rural areas.

Finally, strong monitoring and evaluation procedures are necessary for openness, responsibility, and making sure that programs stay in line with the country's food security goals. Regular evaluations and feedback systems make adaptive management possible, which lets the framework respond well to new problems and chances as they come up. In conclusion, our analysis shows that temporary waqf is a strong and Shariah-compliant tool for improving Malaysia's food security. Temporary waqf can help Malaysia's agricultural sector grow, make communities stronger, and create a more self-sufficient and fair food system that is deeply rooted in the country's Islamic heritage. It does this by systematically addressing legal, financial, and operational issues, encouraging collaboration, and promoting sustainable practices. This integrated strategy not only strengthens national food policies, but it also shows how Islamic charitable ideals may be used to promote sustainable development on a larger scale.

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