



Powering Innovations in Civil Society and Enterprises for Sustainability in the Caribbean (PISCES)

Report on Regional Survey on Needs and Opportunities for Environmental Advocacy by Caribbean Civil Society

Caribbean Natural Resource Institute (CANARI)

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Introduction

Section 1

Overview of the PISCES Project

- **Project Title:** Powering Innovations and Sustainability for Civil Society and Enterprises in the Caribbean (PISCES)
- **Project Objective:** To support innovative actions by Caribbean civil society and coastal community small and micro-enterprises for conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity and development of sustainable and resilient livelihoods. *This includes supporting civil society to play a role in influencing and engaging in decision-making for environmental governance and management.*
- **Implementing Agency:** Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)
- **Project Partners:** Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation (C-CAM), the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO), the Environmental Awareness Group (EAG), the Fondation pour la Protection de la Biodiversité Marine (FoProBiM), Sustainable Grenadines Inc (SusGren), and the Saint Lucia National Trust (SLNT)
- **Target Countries:** Antigua and Barbuda; The Bahamas; Dominica; Grenada; Haiti; Jamaica; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; and Trinidad and Tobago
- **Project Duration:** 2017 to 2020
- **Funding Agency:** European Union
- **Amount:** € 1,000,000

Why the Escazú Agreement?

- The Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (the Escazú Agreement) is the first environmental treaty in the region.
- It was adopted on March 4, 2018 after two years of preparatory meetings (2012-2014) and nine meetings of the Negotiating Committee established in 2014 with the significant participation of the public, including Caribbean civil society.
- The Escazú Agreement opened for signature of the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean from September 27, 2018 through September 26, 2020. To enter into force, 11 State Parties are required to sign and ratify the Agreement.
- As of February 15, 2020, 21 countries have signed and 5 of these have also ratified. Only 7 of the PISCES target countries have so far signed: Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Jamaica, Haiti, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The latter two countries have also ratified.
- Signing and ratification of the Escazú Agreement can help to significantly strengthen the mechanisms for participatory environmental governance in PISCES target countries. This is a critical opportunity for a targeted advocacy campaign by civil society that will help to achieve the project target of ***“Civil society more effectively engaged in decision-making processes for marine and coastal resources governance and management in at least 5 local, national and/or regional initiatives by 2020”***.

Overview of regional survey on needs and opportunities for environmental advocacy by Caribbean civil society

- **Purpose:** To inform the needs and opportunities for advocacy to strengthen civil society's role in environmental governance and decision-making in the Caribbean.
- **Target Audience:** Representatives of civil society organisations including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), fisherfolk organisations (FFOs) community small and microenterprises (SMEs), academia and other non-profit organisations who are directly or indirectly involved in environmental management and sustainable development initiatives in the target PISCES countries and who have a vested interest in environmental advocacy.
- **Method:** Online survey instrument; mix of closed and open-ended questions; 40 questions in total; instrument disseminated by CANARI via email, social media and list servs.
- **Response Period:** December 4, 2019 to January 10, 2020

Summary of results

Section 2

Overview of Respondents

Total number of respondents:

161

Geographic spread of responses:

- **119** were from PISCES countries
- **42** from other countries including non-PISCES Caribbean countries and Latin America countries
- One third (**33.5%**) were from Trinidad and Tobago

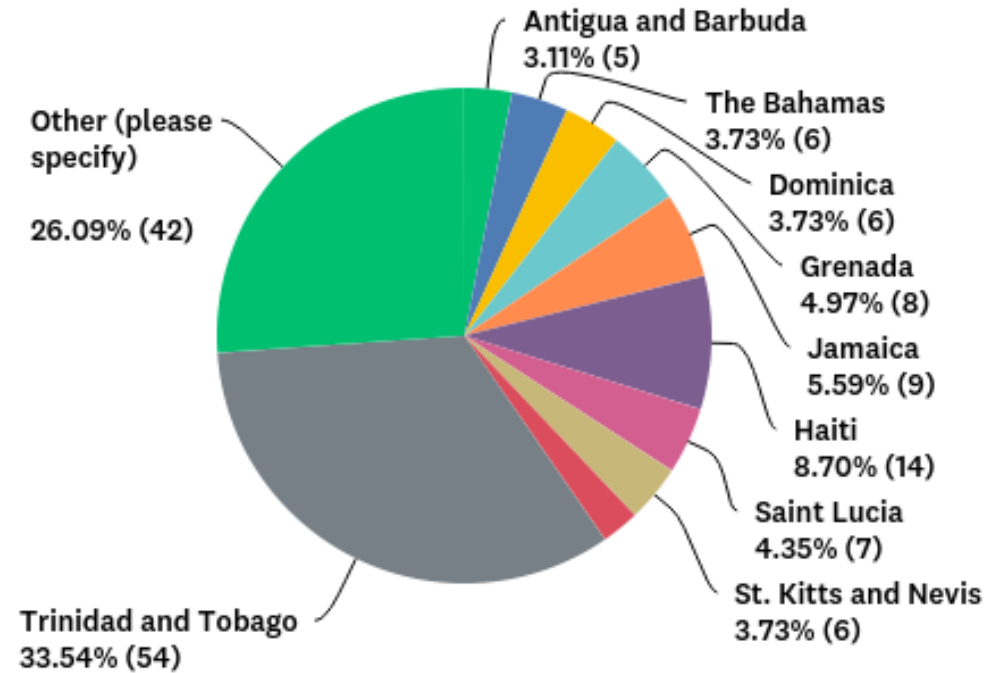


Figure 1: Geographic locations of respondents who completed the regional survey

NOTE:

For the purpose of this report, subsequent analysis were only carried out on responses from the 10 PICSES countries.

Overview of Respondents

Type of organisations represented were:

- **90** were Non-government organisations
- **2** were Fisherfolk organisations
- **2** were Academia
- **10** were Community-based organisations
- **1** was a Faith-based organisation
- **5** were community small and microenterprises
- **8** were Other organisations which included government agencies and international development agencies
- **Most (90%) of respondents belonged to civil society organisations (CSOs) which demonstrate that findings of the survey are sufficiently representative of civil society views in the PISCES countries.**

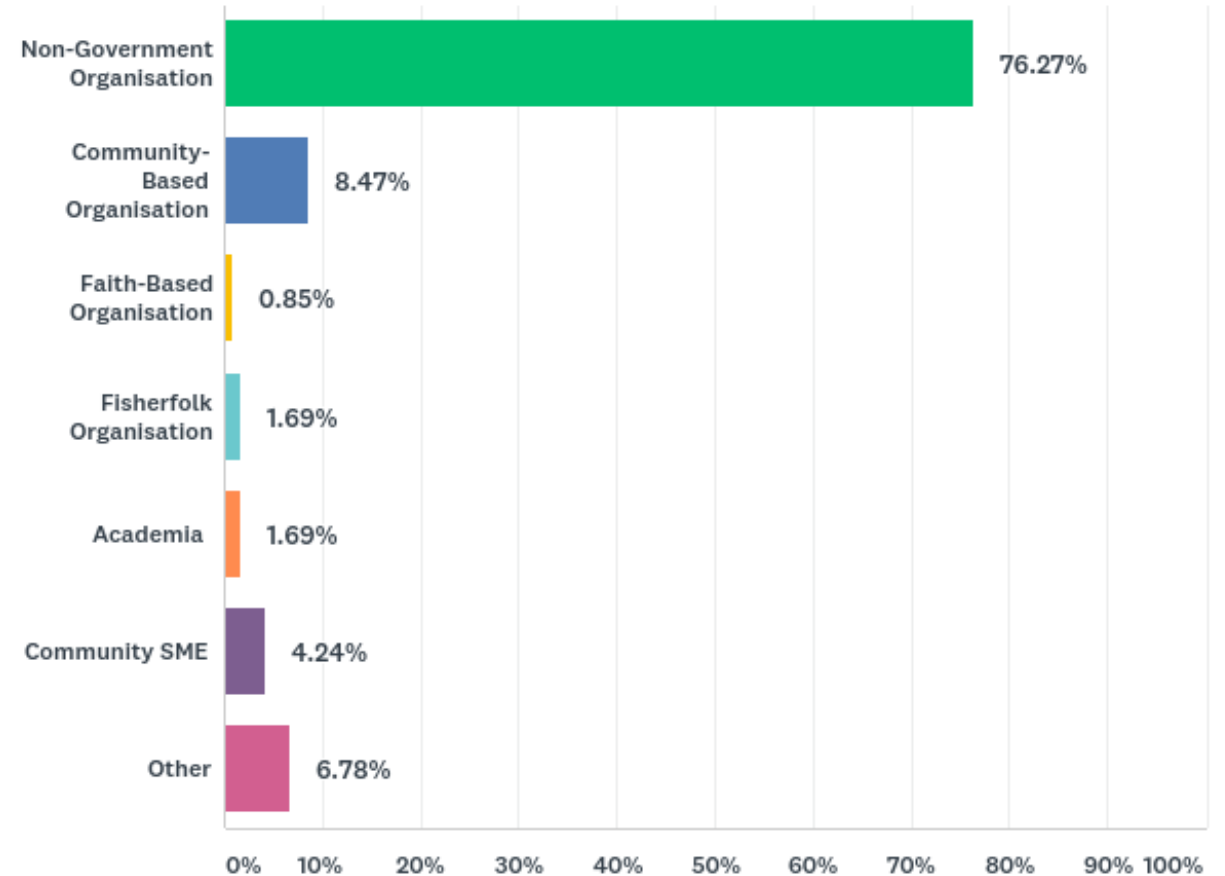


Figure 2: Types of organisations who were represented by the 199 respondents from the PISCES countries in the regional survey

Role of the organisation in environmental matters

- Four-fifths (**81%**) of respondents stated that their organisations were focused on influencing environmental policy and practice
- The majority (**75%**) of respondents agreed that that their organisations had the power to influence important community and national environmental and development issues
- Only **58%** of respondents stated that their organisations were currently involved in environmental governance and management activities
- Interestingly, three-quarters (**75 %**) of respondents agreed that their organisations historically maintained a positive relationship with government authorities in their respective countries
- Almost all (**94%**) of respondents agreed that their organisations were necessary to assist in reducing or avoiding environmental problems at the community and national levels in the target PISCES countries.

Perceptions of environmental issues

- Over **87%** of respondents indicated that there were major environmental problems currently taking place in their respective countries to date.
- The major environmental issues in PISCES countries as identified by respondents were **coastal erosion, illegal/improve disposal of waste, deforestation, bush fires, extreme weather events e.g. flooding and hurricanes, sea level rise and biodiversity loss.**
- Furthermore, major environmental issues facing PISCES countries were perceived by respondents to be as a result of policies and laws being weak or not properly implemented, decisions made by politicians and policymakers and decisions made by business and industry which were compounded by climate change impacts, illegal activities by the population and lack of awareness by the population.
- **These findings imply the need for more strategic, cohesive and on-going advocacy initiatives on key environmental issues by civil society in PISCES countries.**

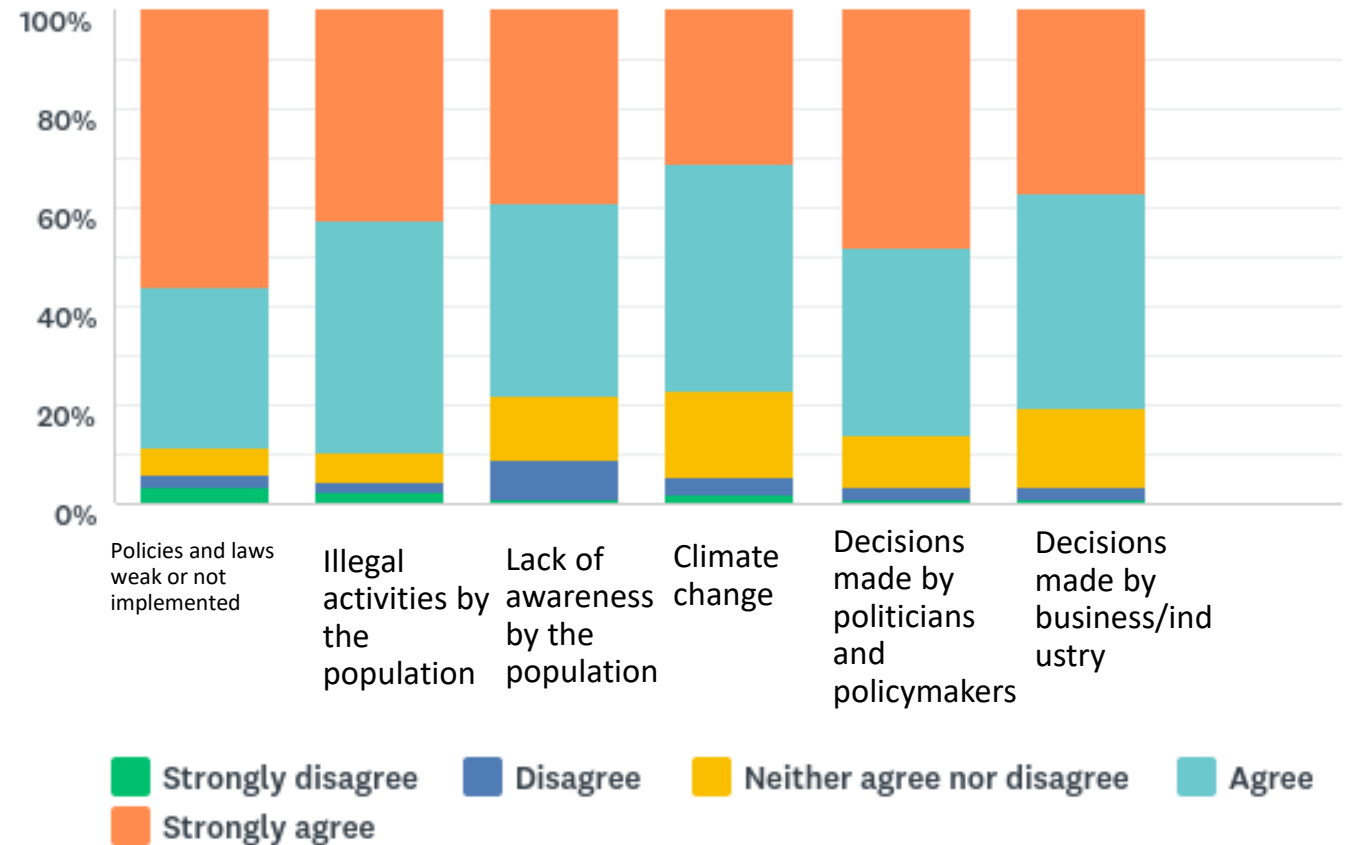


Figure 3: Perceptions of main causes of major environmental issues facing PISCES countries

Access to environmental information in the Caribbean

- A significant majority (**93 %**) of respondents agreed that improving access to environmental information in their countries was a worthy cause to support
- **75 %** of respondents indicated that they believed that civil society did not have adequate access to environmental information in their countries
- Almost three-fifths (**57 %**) of respondents agreed that their countries had adequate legal and regulatory mechanisms to facilitate access to information in environmental matters
- Interestingly, only a quarter (**26 %**) of respondents agreed that civil society is adequately informed on existing legal and regulatory mechanisms to access information on environmental matters in their countries.
- Moreover, respondents considered themselves to have **medium-low capacity** to use existing legal and regulatory mechanisms to access information on environmental matters in their countries.



Figure 4: Respondents rated themselves as having medium-low capacity to use existing legal and regulatory mechanisms to access information on environmental matters in the PISCES countries

Public participation in environmental matters in the Caribbean

- A significant majority (**95%**) of respondents agreed that public participation in development projects is necessary to solve or mitigate environmental issues
- However, a large proportion (**65 %**) of respondents believed that their countries did not have adequate legal and regulatory mechanisms for public participation in environmental governance and decision-making processes
- Interestingly, only one-fifth (**20 %**) of respondents agreed that civil society was adequately informed on the existing legal and regulatory mechanisms for public participation in environmental governance and decision-making processes in their countries
- **68 %** of respondents indicated that their organisations participate in environmental governance and decision-making processes at the national and community levels in their countries
- Moreover, respondents considered themselves to have **medium capacity** to effectively participate in environmental governance and decision-making processes at the national and community levels.



Figure 5: Respondents rated themselves as having medium capacity to participate in environmental governance an decision-making processes at the national and community levels in the PISCES countries

Access to environmental justice in the Caribbean

- A significant majority (**98%**) of respondents agreed that environmental justice was a cause worth supporting
- However, over three-fifths (**65 %**) of respondents believed that their countries did not have adequate legal and regulatory mechanisms for the public to access judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy on environmental matters
- Interestingly, less than one-fifth (**18 %**) of respondents agreed that civil society was adequately informed on the legal mechanisms for the public to access judicial and administrative proceedings on environmental matters
- Respondents considered themselves to have **low capacity** to utilise existing legal mechanisms to access judicial and administrative proceedings on environmental matters in their countries.

2.4★
average rating



Figure 6: Respondents rated themselves as having low capacity to utilise existing legal mechanisms to access judicial and administrative proceedings on environmental matters in the PISCES countries

Environmental advocacy in the Caribbean

- The majority (**75%**) of respondents have engaged on any advocacy on environmental issues at the community or national levels
- Moreover, three-quarters (**75%**) of respondents indicated that their organisations partner with others on environmental advocacy initiatives ranging from social media campaigns, school awareness programmes, documentaries and videos, community sensitisation workshops on environmental issues
- **67%** of respondents stated that their organisation has the expertise to lead on advocacy on environmental issues.

Environmental advocacy in the Caribbean

- Respondents indicated that the **most successful** advocacy tools and techniques they have used were participating in community meetings, workshops and seminars, facilitating community meeting, workshops and seminars, direct meetings with government and other stakeholders, social media campaigns, media (TV and radio appearances) and newspaper articles
- The **least successful** advocacy tools and techniques were considered to be legal advocacy (e.g. law suits, legal rights booklets for citizens, legal advice), demonstrations (e.g. marches, vigils), online petitions and press briefings.

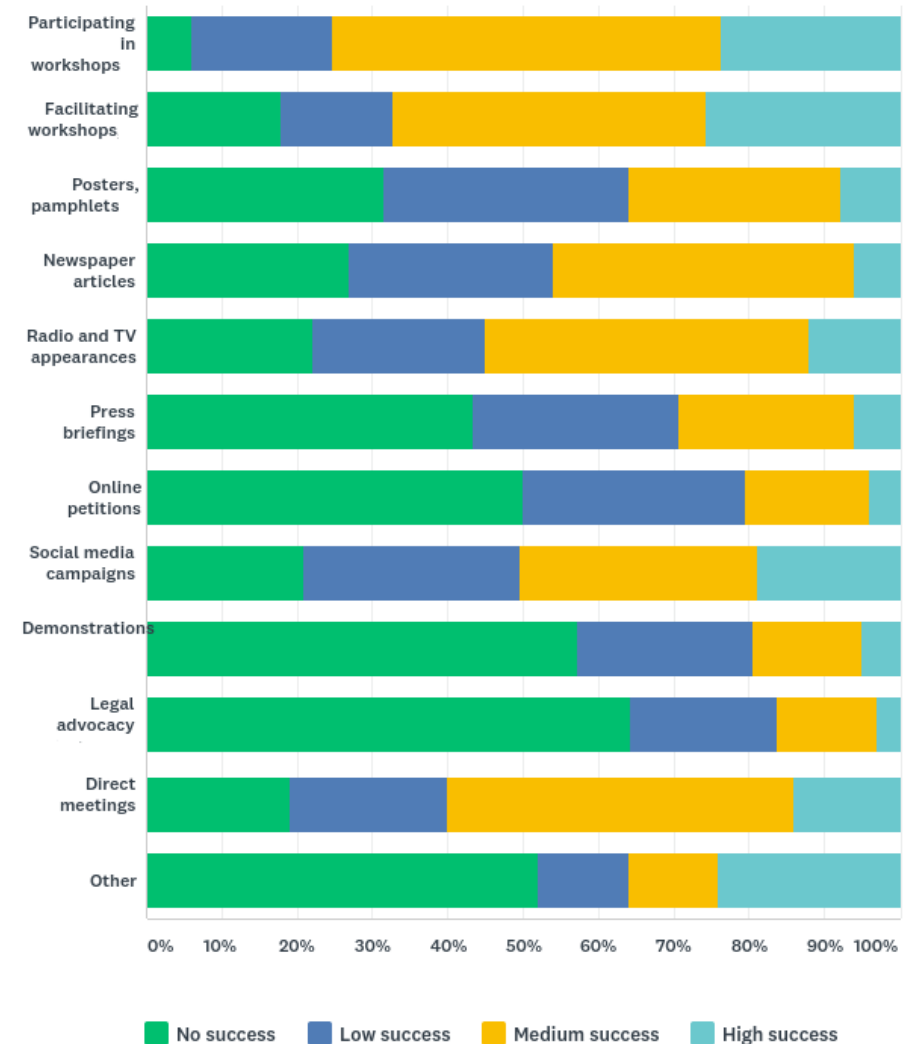


Figure 7: Respondents rated the success of various advocacy tools and techniques they have utilised for environmental advocacy in the PISCES countries

Environmental advocacy in the Caribbean

- Respondents noted that these advocacy tools and techniques have been successful since:
 - Improved awareness on environmental issues
 - Enabled positive behavioural changes
 - Enabled direct access to decision-makers and influencers
 - Encouraged buy-in and support for policies and decisions by communities and stakeholders
 - Facilitated participatory processes in decision-making on environmental matters
 - Provided a space for dialogue and sharing of knowledge and opinions amongst different stakeholder groups, including those who may be marginalised or underrepresented
 - Have increased reach/spread to a larger audience

Knowledge on the Escazú Agreement

- Only **28 %** of respondents stated that their organisations input into or followed the negotiation of the Escazú Agreement
- **52%** of respondents thought that the Escazú Agreement will help to improve environmental management while **47 %** of respondents were not sure
- Moreover, only **28 %** of respondents indicated that they were aware of advocacy initiatives by civil society on the Escazú Agreement which included national consultations by the Saint Lucia National Trust and the Sustainable Development Division in Saint Lucia, a national dialogue led by CSOs such as the Jamaica Environment Trust in Jamaica and a national workshop and open letter to the Prime Minister led by CANARI, The Cropper Foundation, Environment Tobago and EquiGov Institute in Trinidad and Tobago

Needs and opportunities

Section 3

Needs and opportunities for environmental advocacy

- Civil society should implement advocacy initiatives that are more strategic, cohesive and long-term on key environmental issues which are relevant to their work in their countries
- Civil society should continue to design and implement advocacy campaigns in partnership with other organisations including other civil society organisations (CSOs) to leverage their resources and networks and enhance their collective voice and influence
- Successful advocacy tools and techniques identified were: participating in community meetings, workshops and seminars, facilitating community meeting, workshops and seminars, direct meetings with government and other stakeholders, social media campaigns, media (TV and radio appearances) and newspaper articles. Advocacy initiatives should seek to include incorporate a mix of these tool and techniques
- CSOs in the Caribbean already have the expertise to lead on environmental advocacy. However, there is an opportunity to build the capacity of Caribbean CSOs to better design, implement and evaluate their advocacy campaigns as well as to incorporate innovative advocacy tools and techniques which can be adapted to their needs and circumstances.

Needs and opportunities for advocacy on the Escazú Agreement

- Civil society perceived themselves to have low to medium capacity on effectively utilising existing legal and regulatory mechanisms for accessing information or justice or effectively engaging in public participation mechanisms on environmental matters in their countries
- In addition, there was relatively low level of awareness of the Escazú Agreement by Caribbean civil society and how this regional treaty could help to strengthen these access mechanisms to improve environmental management in their countries
- Advocacy on the Escazú Agreement should focus on building public awareness of the regional treaty, the relevance of the treaty to improving existing national and regional environmental governance frameworks, as well as building capacity to enable civil society utilise existing access rights mechanisms on environmental matters in Caribbean countries

For more information:

- Contact person: Sasha Jattansingh, Senior Technical Officer, CANARI
- Email: sashaj@canari.org
- Tel: (868) 638 – 6062
- Website: <http://canari.org>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CANARICARIBBEAN/>



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