

Environmental and Social Screening Report

of

Shubhakalika Solar PV Mini Grid Subproject, Kalikot



Prepared by:

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Mini Grid Energy Access Project
Alternative Energy Promotion Centre
Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation
Khumaltaar, Lalitpur

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Abbreviation

AEPC Alternative Energy Promotion Centre

ESCOs Energy Service Companies

ESIA Environmental and Social Impact Assessment

ESMF Environmental and Social Safeguard Framework

ESMP Environmental and Social Management Plan

ESS Environmental and Social Screening

E&S Environmental and Social

HHs Households

Km Kilometre

MGEAP Private Sector-Led Mini-Grid Energy Access Project

MoEWRI Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation

NEA Nepal Electricity Authority

OP Operational Policies

PBs Participating Banks

PV Photovoltaic

RAP Resettlement Action Plan

RM Rural Municipality

VCDP Vulnerable Community Development Plan

WB The World Bank

Executive Summary

Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC), the apex government body under the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation (MoEWRI), has been implementing the Private Sector-Led Mini-Grid Energy Access Project (MGEAP) since June 2019 with support from the World Bank. The objective of the MGEAP is to increase electricity access and delivery from renewable energy mini-grids (solar, hydro, wind, and hybrid) by mobilizing private Energy Service Companies (ESCOs).

Chankeli Enegry Pvt Ltd., an ESCO for Shubhakalaika Solar Mini Grid Subproject has expressed an interest for the installation of solar mini grid of 150 kWp capacity to meet energy demand of anchor load of NTC tower, health posts, school, entrepreneurs and households situated at Ward No. 4 & 5 of Shubhakalika Rural Municipality. Therefore, Environmental and Social Safeguard team of the MGEAP has conducted Environmental and Social Screening (ESS) of the proposed subproject on February 4 and 5, 2020 as mandated by the Environmental and Social Safeguard Framework (ESMF) for MGEAP. Not any major environmental and social issues have been observed during the field observation of solar panel installation site, powerhouse construction site and potential load centre except the requirement to build access road and ensure the stability of the land. Consultation with community people and meeting with the representatives of local government revealed that the electricity demand is high in the proposed subproject area as they rely only on solar home system for lighting purpose.

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1 Background

Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC) is the apex government body under the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation (MoEWRI), established to promote the use of alternative/renewable energy technology to meet the energy needs in Nepal. The Private Sector-Led Mini-Grid Energy Access Project, supported by the World Bank, has been implemented by AEPC from June 2019. The objective of the program is to increase electricity access and delivery from renewable energy mini-grids (solar, hydro, wind, and hybrid) by mobilizing private Energy Service Companies (ESCOs). The project will deliver financing support to ESCOs to facilitate financial closure and enhance financial viability of the subprojects, provided to ESCOs in the form of loans through participating Banks (PBs), ESCOs to facilitate financial closure and enhance financial viability of the subprojects. The loans will be channelized through commercial class "A" bank of ESCO's choice, shall provide loans

Chankeli Enegry Pvt Ltd., an ESCO for Shubhakalaika Solar Mini Grid Subproject has expressed an interest for the installation of solar mini grid of 150 kWp capacity to meet energy demand of anchor load of NTC tower, health posts, FM station, school, entrepreneurs and households situated at Ward No. 4 & 5 of Shubhakalika Rural Municipality, Kalikot district, Karnali Province. Therefore, Environmental and Social Safeguard team of the MGEAP has conducted Environmental and Social Screening (ESS) of the proposed subproject on February 4 and 5, 2020 as mandated by the Environmental and Social Safeguard Framework (ESMF) for MGEAP. ESMF provides the guidance on the level of study required to address the potential environmental and social (E&S) risks and impact, and specifies the process for managing such risks and impacts based on regulatory framework of the Government of Nepal (GoN) and Operational Policies (OPs) of the World Bank.

2 Shubhakalika Solar PV Mini Grid Subproject

The proposed subproject of **Shubhakalika Solar Mini Grid** is located in Shubhakalika Rural Municipality-4 of Kalikot district, which is approximately 7 km away west from the Sereghat of Karnali Highway. It is located at latitude 29° 6′ 33.82″ N and longitude 81° 37′ 47.16 E with slopes facing towards north & east. There are 8 wards in Shubhakalika Rural Municipality and it intends to electrify all the households (HHs) of Ward no. 4 & 5 which contains approximately 531 HHs. Access to electricity and reliability of affordable electricity is one of the key constraints for development of this area. As there is no national grid power supply, people are using solar home

systems only for lighting and mobile charging purpose. NTC tower, RM Office, Health post, school, FM Station, internet services, small scale enterprises, eateries and community people are facing trouble due to shortage of electricity.



Figure 1: Google Map of the proposed subproject location

3 Objective of Environmental and Social Screening

The ESMF of AEPC/MGEAP has provisioned to conduct Environmental and Social screening of each subproject and categorize environmental and social risk of the subproject based on the screening. The objectives of Screenings are:

- To determine whether the proposed subprojects are likely to have potential negative environmental and social impacts.
- To establish the level of environmental/social assessment required (such as preparation of safeguard document like ESIA, ESMP, RAP and VCDP etc).
- To identify the need to obtain any regulatory clearances (such as approval for felling of trees).
- To assess if the proposed site and activities meet the eligibility criteria.

- To help ESCOs, PBs to understand environmental and social issues related to the subprojects before they are considered for implementation.
- To assist in the decision-making process.

4 Methodology

The ESMF screening checklist annexed in the ESMF was used for information collection. Community consultation was conducted in presence of the representatives of Rural Municipality Office, Ward Offices, Schools and Health Post and local people of Ward no. 4 & 5 of Shubhakalika Rural Municipality. Moreover, community people were informally talked to get their individual opinion and information on the proposed subproject.

5 Screening Findings

5.1 Environmental Issues:

Not any sensitive issues are identified at the proposed site as well as immediate vicinity of the site. Though the Kuldev community forest is in 100 m distance, the subproject will not have any impact in the forest and species in the forest. The Tila Karnali River is located in more than 1.5 Km Arial distance from the proposed subproject site.

5.2 Social Issues:

Not any households are located on the proposed land and nearby area. The nearby settlement is Chaulagain Tole located in approx. 150 m distance. As the public land left barren villagers are using the proposed land for grazing animals. The villagers who resides adjacent to the subproject area rear cattle like cow, oxen, goats and buffalos. Villagers take their cattle to the proposed subproject site for grazing just due to availability of open space. Therefore, during the consultation villagers informed that they have alternate land for grazing animal, which is close to their village.

5.3 Permits/Clearance Required:

Letter from the Shubhakalika Rural Municipality should be obtained for approval of the implementation of the subproject. In addition, Letter from the RM should be obtained for the use of stones extracted from the proposed land (proposed land has rocks/stones which need to be

extracted) during <u>land development</u> for the subproject itself. Moreover, no objection letter from the community forest group should be obtained to ensure any future conflict.

The potential stakeholders of the subproject are Rural Municipality, School, Community Forest, Health Post and Villagers who reside adjacent to the proposed subproject site.

5.4 Land Use:

The proposed land is Barren land and only dry grass has been observed. According to local people, it is being used for grazing just due to availability of open space.

5.5 Land Ownership:

The proposed land is owned by the local government. The Shubhakalika Rural Municipality has the ownership of the land.

The proposed site can be reached from Sereghat, Karnali Highway. Though approximately 7 km earthen road (motorable) has been opend recently, vehicle can not be used due to landslide at many spots. Then, approx. 700-800 meter foot trail can be used to reach the subproject site. Thus, ESCO need to either construct new access road or use human resources (or other means) to deliver the construction materials to the site.

5.6 Any sensitive area:

Not any significant physical cultural site and protected site observed in the immediate vicinity of the subproject. Moreover, not any habitat for known endangered, rare, protected or special species are identified.

- **5.7 Need for VCDP:** There is no need to prepare VCDP.
- **5.8** Need for RAP: There is no need to prepare RAP.
- **5.9 Need for IEE or EIA:** The subproject does not fall under the thresholds mentioned in Schedule 1 & 2 of *Environmental Protection Rules 1997*. Thus, no need to prepare IEE or EIA.
- **5.10** Need for any special study: As the land needed for solar array and powerhouse need to be developed, the ESCO (Chankheli Energy Pvt Ltd.) is responsible to carry out the study on

slope stability and submit the necessary study details executed during the land development at the time of submitting the detail feasibility report.

6 Risk Categorization

The environmental and social impact envisaged from the construction activity of solar mini grid in the proposed subproject area is minimal or low and no significant adverse impact is foreseen. Thus the subproject can be categorized as Low Risk Subproject.

Category - Low Risk Subproject¹

The potential risks associated at the different phases of subproject will be managed by developing detail ESMP and other relevant plans mentioned below.

- Prepare Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) as provisioned in the Project's Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), including the following Plans.
 - o Occupational Health and Safety Plan
 - o Emergency Response Plan
 - o Battery Management Plan
 - o Waste Packaging Materials Management Plan
 - o Spoil Management Plan
 - o Labour Management Plan
- No requirement of any safeguard document as per the Environment Protection Rule 1997 of Government of Nepal

7 Recommendation

• Conduct consultations with the nearby community, relevant stakeholders during detailed feasibility study (DFS) stage.

- As the proposed land for the installation of solar panel/powerhouse is used by community people for grazing, So it is highly recommended to carry out consultation with the users during DFS study.
- As there is only foot trail to reach to the proposed subproject site, the ESCO either need to construct new motorable access road or use human resources (or other means) to deliver the construction materials. During this assessment, ESCO do not need to use private land for the construction of access road. In case if it is required to use private land during the process, it is recommended to take consent (in written) with individuals in presence of

¹ This is an initial risk categorization. Once all the assessments conclude, only then the final risk categorization will be assigned. As private land for access road needs to be acquired, complications can be expected and alter the risk categorization.

individual's family members and local representatives. It is also recommended to ensure that taking land for access road will not affect in their livelihood (or result in economic displacement).

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Date:	Date:

Annex I: Environmental and Social Screening Checklist

The purpose of this checklist is to identify potential environment and social issues related to subproject development, construction and operation.

(A) Subproject Background

1.	Name of proposed subproject	Shubhakalika Mini Grid Subproject, Kalikot (Green Field Subproject)
2.	Location	Shubhakalika Rural Municpality-4, Kalikot
3.	Geographical coordinates	Latitude 29° 6' 33.82" N Longitude 81° 37' 47.16" E
4.	Altitude	1,750 m
5.	Subproject objectives	Electrification
6.	Name of subproject developer (ESCO)	Chankheli Energy Pvt Ltd.
7.	Number of beneficiary households of the subproject	Number of households = 531 (Approx. 3,136 population that comprises of Bhramin/Chhetri/Thakuri and Dalit are going to be benefited from electrification). Apart from households Health Post, Bank, School, NTC Tower, FM station and Internet Tower are potential end users.
8.	Capacity (kWp) of the subproject	150 kWp
9.	Powerhouse area, m ²	Power house: Approximately 120 m ² Panel array: Approximately 2,200 m ²
10.	Length of Transmission and Distribution line (Kilometer/meter)	Approximately 15 Km Transmission and Distribution line will be constructed to electrify the Ward No. 4 & 5 of Shubhakalika Rural Municipality. The nearest NEA grid line is in Ghurase Danda, Dailekha which is approx. 120 Km away from proposed subproject site. However the erection of Pole from NEA can be observed along the Karnali Highway.
11.	Relevant national requirements (assessment, threshold limits etc.)	Not Any as per the <i>Environmental Protection Rule</i> 1997
12.	Project safeguard requirements	As the subproject can be categorized as Low Risk, it seems detail ESMP will be sufficient to manage the E &

S impacts associated with subproject.

Subproject Selection Criteria

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments (In the case select "yes", provide detailed information)
1.	Is there indication of: a. Significant adverse impacts on ecologically sensitive areas ²		✓	The proposed subproject does not lie in ecologically sensitive areas like national parks, conservation area buffer zone, forest, wetland and wildlife reserves etc.
	b. Large-scale resettlement ³		✓	The subproject does not involve in any resettlement
	c. Significant adverse impacts on cultural heritage		√	Not any cultural heritage is present in the subproject and surrounding area.
	d. Subproject in disputed area or territory ⁴		✓	As the proposed land for subproject is public barren land there is no dispute noticed during field.
2.	If yes, can these impacts be eliminated or reduced to acceptable levels through adequate application of mitigation measures?	NA		

(B) Environmental and Social Screening

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments (In the case select "yes", provide detailed information)
Subproject's site				
1.	Define subproject's boundaries(direction, East, West, North & South) and area of influence			Boundaries East: Kuldev Community Forest around 100 meter away from proposed site West: Chaulagain Tol, Shubhakalika

²Significant adverse impacts on ecologically sensitive areas will be determined using international best practice and tools, as well as based on the outcomes of relevant studies within the ESIA.

³ Large-scale resettlement is defined as physical displacement of 100 or more number of Physical displacement would mean relocation/loss of shelter and assets resulting from the acquisition of land that requires the affected persons to move to another location

⁴ Disputed Territory is a disagreement over the possession/control over natural resources such as land, rivers between two or more individuals, communities, RM/Municipalities, Provinces and Nations.

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments (In the case select "yes", provide detailed information)
				North: Shubhakalaika School around 200 meter away from site. South: Public land with community forest around 250 meter away from site. Area of influence Shubhakalika Ward No. 4 & 5
2.	Is the subproject site adjacent to or within any of the following sensitive receptors?			
	 i. Natural habitats and/ or legally protected areas (wetlands, forests, estuary, buffer zones, nature reserves); if yes, is there possibility of a critical habitat present⁵? What are the ranges of endangered or threatened animals/birds/plant species (if known at time of screening)? 		√	The site is located around 100 -250 meter away from community forest area.
	ii. Cultural heritage site (e.g. temple, monastery, mosque)?		✓	Cultural heritage site like temple, monastery and mosque are not observed in immediate vicinity of the proposed subproject area.
	iii. Is the site located on Aesthetically Important Viewpoints ⁶ ?		✓	The site is not important as touristic destination.
	iv. Is the site located near main settlement and trade centres? Description (approximate distance, no. of HH and population, nature and special feature /importance / significance)	*		 Chaulagain Tole and Dalit Tole (75 HHs), Kalikot is the nearest settlement (approximately 150 m) from the power house and solar panel installation site which is one of the load centres. Other major load centres are Thana (96 HHs), Rarakatiya (27HHs), Sundar Gaun (71 HHs), Khate Bada (84 HHs), Adhikari Bada (27 HHs), Uda Gaun(61 HHs) and Karki Tole (15 HHs) Approximately 3,136 population will be benefited from the subproject.

⁵ Critical habitat is defined based on global good practice as a subset of both natural and modified habitat that deserves particular attention. Critical habitat includes areas with high biodiversity value that meet the criteria of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) classification, including habitats of significant importance for required for critically endangered or endangered species as defined by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species; habitats of significant importance for endemic or restricted-range species; habitats supporting globally significant concentrations of migratory species and/or congregatory species; areas with unique assemblages of species or which are associated with key evolutionary processes. Primary Forests or forests of High Conservation Value shall be considered Critical Habitats. This includes HCV forests. HCV areas do not directly correspond with definitions for modified, natural, and critical habitat. The HCV Resource Network, an internationally recognized group, provides informat ion and support on the evolving usage of HCV to ensure a consistent approach. https://www.hcvnetwork.org/.

⁶Aesthetically Important Viewpoints are the places with natural beauty and well known for touristic destination.

s. N		Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments (In the case select "yes", provide detailed information)		
	V.	Fragmentation of habitat of flora and fauna (Avifauna and mammalian fauna)?		✓			
	vi.	Are there any flood prone / river cutting / low lying / areas near or within site? What are challenges and opportunities associated flood/river cutting/low lying areas (if any)?		√	Nearby river is Tila Karnali River, which is in 1500 m arial distance from the proposed site. Due to the distance from the river such challenges are not anticipated.		
	vii.	Are canals and irrigation systems present in direct proximity to subproject site?		✓			
	viii.	Are there any water sources or springs near or within site?		✓	A small seasonal stream runs approx. 200 m from the site.		
	ix.	Is the proposed site located on agricultural land?		✓	The proposed land for solar array & power house is barren public land.		
	x.	Is subproject site accessible round the area or only in dry season? Description of condition of road/track (black top, fair weather etc.) or need to construct new road, total length, nearest road head etc.	✓		Need to walk around 4 hours to reach the proposed site from the point where road is reached. Track opening work is in progress.		
	xi.	Is the proposed site located on area used by Indigenous people		✓			
	xii.	Is the subproject area important for indigenous people from the point of view of communal right and customary practices & beliefs?		✓	From the consultation meeting, it came to know that indigenous people do not reside around the subproject area. Few households of Dalit reside near the proposed site (approximately 150 m).		
	xiii.	Is there any expectation of vulnerable or indigenous people from subproject?		✓	People expressed their interest to get benefit from facilities that could be achieved with the availability of electricity. People of subproject area showed interest to be achieved with the availability of electricity.		
					to know about tariff rate of electricity generated form solar mini grid.		
Pote	Potential Environmental Impacts						
3.	liveliho	ts on natural resources that constitute ods of community (e.g. water resources, grazing or hunting grounds)?		√	The proposed land is rocky barren land. As the public land left barren some of the community people also use it for grazing purpose. If the proposed site is used for solar mini grid there are other public lands available for grazing.		
4.	Disfigu	uration of landscape?		✓			
5.	Is there	e potential for landslide and soil erosion		√	As reported by the community people and the representatives of the local		

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments (In the case select "yes", provide detailed information)	
	impacts? If yes, please provide following information: - Past and present conditions and values (including tentative area to be affected, risky areas) What are challenges and opportunities associated			government. However, detail study should be conducted during DFS.	
6.	with landslides and erosion (if any) Will the subproject cause increase in waste generation? Describe types and expected amount of waste.	✓		Excavation or/and land development waste and material packaging waste might be generated during construction period.	
7.	Will there be forest loss in terms of area (if yes, type of forest)? Will it lead to loss of forest species (provide details of the loss of listed species according to national and international – specifically IUCN - classifications)?		√	Though the community forest is located nearby the proposed location, measures should be taken not to affect forest area and species residing on it.	
8.	Is loss of non-forest species possible? If so, are these listed species (as above)?		✓	Though the community forest is located nearby the proposed location, measures should be taken not to affect non-forest species.	
9.	Creation of barrier for migratory land animal		✓		
10.	Construction of permanent access road near or through forest?		√		
11.	Other potential biodiversity impacts (specify)?		✓		
12.	Loss or destruction of unique or aesthetically valuable land or water forms		√		
13.	Disturbance of large areas due to material quarrying		✓	Approximate quantity of materials will be estimated by DFS	
14.	Availability of local construction materials a) Stone ✓ b) Sand ✓ c) Wood (For door, window and roofing etc.) ✓ d) Wood for Pole X	√			
Labour and working conditions					
15.	Is there availability of labour force (skill & unskilled) in local level for the construction of subproject?	✓		People of subprojects area are using solar home systems for lighting purpose. So, the possibility of skilled human resources availability in the subproject area is very less whereas unskilled labour force is available in local level for construction of	

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments (In the case select "yes", provide detailed information) subproject.
16.	Will there be social conflict in case of workers hired from other region?		✓	Only skilled human resources which are not locally available will be hired from other region. They will be hired for short period only as the construction period is also short (around six months).
17.	Will there be substantial migrant labour (skill & unskilled) required?		✓	Only few migrant labours will be hired for short duration.
Pote	ntial Community and Occupational Health and	Safety	Impac	ts
18.	Are there community health and safety risks due to the transport, storage, and use and/or disposal of materials likely to create physical, chemical and biological hazards?		√	Though the subproject will use batteries to store power in isolation adopting adequate measures, not any potential risk is anticipated. Detail Management of such risks will be included in ESMP prepared for this subproject.
19.	Will the construction works disturb other commercial/community/residential activities?		✓	
20.	Will the subproject create major noise/vibration?		✓	
21.	Will it create dust problem around the sites?	✓		Possibility of creating dust problem during land development
22.	Will it temporarily stop or impact on the water supply and sanitation system?		√	
23.	Any potential impacts to public health via potential water logging and degradation of land and water quality		✓	
24.	Will subproject's construction cause disturbance to the transportation in the subproject's site?		✓	
25.	Will batteries be removed/disposed (lead-acid or nickel-cadmium batteries from emergency lights and other battery-powered or battery-backup items?	✓		Batteries and all the hazardous materials will be used in isolation adopting required measures to manage the risks/impacts associated with it.
26.	Will an emergency generator set or other aboveground storage tank (AST) be installed or removed?	✓		As there is not any means of electricity, generator can be used for power during the installation of subproject.
Pote	ntial Social Impacts			
27.	Permanent land acquisition		✓	Public land will be used.
28.	Temporary land acquisition		✓	
29.	Type of land			The proposed land for Solar Array and powerhouse is barren public land. There

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments (In the case select "yes", provide detailed information)
	Private land Public land Government land Leasehold land			is land agreement done by ESCO and Rural Municipality for the construction of subproject.
	Type of land procurement Voluntary donation Involuntary acquisition Leased Land ✓ Negotiation(Willing buyer & willing seller)		√	Leased the land with Rural Municipality. ESCO had already done agreement with Rural Municipality for the use of land.
31.	Loss of productive land		✓	
32.	Involuntary land taking resulting in loss of income, livelihood, sources of livelihood, loss of access to common property resources and/or private residential and/or property resources		✓	
33.	Adverse impact on non-title holders including loss of shelter and livelihood		✓	
34.	Is there any household needed to be relocated?		√	Not any household situation in the proposed land
35.	Will subproject activities have adverse impact on school, drinking water supply system, and other facilities?		✓	
36.	Will subproject need to use existing or open new access roads? What will be the impacts of increased traffic on communities?			Need to open new access road. Not any impact anticipated of traffic as it will be used only to transport equipment, which will only be in small scale.
37.	Will subproject's construction cause any damage to the existing local roads system?		√	Not any road system available.
38.	Adverse impact to women including economic and safety concerns		✓	
39.	Possible conflicts with and/or disruption to local communities		√	
40.	Significant issues raised by the stakeholders during consultation	✓		 Households as well as commercial entities demanded for reliable source of electricity. Community was keen to know about tariff rate that they have to pay after electrified their households.
Clim	nate Benefits			
41.	Will subproject activities contribute in the	✓		Minimize the use of firewood for

S. N	Screening Questions	Yes	No	Comments (In the case select "yes", provide detailed information)
	reduction of GHG emissions? Description on the activities that contributes for the reduction of GHG emission			cooking and heating purpose
42.	Is there any NGO or INGO working on environment related activities		✓	

Annex II: Pictorial Observation





The proposed site is located at Shubhakalika Rural Municipality Ward No.4. The land is public and left barren. The ESCO has already taken the proposed land on lease with Rural Municipality for the construction and installation of solar mini grid.



Consultation meeting with the community and representative of local government

Total Number of Participant: 35 (Male: 89% and Female: 11%; Brahmin/Chettri/Thakuri: 54%, Ethin/Indigenous People: 6% and Dalit: 40%)

Representatives of local government, anchor such as hotels, hospital, operator and developer of current solar mini grid plant,

(Minute of the meeting is attached in Annex III)



The proposed load centre of the Shubhakalika subproject. Households of Dalit are also the proposed as load centre of the subproject. Nearest NEA Grid Point =Gurase Danda, Dailekh (125 Km)

Potential Anchor = NTC Tower, FM Station, Health Post, Local Hospital, Schools, metal workshop and Local Eateries etc.

Annex III: Meeting Minute

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of all All को मेराम कार	118
- र्रि भी न्यन वहादर क्राइ	11-8
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