Standards users and use of standards: The SME perspective

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Small Business Standards

Introduction

SMEs across Europe

- 99.8% of all businesses
- > 20 million SMEs in Europe
- > 95% are micro-enterprises (<10 people)
- 67% of all jobs
- 57% of the gross value added

Standardisation: benefits for SMEs and use of standards

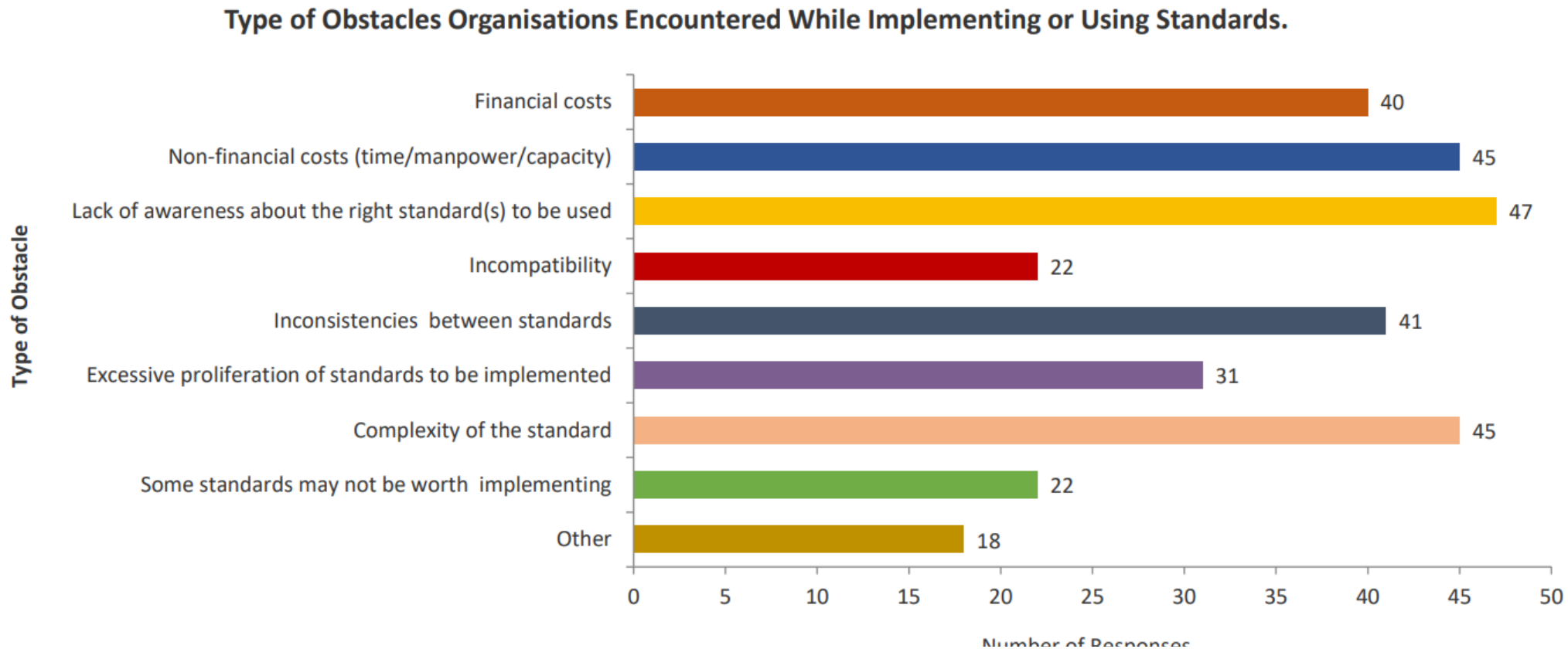
- Facilitate market access
- Lower costs
- Compliance with legal requirements and risk management
- Demonstrate quality, performance, safety
- Interoperability and compatibility of products
- Support acceptance of new products/solutions- gain trust in the market

Standardisation: challenges for SMEs

- Lack of awareness
- Lack of resources
- Finding what is going on/the right standard
- Complex standards/unfit for SMEs
- Lack of support for implementation

STAND4EU: Obstacles faced when implementing standards

Q30. Identify the obstacles that your organisation encountered while implementing or using standards.



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www.stand4eu.eu

SBS and its activities

Small Business Standards (SBS)

Created in 2013

Recognised by EC as the association representing SMEs in standardisation (Regulation 1025/2012)

Objectives:

- Increase the awareness of SMEs about standards
- Encourage and support SME involvement in standardisation
- Represent SME interests in European/international standardisation work and related policies/legislation
- Support the uptake of standards.

SBS Membership

- National SME associations
- European SME organisations
- Multi-sectorial & sector specific
- 22 associations representing more than 12 million SMEs

SBS activities

TECHNICAL

- Funding experts to represent SMEs in Technical Committees
- Monitoring standardisation developments & support tools to consider SME needs in standardisation
- Training of experts & support SMEs with any questions related to standardisation
- Support uptake & knowledge about standards (e.g. SME Guides on IIoT, blockchain, security controls)

POLITICAL

- Participation in relevant EC Expert Groups (e.g. HLF Standardisation, Committee on Standards, Machinery EG…)
- Participation in ESO's policy & governing bodies
- Developing SME positions on policies & legislation related to standardisation
- Establishing relations with ISB's to improve representation & participation conditions for SMEs

AWARENESS RAISING

Events, webinars, publications (e.g., brochures)

SBS sectoral approaches & Working Groups

WG PPE & TEXTILE CARE

WG CONSTRUCTION

WG DIGITALISATION

WG SUSTAINABILITY

WG LIFTS

In addition: Ad-hoc groups created whenever necessary e.g. on services, machinery, DPP…

Brochures & Guides for SMEs

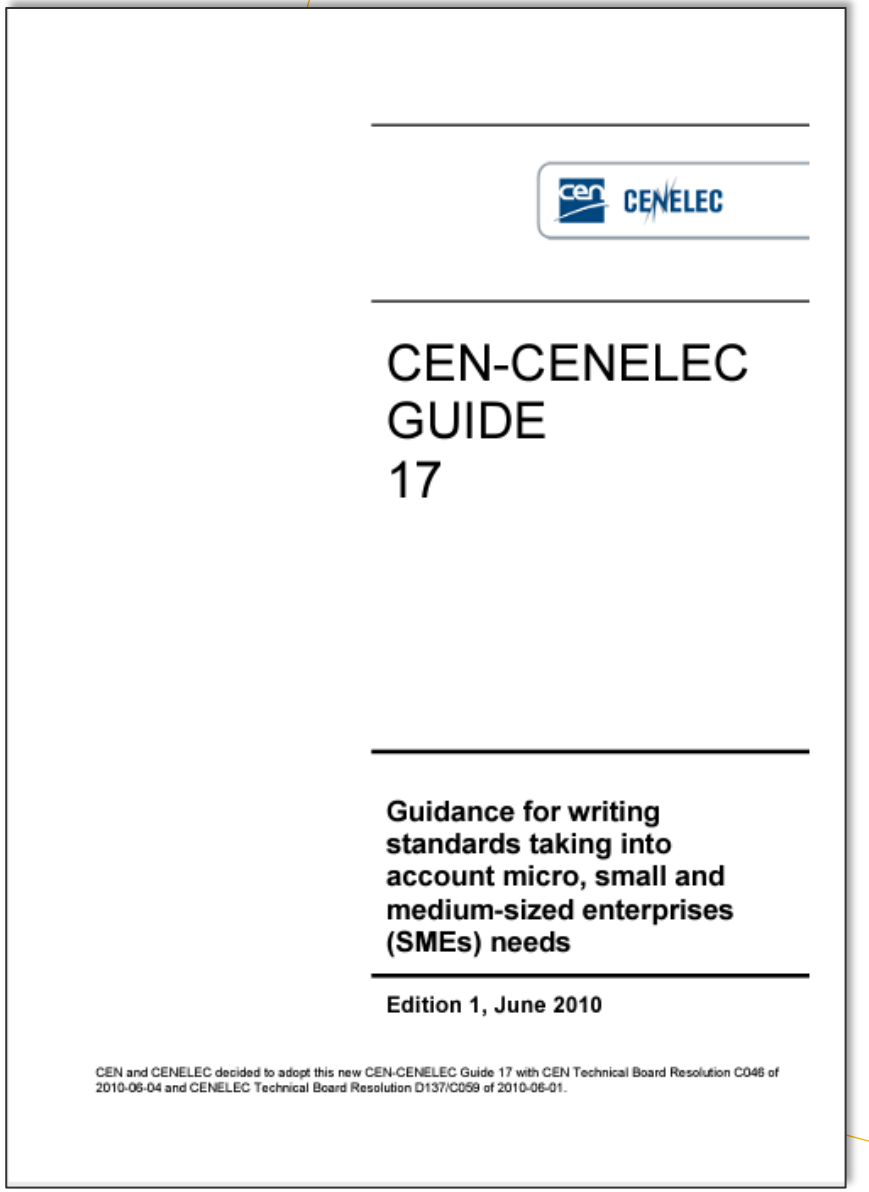
- Brochures:
  - Why standards matter and how to get involved
  - Practical guide for SMEs on Conformity assessment and standards

- Guides for SMEs:
  - SME Guide on Information Security Controls
  - SME Guide on Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT)
  - Guide on blockchain and distributed ledger technology
  - SME Guide - Navigating contradictory standards for Construction

Some useful tools to help consider SME needs

Guidance for writing standards taking into account SME needs

- CEN-CENELEC Guide 17
- Also adopted by ISO and IEC
- Available in different languages: https://bit.ly/3XEXXUj



CEN CENELEC

CEN-CENELEC
GUIDE
17

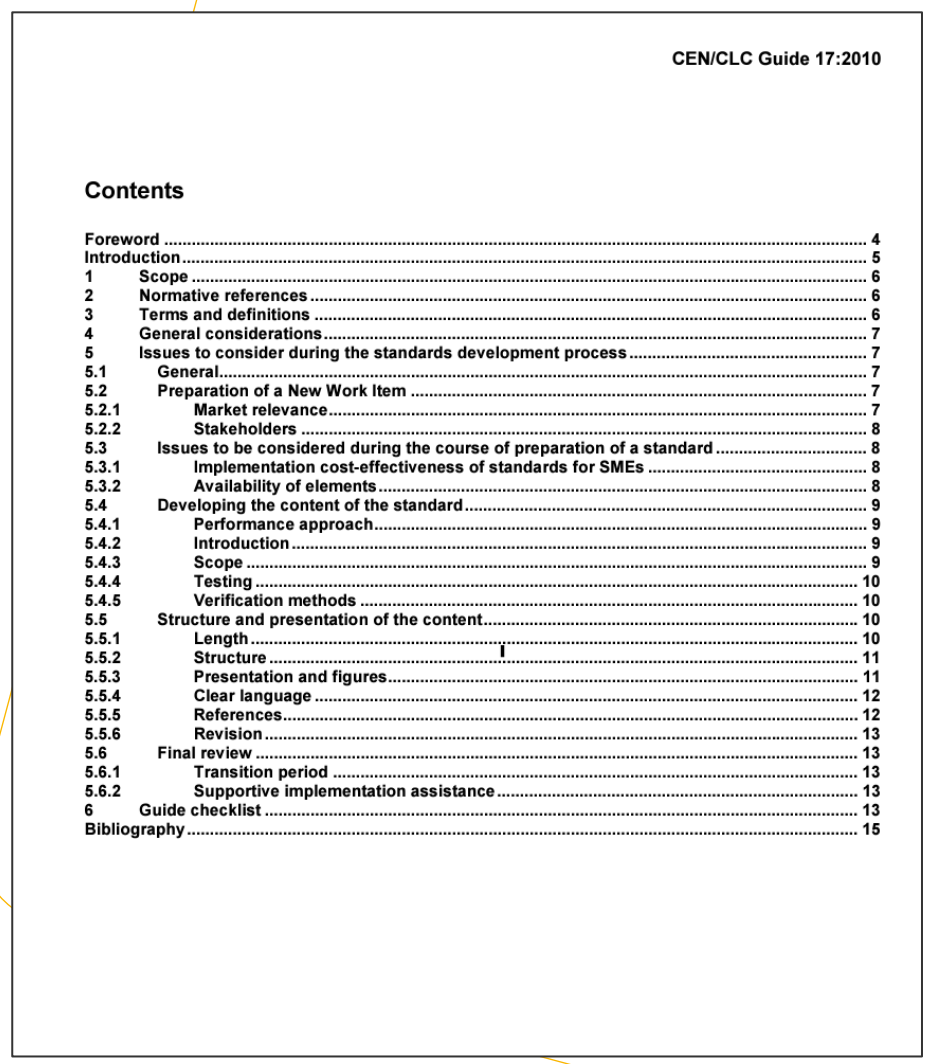
Guidance for writing standards taking into account micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) needs

Edition 1, June 2010

CEN and CENELEC decided to adopt this new CEN-CENELEC Guide 17 with CEN Technical Board Resolution C046 of 2010-06-04 and CENELEC Technical Board Resolution D137/C059 of 2010-06-01.

Content of Guide 17

- Guidance to writers of standars on relevant issues to consider when drafting standards to avoid exclusion of SMEs from the market and distortion of fair competition
- Guidance relevant to all those involved in standardisation activities at all levels (national, European, international, fora…)
- Issues to consider during preparation of a NWI, preparation and development of a standard, structure and presentation of content



CEN/CLC Guide 17:2010

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Guide 17 Checklist

Guide checklist

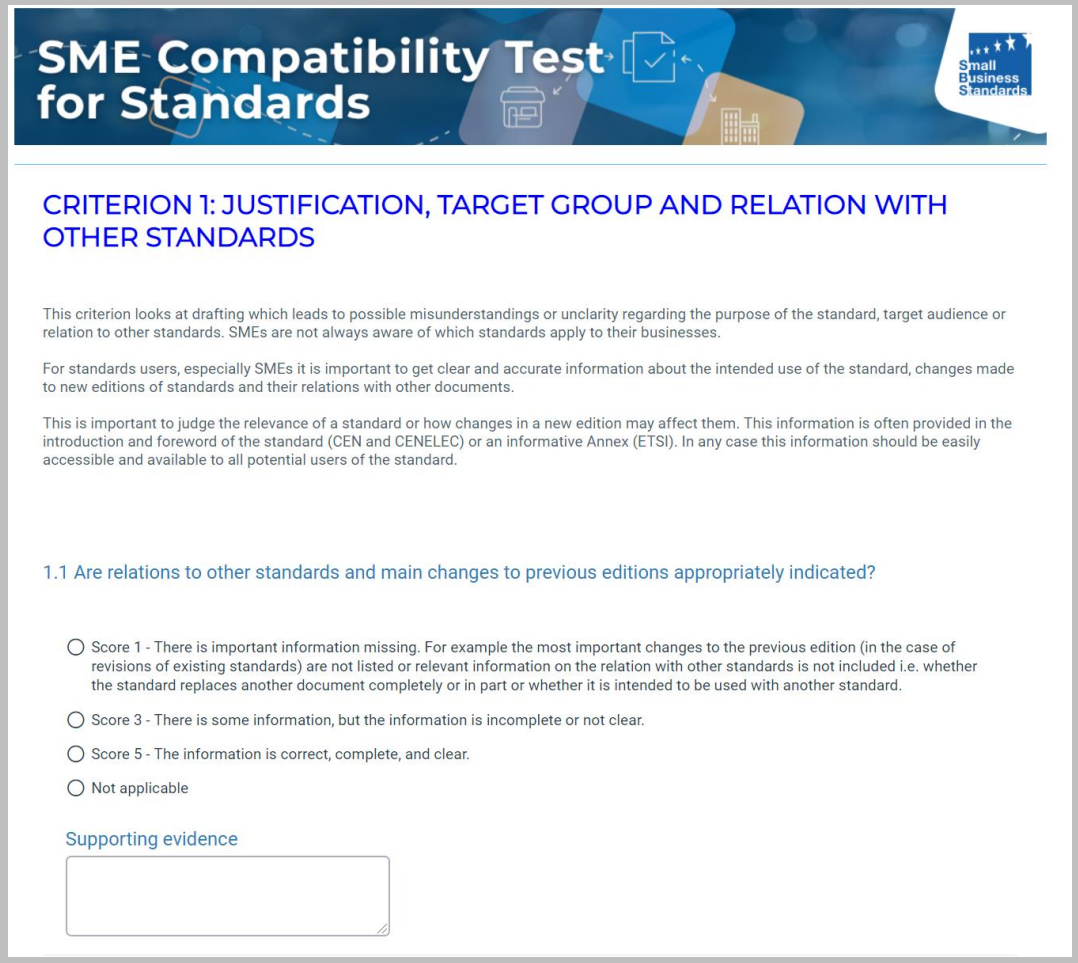
Preparation of the New Work Item	Preparation of a standard	Development of the content	Structure and presentation of the content	Final review
❑ (5.2.1) Have you checked the SME relevance of the standard? ❑ (5.2.2) Have you checked among all the stakeholders if there are special SMEs needs? ❑ (5.2.2) Did you evaluate if SMEs are among the target groups?	❑ (5.3.1) Did you evaluate the costs of investment (technology, equipment, testing)? ❑ (5.3.1) Did you evaluate the cost of training (staff)? ❑ (5.3.1) Did you evaluate the costs of implementation? ❑ (5.3.2) Have you verified that all elements are available?	❑ (5.4.1) If the performance approach is used, is it understandable? ❑ (5.4.2) Have you used descriptive explanations? ❑ (5.4.3) Is the standard precise and complete within its scope? ❑ (5.4.4) Did you avoid strict testing regimes? ❑ (5.4.4) Did you evaluate the cost of testing? ❑ (5.4.5) Have you identified simple and cost-effective ways of verifying conformity with the requirements?	❑ (5.5.1) Is the standard as short as possible? ❑ (5.5.1) If the standard is long, did you evaluate the possibility of dividing it in shorter standards? ❑ (5.5.2) Is the structure of the standard easy to follow? ❑ (5.5.3) Have you included supportive graphs, charts, etc (when possible)? ❑ (5.5.4) Have you used clear language understandable by all expected standard users? ❑ (5.5.5) Did you minimise the number of referenced standards? ❑ (5.5.6) Did you provide clear information on the changes from the previous versions of the standard?	❑ (5.6.1) Have you suggested a transition period reflecting the implications of changes? ❑ (5.6.2) Have you made the evaluation on the need for an implementation manual?

SME Compatibility test

- Provide an overall perception of the SME compatibility of any given standard
- Based on CEN-CENELEC Guide 17
- Rank into broad categories (good, average and poor standards)
- Starting point for possible improvement of standards
- To be updated in line with users' experiences

SME Compatibility test- Composition & use

- Intended for people with some experience in standardisation & the subject area
- Can be applied at any stage of development: Enquiry, Formal vote, finalised standards and on any standard (national, EN, International)
- Online form with questions calculating overall score
  - 11 criteria and 21 questions
  - Related to text of standard & impact/implementation
- Scores: 1,3,5, N/A (non-applicable)
- Different weight of different criteria



SME Compatibility test - Criteria

- Justification, target group and relation with other standards (3 Q.)
- Scope (1 Q.)
- Normative references (1 Q.)
- Market access (1 Q.)
- Relevance of the content (1 Q.)
- Cost (requirements) & conformity assessment (4 Q.)
- Readability (1 Q.)
- Availability of guidance (1 Q.)
- Necessary modifications before applying the standard (3 Q.)
- Availability of external elements for implementation (4 Q.)
- Appropriate transition period (1 Q.)

SME Compatibility test - Result

0 - 33%

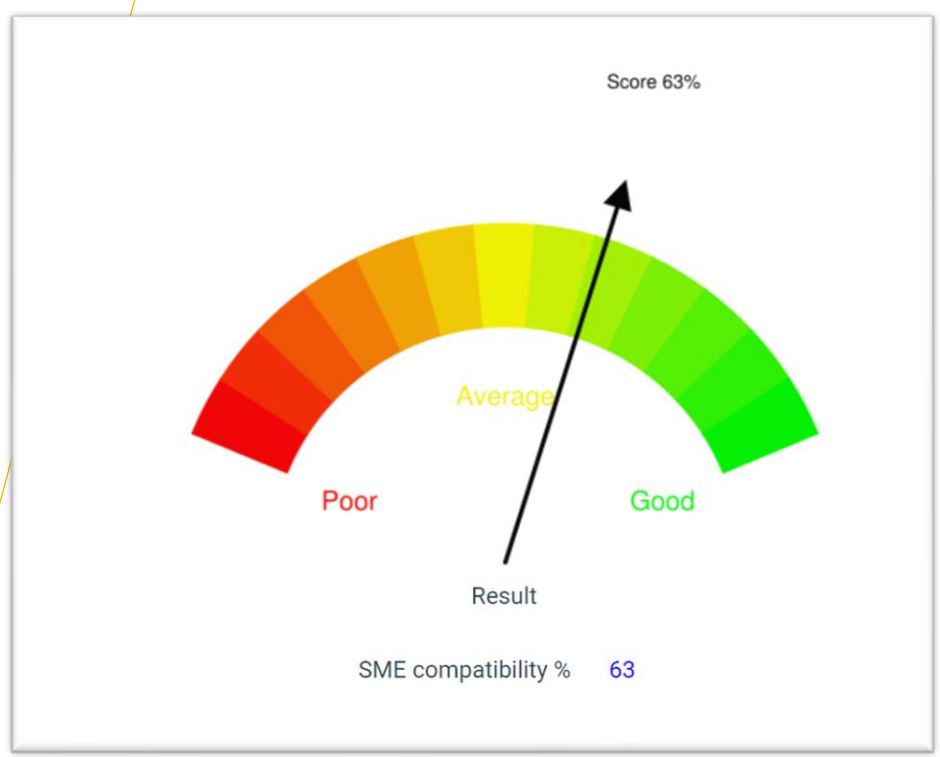
The standard is poor & causes substantial challenges for SMEs. It requires urgent/fundamental improvement.

34 - 66%

The standard is average in relation to compatibility with SME's needs. It should be improved.

67 - 100%

The standard is good & compatible with SMEs' needs in general. It requires little or no change



https://www.sbs-sme.eu/sme-compatibility-test-standards

You can send us feedback: info@sbs-sme.eu

- Small Business Standards objective is to represent European SME interests in European & international standardisation
- Including the user perspective increases likelihood of standards being adopted/implemented
- There are some tools that can help you consider SME needs/perspective when contributing to standardisation (Guide 17, SBS SME Compatibility test)

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