



INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL
SYSTEMS BIOLOGY

GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVITY PLAN 2024-2029

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1. Introduction

Gender equality constitutes a fundamental value of humanity, essential to peace and social justice. As a principle established in international and European human rights instruments a goal for Human Development highlighted in the 2030 Agenda (5: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) gender equality emerges (...), gender equality emerges as a strategic guiding principle for the development and progress of societies at a global scale.

Although gender inequalities have gradually diminished in recent decades, with more equitable access to education and career choices for girls and women, they endure in many other ways, in work-family balance, career progression, access to leadership, and salary equity.

Embracing inclusivity and diversity is crucial for creating thriving communities where everyone feels valued and respected. By acknowledging and honouring differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and abilities, inclusive practices ensure equitable access to opportunities, resources, and representation for all individuals. When diverse voices are empowered, innovation thrives, and collective progress becomes achievable. Therefore, promoting inclusivity and diversity is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic investment in building a more harmonious and equitable world.

Recently created, with its bylaws published in February 2024, the NOVA Institute for Medical Systems Biology (NIMSB) aims to become a reference in biomedical research in the coming years. The excellence in research that NIMSB aspires will only be achieved through a strong human resources strategy and an attractive, collaborative and supportive work environment that will prime through Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, allowing all individuals to thrive.

This document constitutes NIMSB’s commitment to gender equality and includes a set of measures aimed at addressing that commitment while recognizing that this is an ongoing task that must be continuously improved.

2. Framework – Policies and guidelines

Established as a multidisciplinary strategic platform of NOVA University Lisbon (NOVA), NIMSB is the result of a partnership between NOVA and the Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine, Berlin, Germany, funded by the European Research Executive Agency (REA) through the Horizon Europe - Teaming for Excellence program, with the support of the Portuguese Government and the Oeiras Municipality.

Hence, as an integral part of NOVA, NIMSB adopts the “NOVA’s Gender Equality Plan 2021-2025” (NOVA GEP)¹, **comprising adjustments to the unique context of NIMSB as an R&D institution.**

¹ - Gender Equality Plan, 2021-2025, NOVA University, 2021

NOVA's GEP, following SPEAR guidelines², adheres to the international and national frameworks that address gender-based inequalities and discrimination, namely the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda³, the European Union Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025⁴ and, at a national level, the Portuguese National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030 "Portugal+Igual" (ENIND)⁵. Within this framework, we identify cross-cutting measures to address and eliminate gender-based discrimination and promote equal opportunities for women and men, and inclusion of all individuals in general, that can be briefly summarize, as follows:

- i. foster a culture of gender equality and promote an unbiased social environments;
- ii. reducing gender-based inequalities and discrimination on employment;
- iii. encouraging equal opportunities in leadership and decision making;
- iv. eliminate gender pay gap;
- v. promote the reconciliation of professional, family and personal life;
- vi. ensure equal access to training and education;
- vii. combatting stigma and discrimination based on gender, disabilities, and age;
- viii. promote inclusive and future-oriented scientific and technological development;
- ix. combat gender-based violence and harassment.

Additionally, the European Commission emphasizes its commitment to gender equality in research and innovation, designating it a pivotal cross-cutting priority, enhanced through provisions implemented by REA. Specifically, the Horizon Europe programme for research and innovation urges research projects to adopt a gender-sensitive approach, by promoting equal opportunities for researchers of all genders, considering gender perspectives in research content, and addressing gender-based challenges in scientific careers, aiming to rectify historical gender imbalance.

² - Supporting and Implementing Plans for Gender Equality in Academia and Research (SPEAR). NOVA Gender Equality Plan (GEP) was developed with the financial support of SPEAR project. Funded by the European's Union H2020 Research and Innovation Programme, Grant Agreement No 824544 (H2020-SwafS-2018-2020).

³ - Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, United Nations 2015

⁴ - A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, European Commission 2020

⁵ - National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030 - "Portugal + Equal" (ENIND 2018-2030)

3. Gender Equality Plan of NOVA University Lisbon (NOVA's GEP)

Since the NIMSB does not have yet the necessary critical mass to conduct gender-based diagnostics, thus making it impossible to initiate a comprehensive data collection, we provide below a gender-based overview of the selected research data coming from NOVA's GEP, in 2017 and 2019, complemented with recent updates from 2022 and 2023.

It can be asserted that NOVA's scientific community, constituting a quarter of the total university staff, maintains the gender balance observed during the period from 2017 to 2019, with a marginal increase in the representation of women. Specifically, there was a slight increase from 58%-59% to 60%-61% in the years 2022-2023.

In terms of competitive R&D projects approved for funding in 2017 and 2019, the majority of Principal Investigators were women, with 109 projects (53%) approved, while men had 98 projects (47%). However, during the period of 2022 and 2023, although the total number of approved projects decreased, there was a notable increase in the percentage of women's projects approved, reaching 58%.

One of the most competitive calls for funding in Europe is the European Research Council (ERC) Grants. Since 2007, NOVA has been awarded 34 ERC Grants, with the majority being awarded to women researchers – 23 in total, representing 68% of the recipients.

NIMSB, as NOVA's Center of Excellence in Systems Biology and Precision Medicine, aims for these and other indicators to produce similar results and, therefore, intends to implement an effective policy to promote gender equality through a comprehensive and systematic approach.

4. Commitment on Gender Equality/Equal Opportunities

NIMSB complies with EU framework strategy and policies for gender under the Horizon Europe Program and NOVA's GEP, by addressing gender equality as a key standard for an inclusive research and innovation environment.

As part of its implementation strategy, the NIMSB affirms its commitment to create and develop an inclusive organizational culture based on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Recognizing these values as fundamental pillars for promoting excellence in Scientific Research, NIMSB is engaged in the holistic development of all collaborators, and compromises to create the conditions that will allow them to reach their professional and personal fulfilment without obstacles regarding gender, culture, nationality, religion, physical, psychological or sexual orientation differences.

NIMSB's strategy for Gender Equality/Equal Opportunities (GE/EO) comprehends an approach on three axes:



Axis 1- Organizational structure and management, aiming to:

- Implement and monitoring GE/EO dimension throughout organization levels;
- Develop GE/EO dimension on HR policies encompassing recruitment, management, and career progression;
- Promote gender balance in leadership and decision-making.

Axis 2 - Organizational culture and communication, aiming to:

- Implement a GE/EO sensitive organisational culture and communication strategy;
- Promote work-life balance;
- Prevent gender-based violence, discriminatory behaviour, and sexual harassment.

Axis 3 – Research, Education and Training, aiming to:

- Integrate GE/EO dimension into education and training;
- Promote individual progression through comprehensive training and education;
- Incorporate gender dimension into research and teaching content.

By addressing these three axes, NIMSB aims to create a comprehensive and inclusive approach to Gender Equality within its organizational framework to promote equal opportunities (EO) between men and women, and a culture of respect for gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

Lisbon, 28th February 2024

Principal Investigator,

António Jacinto, Ph.D.



5. NIMSB Gender Equality and Integration Plan - Strategic Axis Planning and Monitorization

The singularity of NIMSB, as a recently created R&D institute, enforces at this early stage of its implementation a more generalist monitorization plan. It establishes goals, actions and indicators for assessment accordingly to NIMSB design and the mission statement on GE/EO. However, its implementation will require to assess its applicability to NIMSB development over the period of operationalization of this Gender Equality Plan, remaining an open, flexible, and ongoing task.

1. Organizational Structure and Management

Measures	Description /Goals	Actions	Target groups	People Involved	Monitorization and Implementation Assessment		
					Timeline	Indicators	status
Structural Integration of GE/EO	Creation of a mission statement and inclusion of GE/EO in strategic governance and policies	Develop and implement of Gender Equality Plan (GEP)	Stakeholders Researchers	Board of Directors (BoD) Heads of Departments/ Technologic Platforms NGE Group	2024-29	GEP in place	Yes / No
		Include GE dimension as a regular topic of discussion in governance boards	Technical & administrative Staff			Nr. of strategic documents created including GE/EO dimension	Yes / No
			MSc and PhD students			Annual meeting with BoD for GE strategy adjustment and implementation	Yes / No
	Make a public commitment of the institution strategy and policies to GE/EO	Disseminate GE/EO commitment through NIMSB public website, social media and throughout internal channels	Stakeholders Researchers Technical & administrative Staff MSc and PhD	BoD Heads of Departments/ Technologic Platforms NGE Group	2024-29	GEP published, communicated externally (updated as necessary)	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of communications on GE/EO policies through internal	Yes / No /ongoing



			students			channels		
	Creation of a GE/EO office for implementation and monitoring of GE/EO measures	Establish a NIMSB GE working group (NGE) and appoint a GE officer, to oversee and manage all topics related	Researchers Technical & administrative Staff	BoD Heads of Departments/ Technologic Platforms NGE Group	2024-29	NGE and GE officer appointment	Yes / No	
		Ensure senior management and representatives of all areas	MSc & PhD students			NGE bi-annual meetings, for strategy adjustment and implementation, including senior and junior representatives of Institutional areas	Yes / No /ongoing	
		Allocate annually budget for GE activities and dedicated human resources				2024-29	Amount and type of funding	Yes / No /ongoing
							Nr of HR allocated to GE activities, by sex, professional position and Institutional area	
Promote GE/EO in governance and management structure	Encourage and foster gender-equal composition of all bodies	Promote GE in bodies, teams, committees, student groups, and others nomination, at least 40% of the underrepresented gender ⁶	Boards Researchers Technical & administrative Staff MSc & PhD students	BoD NGE group Heads of Departments / Technologic Platforms	2024-29	Nr of documents defining goals and guidelines for bodies/teams/committees' nomination, by type and institutional area.	Yes / No /ongoing	
						Nr and type of bodies/ teams, committees, etc. in compliance		
		Training of senior staff for GE dimension inclusion on teams' composition				Nr of training sessions for senior staff on teams' composition		
						Nr of attendees, by sex, by institutional area, by		

⁶ Accordingly with NOVA's GEP and based on the provisions laid on Law 26/2019 of March 28th



						professional position	
	Promote equality and diversity in leadership positions	Define metrics and mechanisms for implementation and assessment			2024-29	Nr of employees in leadership positions by sex, professional position, institutional area	
						Create goals for progression and assessment, for leading positions	
	Incorporate gender dimension into standard management procedures				2024-29	Nr of documents defining goals and procedures for GE dimension in management (ex. (onboarding form, booking systems/ facilities)	Yes / No /ongoing
Nr of reports disaggregated by defined indicators (ex. sex, nationality, institutional area, professional position, ...)							
Implement GE/EO dimension on HR policies	Ensure HR recruitment and selection processes are based on the principle of equality and non-discrimination according to gender	Establish goals and guidelines for selecting and recruiting HR based on GE and non-discrimination	Researchers Technical & administrative Staff	BoD NGE group HR department	2024-29	Nr of documents defining goals and procedures on recruitment processes, inc. gender dimension	Yes / No /ongoing
		Encourage application for institutional areas in which are gender under-represented (by stating institutional GE compliance on job announcements and actively send invitations for applications submission)				Nr of job announcements with institutional gender compliance	
						Nr of invitations for applications submission	
		Monitor and assess recruitment and selection procedures regularly, for	BoD Researchers Technical &	BoD NGE group	2024-29	Revise, every two-year recruitment procedure, for compliance	Yes / No /ongoing



		adjustments	administrative Staff	HR department		Nr of documents/procedures inc. gender dimension on HR system	
		Nr of newcomers by position, by sex, professional position, institutional area					
		Promote gender balance in selection teams, at least 40% of the under-represented sex			2024-29	Nr of documents establishing goals/guidelines for selection team appointment	Yes / No /ongoing
		Nr of selection teams in compliance, by institutional area					
		Training selection teams to overcome biases based on gender stereotypes				Nr of training sessions selection teams members on gender biases	Yes / No /ongoing
		Nr of attendees, by sex, by institutional area, by professional position					
	Improve and include GE/EO dimension on career progression, support and retention	Establish and monitor transparent career promotion plan	Researchers Technical & administrative Staff	BoD NGE group HR department	2024-29	Nr of documents establishing goals /guidelines for career progression and retention GE	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of career progressions by sex, by institutional area	
		Mentoring and empowering action plan for under-represented gender and junior employees	Researchers Technical & administrative Staff	BoD NGE group HR department Heads of Departments / Technologic Platforms		Nr of documents establishing goals /guidelines for career mentoring/ counselling programs, for both underrepresented gender and junior researchers/staff	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of Mentorships, by sex, institutional area	



		Consider family or cultural career-breaks in career progression and access to resources				Nr of training sessions on empowerment and leadership	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of attendees, by sex, by institutional area, by professional position	
						Nr of career break, by motive, by sex, by institutional area	
	Implement equal salary policy	Assure that salaries are not determined by gender				Annually collect data on salary, by sex, by institutional area, by professional position	Yes / No /ongoing

2. Organizational culture and communication

Measure	Description /Goals	Actions	Target groups	People Involved	Monitorization and Implementation Assessment		
					Timeline	Indicators	status
Raising awareness of GE/EO	Implement the collection and reporting of GE data	Institutional reporting with gender disaggregated data (when applicable), and make it available throughout the institution and externally (when applicable)	Stakeholders Researchers Technical & Administrative staff MSc & PhD students	BoD NGE group Heads of Departments / Technologic Platforms Communication office	2024-29	Nr of documents/information with goals/guidelines for GE data collection (metrics), by institutional areas	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of reports (public and Internal) including indicators disaggregated by sex, by institutional area	
	Develop and implement a strategy for institutional	Elaboration of annual action plan for GE awareness, both internal and externally	Researchers Technical & administrative Staff	BoD NGE group communication	2024-29	Nr of reports (public and Internal) including indicators disaggregated by sex, by institutional area	Yes / No /ongoing



	GE/EO dissemination and communication		MSc & PhD students	office		Nr of internal actions accomplished	
						Nr of external actions accomplished	
		Promote participation of the under-represented gender on internal and external communication (role model approach)	Researchers Technical & administrative Staff MSc & PhD students	BoD NGE group communication office	2024-29	Nr of internal and external communications, by sex	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of outreach activities, by sex	
		Make available information about GE/EO institutional standards for all employees, collaborators and students	Researchers Technical & administrative Staff MSc & PhD students	BoD NGE group communication office		Nr of documents on GE/EO Institutional standards on internal communications (intranet, onboarding, etc.)	Yes / No /ongoing
						Include Information on onboarding package	
						Nr of information sessions for GE awareness and sensibility, by position, including leaderships	
						Nr of attendees to Information sessions, by sex, by institutional area, by position	
Create a sustainable GE/EO dimension in institutional culture	Implement the use of gender-neutral language throughout the institution	Implement gender-neutral language inclusion on external and internal communication.	Boards Researchers Technical & Administrative staff	BoD NGE group Heads of Departments / Technologic Platforms	2024-29	Nr of documents with goals / guidelines on gender-neutral language	Yes / No /ongoing
		Make available information and on training on gender-inclusive language	MSc & PhD students		2024-29	Nr of information sessions on gender-inclusive language	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of training sessions on	



		applicability				gender-neutral language	
						Nr of attendees, by sex, by institutional area, by professional position	
	Ensure sustained and comprehensive internal knowledge on GE/EO	Include GE/EO institutional standards and policies on onboarding package				Nr of newcomers, by sex, institutional area	
Work-life balance and well-being	Implement policy to normalize conditions for the reconciliation between work, family life and well-being	Dissemination and sensibilization on the importance of reconciling work-life and well-being, particularly for leadership positions.	Boards Researchers Technical & Administrative staff MSc & PhD students	BoD NGE group HR Department	2024-29	Nr. of information sessions/ workshops/ seminars on work-life balance and well-being, by sex, professional position, institutional area	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of attendees, by sex, by institutional area, by professional position	
	Establish a workplace culture that normalizes the importance of work-life balance for everyone	Implement and monitor reasonable working hours	Boards Researchers Technical & Administrative staff MSc & PhD students	BoD NGE group HR Department	2024-29	Annual assessment of working hours by sex, professional position, institutional area	Yes / No /ongoing
		Promote flexible working hours and workplaces.				Nr of employees in different schedules and working places schemes	
		Encourage the schedule of key meetings to core hours to enable attendance by those with family responsibilities				Nr of documents establishing goals/guidelines for meetings schedules, by institutional area	
	Implement measures for care	Include parental leave and family assistance in HR	Boards	BoD	2024-29	Nr of parental absences by sex, institutional area, professional	Yes / No



	& family life and well-being	management procedures	Researchers Technical & Administrative staff MSc & PhD students	NGE group Heads of Departments / Technologic Platforms HR Department		position	/ongoing
		Promote alternative schedules to reconcile work and family support absences, involve senior staff and leadership				Nr of employees adhering to alternative schedules for familial absences (parental, support to elderly, familiar sickness, etc.), by sex, by institutional area, by professional position	
		Promote work in teams, to cover family support absences				Nr of institutional areas/position, where there are teams in place, by sex, by institutional area	
		Entitlement to time off from work or reduction of working hours for breastfeeding (reduction of 2h/day)				Nr of employees who benefited from this scheme (among those who recently became mothers)	
		Make available support facilities for parenthood and well-being	Boards Researchers Technical & Administrative staff MSc & PhD students	BoD NGE group HR Department	2024-29	Ensure dedicated space for lactation	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of communications (internal channels) on wellbeing activities (sports, cultural, and others) within the university and through institutional partnerships.	
						Nr of employees that took advantage of this benefits, by sex, by institutional area, by professional position (enquiry)	
Equal treatment & protection against discriminati	Promote equality in working conditions	Clearly communicate institutional standards on workers' rights and responsibilities	Boards Researchers Technical & Administrative	BoD NGE group Heads of Departments / Technologic	2024-29	Nr of documents/ communications establishing goals/guidelines for workers' rights and responsibilities (ex. onboarding, intranet)	Yes / No /ongoing



on and harassment			staff MSc & PhD students	Platforms HR Department		Nr of onboarding processes, by sex, position	
		Implement equal accessibility to institutional resources (infrastructure, training, time schedules and benefits schemes, etc)				Assess, every two-year (enquiry), on equal accessibilities to resources (infrastructure, training, flexible schedules, benefits schemes, internal funding schemes, etc.)	
						Nr of replies, by sex, by institutional area, by position	
	Promote awareness and addressing discrimination and harassment	Define clear goals and guidelines for awareness and prevention and to address discrimination and harassment.	Boards Researchers Technical & Administrative staff MSc & PhD students	BoD NGE group Heads of Departments / Technologic Platforms	2024-29	Nr of documents/ communications establishing goals/guidelines for awareness, prevention and to address discrimination and harassment. (ex. onboarding, intranet), by channel	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of onboarding processes, by sex, professional position	
						Nr of communication in internal channels	
		Information and training on identification and how to report discrimination and harassment	Boards Researchers Technical & Administrative staff MSc & PhD students	BoD NGE group Heads of Departments / Technologic Platforms	2024-29	Nr of sessions for identification and report on discrimination and harassment	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of information sessions	
						Nr of training sessions, for leadership	
						Nr of attendees, by sex, by institutional area, by professional position	



	Develop a strategy to address physical, psychological or sexual harassment prevention	Define goals and guidelines for harassment/ discrimination report and measures for victim protection.	Boards Researchers Technical & Administrative staff MSc & PhD students	BoD NGE group Heads of Departments / Technologic Platforms	2024-29	Nr of documents/ communications establishing goals/ guidelines on harassment/ discrimination report, by channel	Yes / No /ongoing
						Create anonymous channel for reporting in coordination with NOVA University	
						Nr of cases reported /supported, by sex, by professional position, by institutional area	

3. Research, Advance Training and Education

Measure	Description /Goals	Actions	Target groups	People Involved	Monitorization and Implementation Assessment		
					timeline	Indicators	status
Integration of gender dimension into advance training and education	Include GE dimension on Advance training programmes	Promote the collection, monitoring and communication of data and metrics on Advance training programmes, by gender	MSc and PhD students	BoD NGE group Career, education and training officer	2024-29	Nr of documents with guidelines for inclusion of GE dimension general metrics data on Advance training (define criteria):	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of Doctoral fellowships, by sex, scientific field, and others	
						Nr of Master fellowships, by sex, scientific field, and others	
		Include GE dimension in Studentship programmes	MSc and PhD students	BoD NGE group Career, education and	2024-29	Nr of training sessions in the advance programmes on how to include GE dimension in research work/ outputs/ thesis	Yes / No /ongoing



				training officer		Nr of attendees, by sex, by institutional area, by professional position	
		Promote gender balance in evaluation panels, thesis committees, etc. (at least 40% of the underrepresented gender)	MSc and PhD students	BoD NGE group Career, education and training officer	2024-29	Nr of panels, thesis, committees in compliance	Yes / No /ongoing
Integration of gender dimension into research	Include GE dimension on R&D data	Promote the collection, monitoring and communication of data and metrics on research, by gender	RG Leaders Researchers Technical staff MSc & PhD students	BoD NGE group RG Leaders Science manager Head of Departments &Technologic Platforms	2024-29	Nr of documents/information with goals and guidelines for collection of data /metrics on R&D	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of R&D projects by type of funding, by sex, by professional position	
						Nr of Indexed publications, by authorship, by sex, by year	
						Nr of patents applications/ submission, by sex, by year	
	Implement training for integration GE dimension in research	Promote internal regular information and training on GE dimension in research (general) and core specialized training on key institutional areas (funding, reporting, outputs, etc)	RG Leaders Researchers Technical staff MSc & PhD students	BoD NGE group RG Leaders Science manager Head of Departments &Technologic Platforms	2024-29	Information on (where to look for) GE dimension in research on onboarding package	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of documents/information with goals and guidelines on GE inclusion in research	
						Nr of information sessions	
						Nr of training sessions, by key institutional areas (funding, reporting, etc.)	



						Nr of attendees, in both information and training session, by sex, by institutional area, by professional position	
						Nr of documents/information establishing goals and guidelines for the GE inclusion in R&D projects	
		Define goals and guidelines for inclusion of the gender dimension in research projects	RG Leaders Researchers Technical staff MSc & PhD students	BoD NGE group RG Leaders Science manager Head of Departments & Technologic Platforms	2024-29	Nr of attributed funding in compliance	Yes / No /ongoing
						Nr of funding, activities, reports and deliverables, disaggregated by sex (when applicable)	
		Integrate the GE dimension in the R&D projects contents, (teams, outputs, deliverables			2024-29	Nr R&D project team members disaggregated by sex, professional position Nr samples in R&D projects, disaggregated by sex, when applicable Nr of R&D projects outputs and deliverables disaggregated by sex and type, when applicable	Yes / No /ongoing
	Promote for GE integration on R&D communication	Promote the role model approach for the participation of the under-represented gender, on both internal and	RG Leaders Researchers Technical staff	BoD NGE group RG Leaders	2024-29	Nr of internal and external communications, by sex, professional position, institutional area	Yes / No /ongoing



		external scientific communications	MSc & PhD students	Science manager Head of Departments &Technologic Platforms		Nr of outreach activities, by sex, position, institutional area	
	Include gender dimension on the organization of scientific events	Promote gender balance on scientific events organization	RG Leaders Researchers Technical staff MSc & PhD students	BoD NGE group RG Leaders Science manager Head of Departments &Technologic Platforms	2024-29	Nr of documents with guidelines for inclusion of GE dimension in internal and external scientific events	Yes / No /ongoing
Nr of speakers, by sex, by professional position, by organizational institutional area							
Nr of attendees, by sex, by professional position, by organizational institutional area							
Nr of organization staff, by sex							
Nr of scientific committees, with gender balance (at least 40% of under-represented gender)							



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