



MODULE 12

I apply my competences

Learning outcomes

You will learn here to:

- how you can work independently towards the development of your green business
- how to stay determined and persistent when trying to achieve your goals.
- how to become an active problem-solver who can see opportunities and create value in your green business



Figure 1: Applying competences

Basic information



In this last module, you will learn how to use the SMART Method and how to become more resilient in the face of difficulties



This module contains three exercises.



You will need 15 h to finish the module.



You need 66% correct answers to pass this module.



Your lecturers are Susanne, Tiziana, and Klaus.

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Welcome to Module 12

The second module of the last training block deals with the following contents.

In the first section, we address the question of how you can achieve your professional goals as effectively as possible. We will familiarise you with the SMART rule.

Then it's a matter of sticking to it and persevering with the goals you have set for yourself. We will show you some suitable methods for this.

The last section then deals with how to solve problems that arise. Because of course you will also have to solve some problems in your self-employment. We show you a structured process.

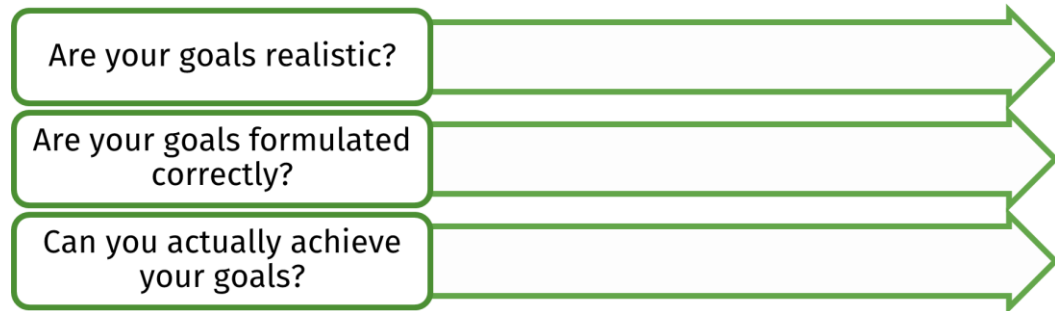
How you can work independently towards the development of your green business



Figure 2: Working independently towards the development of your green business

We want to introduce you to the SMART method. With this method, you can set your goals. And you can also use it to check whether you can achieve your goals.

More precisely, the SMART method is a 5-step strategy. With this strategy, you check the following:



The Smart Method states that goals must be specific, measurable, attractive, relevant, and time to meet all three criteria. Used correctly, the SMART method is a straightforward tool to formulate your goals. We will show you how to do this with some examples.

But why is this method called the SMART method? SMART stands for the beginning of each keyword in this method:

- **Specific**

Formulate your goals clearly! Not vague!

- **Measurable**

Goals must be measurable! Think about criteria with which you can measure: Have I achieved my goal?

- **Attractive**

Make sure you enjoy achieving your goals!

- **Realistic**

Goals must be achievable within a fixed period of time. And they must be achievable with the means you have.

- **Time-bound**

You need a precise timetable: What do I have to do and by when?

How we formulate our goals is important! The way you set goals is an important step towards success. It is not enough to find your (own) goals. We have to set our goals correctly!

But let's take a closer look at the cornerstones of this method together:

Specific

When you formulate your goal: Refrain from general formulations or imprecise or even vague ideas! The opposite is essential! Your plan must be described as precisely as possible so that it is clear that you will achieve it! You do not have to write many, many pages. The best thing at all is to create the following:

Describe your goal in one clear sentence!

Here is an example: On 30 June, I would like to have gained 30 new customers.

How can this be done?

By answering the following 5 W-questions:



Measurable

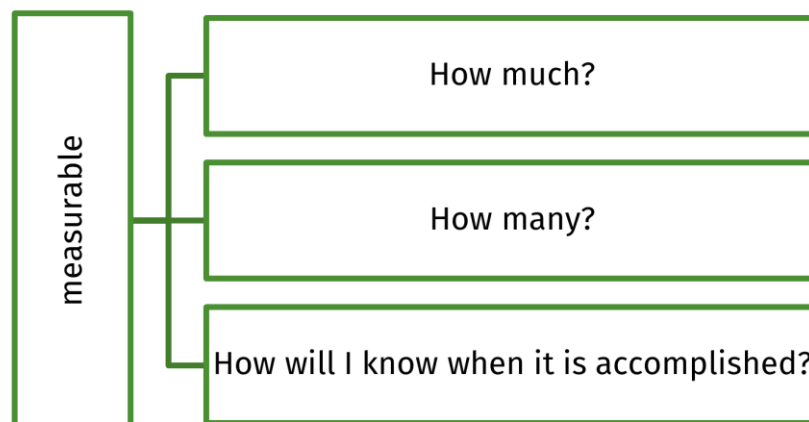
If you want to find out whether you have reached your goal, you must also be able to determine this: You must be able to measure it! Sometimes this is not very difficult. When it comes to things you can count, it's not particularly difficult, for example, when it comes to time or quantities. For other things, it is not so easy. In the example before, you can quickly determine whether you have gained 30 new customers.

Nevertheless, your goals must be measurable! If you want to improve the quality of your product, for example, you could come up with the following metrics: I collect 50 positive evaluations of my product from my customers. I use an online questionnaire for this.

Having measurable goals to track your progress and stay motivated is essential. Assessing progress helps you stay focused, meet your deadlines, and feel the excitement of achieving your goal.

How can this be done?

A measurable goal should address questions such as:



Attractive

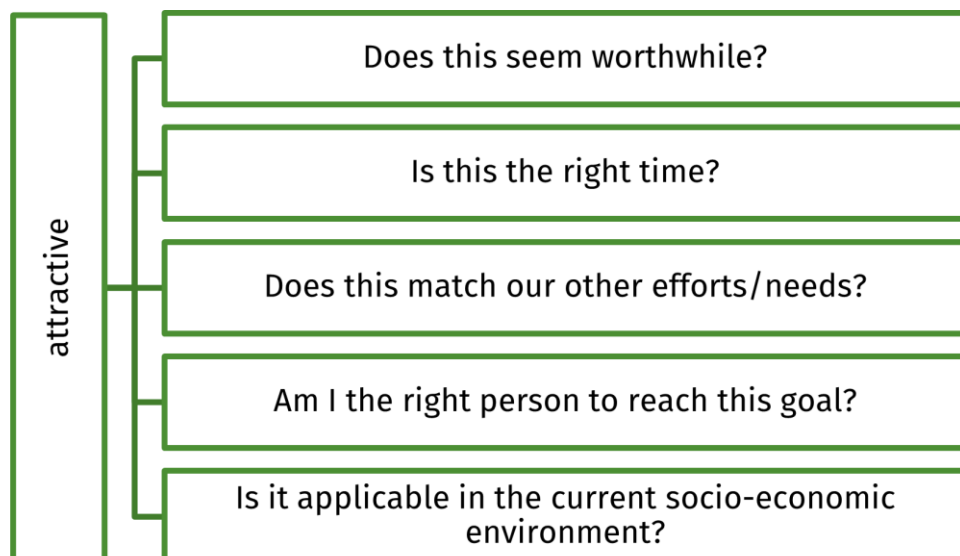
You will not achieve your goal if you constantly struggle, and the goal is not desirable to you personally. On the other hand, the following applies:

If you have the desire to reach your goal, you will also do everything you can to actually reach your goal! Make sure that your goal is formulated positively!

Here's an example: "I want to be able to decide freely in my job!" is much more effective and motivates you than "I don't want to be dependent on my job anymore!"

Of course, there are hardly any goals that are very, very easy to achieve! What is the point? There are almost always problems somewhere that you have to overcome or even setbacks. That makes attractive goals all the more critical. They also help you to cope with setbacks.

A goal is attractive if you can answer "yes" to the following questions:



Realistic

Think big! - What is a good attitude can block all determination. Excessive ambition leads to frustration, castles in the air lead to disappointment. We can set big goals, but they should not be completely unrealistic or utopian, so we cannot achieve them at all. That kills any incentive. In the best case, the goal is chosen so that it is still challenging, but the result remains feasible.

Dare to do something! That is undoubtedly a good and motivating attitude. But be careful! You can quickly become discouraged and disappointed if you take on too much at once. Don't build castles in the air! Goals should motivate you. Therefore, they can be considerable. But stay realistic so that you can achieve your goals.

Choose your goal like this:

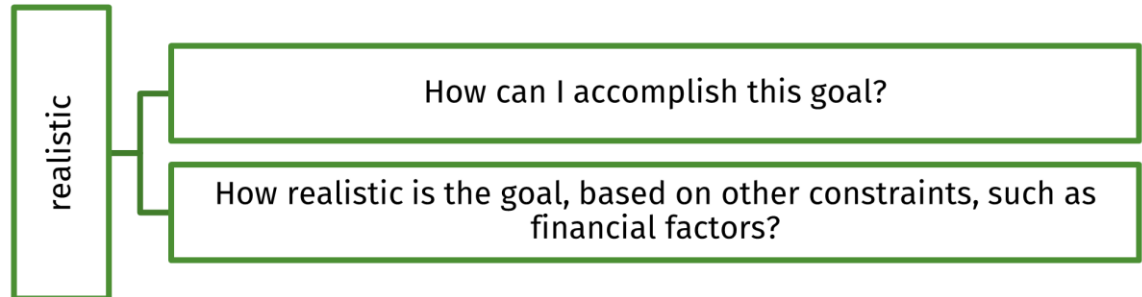
Your goal should be a challenge for you! And the result must be feasible!

If the result is not feasible (at the moment), you have to divide your goal into smaller sub-goals!

Here is an example: Maybe the goal of getting good funding for your project is not feasible for you at the moment. But what you can formulate as a sub-goal is the following: I will find out about possible funding opportunities by the end of this month. I will make an appointment with the Chamber of Commerce and contact my bank advisor.

How do you notice that your goal needs to be divided into sub-goals?

It's very easy! An achievable goal will usually answer questions such as:



With this, you make sure that

- You have also considered everything.
- The goal remains transparent and understandable.

Time-bound

Every goal needs a time frame and a deadline by which something should be done. The deadline is not only an essential checkpoint for success. It also spurs you on. You know how it is: the closer the deadline, the more everyone tries (see: goal gradient effect).

It would help if you had a clear deadline, i.e., a date by which you want to achieve your goal. This has two advantages:

- You keep control.
- The appointment spurs you to become and stay active.

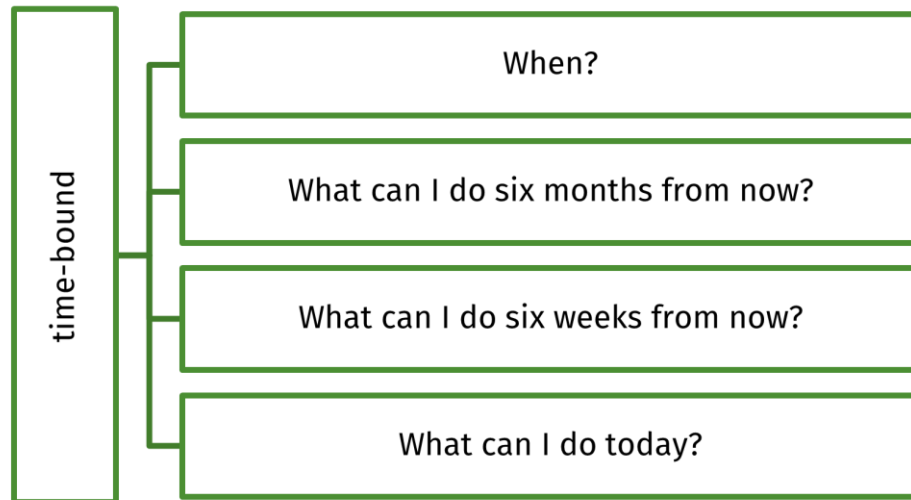
I am sure you are familiar with this:

The closer you get to a goal, the more motivated you are!

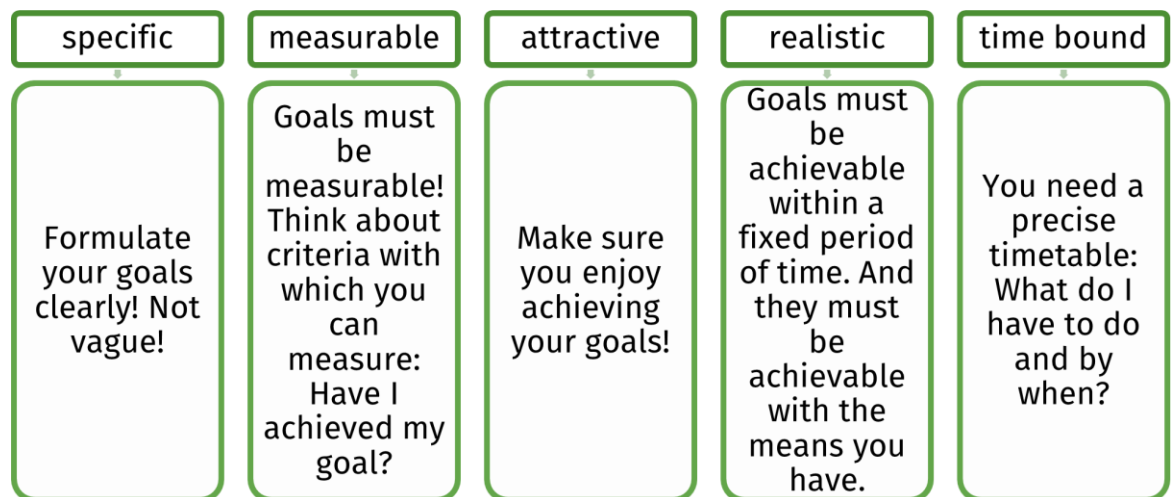
Therefore, here is the tip from earlier once again:

Plan partial steps, then you will also reach your goal more quickly.

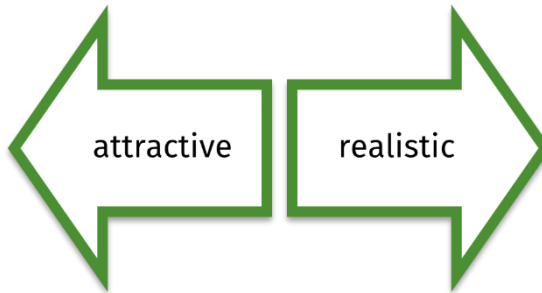
A time-bound goal will usually answer these questions:



A goal is, therefore, SMART if it fulfills all five criteria of the SMART method!



Unfortunately, it is not always that simple in practice. There are often incompatibilities between the individual criteria of the SMART method.



Again and again, there are conflicts between the criteria "attractive" and "realistic."

Because it is often the case that the bigger a goal is, the more attractive it becomes. And then it happens very quickly that this goal becomes unrealistic!

That is why it is crucial always to observe all five criteria of the SMART method.

EXERCISE 1



M 12_E 1: Working independently towards the development of my green business

Open a writing programme or take a sheet of paper. On the top, write the number of the module and the number of this exercise.

Using the SMART method, define two professional goals that you would like to achieve.

Goal 1:

| | |
|------------|--|
| specific | |
| measurable | |
| attractive | |
| realistic | |
| time bound | |

Goal 2:

| | |
|------------|--|
| specific | |
| measurable | |
| attractive | |
| realistic | |
| time bound | |

When you have completed the exercise, name your digital document after the number of this exercise and save it in the folder to Module 12! If you did the exercise on paper, take readable photos and keep them.

How you can stay determined and persistent when trying to achieve your goals

How determined are you? There are many people who cannot make up their minds. They want to avoid mistakes and therefore tend to stay in the background. And yet there are always situations in life in which a resolute attitude and decisive action are important. You are about to start your green business. You want to stand up for your convictions, namely, to start a sustainable and Green Business. If you want to pursue your goals, you need a fair amount of willpower to stay on the ball. But how do you get more determination?



Figure 3: Staying determined and persistent

As so often in life, your determination is related to how you think about certain things:

Visualise your goals!

Your resolve is highly dependent on how concretely you can visualize your goals. So we are not talking about vague ideas of something you would like to achieve. In the worst case, you may consider these diffuse desires to be unrealistic. If you want to increase your determination, you have to deal with your own desires and goals. We discussed the SMART rule in the previous section. Break down big goals into many small sub goals.

In doing so, take different perspectives and inform yourself. On the one hand, this makes big goals more realistic, and on the other, it gives you the perseverance you need to overcome adversity.

Trust in your own abilities

Often, excessive self-doubt and fears get in the way. When you are asked to make a decision, there is a great fear that you might make the wrong choice. Do you know your inner critic? This is that voice that speaks up whenever you need to get something done, and that voice spurs you on to do it even better. Usually, the inner critic is oversized so that all work is done with great care. This is undoubtedly a great advantage. However, sometimes working even better is simply superfluous and a waste of time. Therefore: seriously acknowledge your own achievements and trust in your own abilities. Do an honest strengths and weaknesses analysis to get an overview of your abilities, also ask people you trust.



Remember the following chapter of **Module 3: How to use your strengths for your green business idea**. There you have dealt intensively with your own strengths and weaknesses

Be inspired

Determination depends on the mood of the day. Nobody is always in a good mood. A setback can lead to temporary frustration. The important thing is

not to let it permanently discourage you. To do this, you can support yourself with positive thinking and autosuggestion.



Remember the following chapter of **Module 5: How to anticipate the feeling of achieving goals**. There you have also learnt about the power of autosuggestions and how to use them.

Take inspiration from role models - how did they achieve their goal? Did they manage not to deviate from their plan even on difficult days?



Remember the following chapter of **Module 5: How to find examples of making the most of ideas and opportunities**. There you also dealt with the 3 Zone Model.

Change the way you deal with defeat

Think about highly successful people. Many of these people had to cope with heavy defeats. Before these people became successful, they had made many attempts and were quite often mistaken. What is the point here? Change your general attitude towards mistakes and mishaps! Only if you are ready to learn from mistakes, a defeat will not only be a defeat, but above all an opportunity to learn and do better next time. Setbacks help because afterwards you know where something needs to be improved.

Reward yourself

Very importantly, your determination must be rewarded. Namely, by yourself. Of course, you will be very proud when you achieve a goal. In addition, however, you should also treat yourself to something. This can be a nice experience with friends. Going to the movies. Whatever it is. After a long period of tension, it needs a reward, because here you combine the necessary relaxation with an experience that is not common.

EXERCISE 2



M 12_E 2: Staying determined and persistent

Open a writing programme or take a sheet of paper. On the top, write the number of the module and the number of this exercise.

Comment in detail on this point: Change the way you deal with defeat.

Describe a defeat and detail what you learned from that defeat.

When you have completed the exercise, name your digital document after the number of this exercise and save it in the folder to Module 12! If you did the exercise on paper, take readable photos and keep them.

How to become an active problem-solver

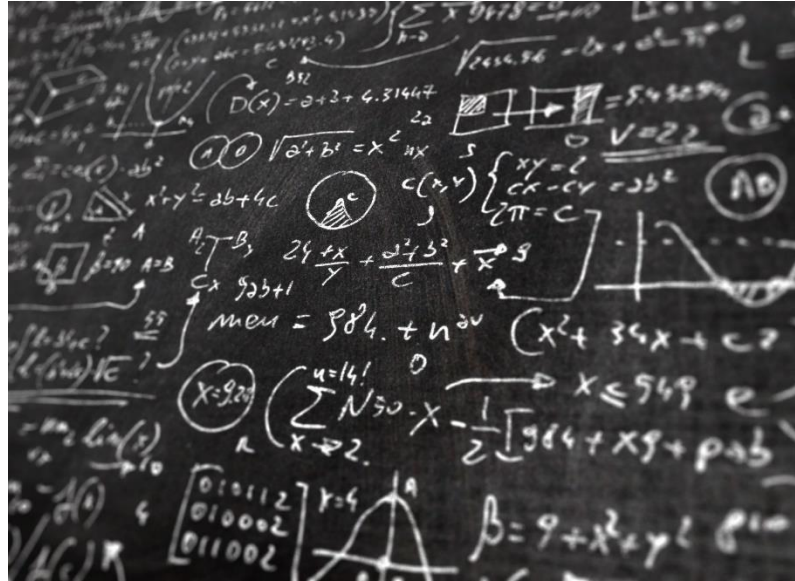


Figure 4: Problem solving

Problem solving is a core skill you need as a budding green entrepreneur. Whether it's unhappy customers, late deliveries, or something else: If you have this skill, you can take appropriate steps to remove existing obstacles and reach your goal.

First of all, we can distinguish three different problem-solving strategies. And as you can see there is only one of them that can actually help to solve a problem:

Escape

- Escape is when you recognize the problem but do nothing about it.

Displacement

- A classic avoidance strategy is also displacement. Instead of addressing the problem, you talk it down or ignore it altogether. A similar mistake is recognizing a problem but focusing on something else.

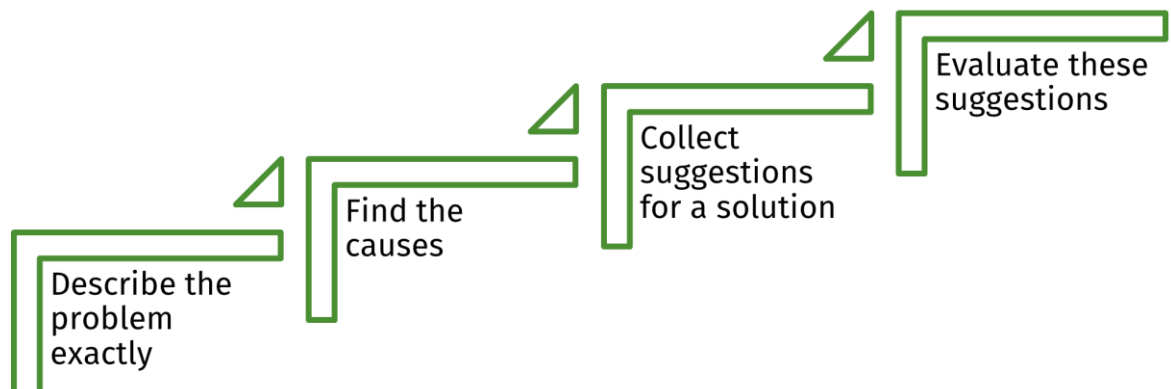
Acceptance

- The most important insight to problem solving is as mundane as it is crucial: focus on the problem. Problems don't solve themselves, and they don't solve themselves by making you angry about the circumstances that cause them. Instead, accept the problem, address it head-on, and put off unimportant trivialities for another time.

No matter what kind of green business you want to start, you will also always have problems to solve. Therefore, it is important that you approach solutions in a structured way. In the following, we would like to introduce you to a suitable process that you can use to solve problems.

Problem solving process

The following steps can lead from a problem to a solution:



Describe the problem exactly

The first important step is to describe exactly what the problem is. What went wrong, what is not as it should be? At this point a comparison between the target and the actual state can help. This step is especially important because it will help you to find a suitable solution later on.

Find the causes

In order for a problem solution to succeed, it is important that you find and analyze all causes if possible. This step is also important so that you can avoid also for the early prevention of a similar mistake in the future, the analysis of the causes is essential. How could the grievance have come about? What factors led to the problem occurring? If possible, causes are uncovered, work can be done on these areas.

Collect suggestions for a solution

You now have an overview of what the problem is and what caused it. Now you start looking for possible solutions. Perhaps you already have experience in some areas that can lead to a solution. If this is not the case, you can use different creativity techniques to find solutions: Mind Map, Brain Storming. At this point it is important to note that there is no right or wrong at this point.

Evaluate these suggestions

Only when you have collected all the proposals do you go on to evaluate the proposed solutions. Here you determine which proposals come closest to an ideal solution. To do this, you need suitable criteria that the solution must fulfil. The solution proposal that best fulfils the criteria is then selected and implemented.

EXERCISE 3



M 12_E 3: Solving a problem

Open a writing programme or take a sheet of paper. On the top, write the number of the module and the number of this exercise.

Either take a problem that currently exists or remember a problem. Now follow the individual steps of the problem-solving process described above and describe the following points in detail:

- Describe the problem exactly.
- Find the causes.
- Collect suggestions for a solution.
- Evaluate these suggestions.

When you have completed the exercise, name your digital document after the number of this exercise and save it in the folder to Module 12! If you did the exercise on paper, take readable photos and keep them.

Reference list

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Kidston. P. (2015) *Planning, Scheduling, Monitoring, and Control: The Practical Project Management of Time, Cost, and Risk*

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Books about learning from failure:

<https://medium.com/@ShaneLester2016/5-best-books-about-learning-from-failure-db1fe8b2fac1>

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