



## FULL PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS 2023-2025 LONG ISLAND SOUND RESEARCH

**Full Proposal Instructions for the 1 March 2023 – 28 February 2025 funding period.**

### **IMPORTANT REMINDERS:**

Full proposals must be submitted using NY Sea Grant's (NYSG) electronic submission website [nysgproposal.org](https://nysgproposal.org) for receipt no later than 5:00 pm EDT on Friday, October 14, 2022.

***The submission website closes and proposals cannot be submitted after the deadline. Proposals submitted by email will be discarded without review, as will proposals that fail to comply with content, format, page limits, budget, and other requirements.***

- The first year of the funding period covered by this Call for Proposals will begin on March 1, 2023.
- All proposals must be reviewed and approved by the Principal Investigator's Sponsored Programs Office before submittal. Proposals that have not been approved, with appropriate signatures from an authorized institutional representative (the principal investigator is generally NOT an authorized institutional representative), will be discarded without review.
- Projects considered for funding should address the research topics outlined in the 2023-2025 Call for Preliminary Proposals for Long Island Sound Research and on pages 2 and 3 of this document. Applicants should clearly identify the LISS research need(s) being addressed by the proposed research.
- Even if you have submitted proposals to NYSG or CTSG in the past, be sure to carefully follow these instructions. There are some significant differences from previous requirements and instructions relative to this competition.

### **I. BACKGROUND**

On March 16, 2022, Connecticut Sea Grant (CTSG) and New York Sea Grant (NYSG) announced a Call for Preliminary Proposals for the Long Island Sound Study (LISS) Research Program. This program is intended to fund research in support of the LISS, a regional, community-based partnership to protect and restore Long Island Sound. Information on the LISS can be obtained at [longislandsoundstudy.net](https://longislandsoundstudy.net).

Initiated in 1999, the Long Island Sound Research Grant Program awards funds to researchers whose work helps inform efforts to manage Long Island Sound. Descriptions of projects previously funded are available at <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/research-monitoring/lis-research-grant-program/>.

#### **A. Research Focus and Topic Areas**

The purpose of this Call is to ***support actionable research that produces and integrates information that fills identified gaps in our understanding and extends the ability of managers to make informed decisions and take appropriate management actions to prevent, reduce, or mitigate anthropogenic stressors and enhance the health and sustainability of the Sound.***

Topic areas address the four themes of the 2015 Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), which is available at <http://longislandsoundstudy.net/our-vision-and-plan/>. Applicants should also review the 2020-2024 CCMP Update with revised Implementation Actions at <https://longislandsoundstudy.net/2021/01/ccmp-implementation-actions-supplemental-documents/>.

Proposals may also wish to consult the 2022 LISS Science Needs Document at: <https://longislandsoundstudy.net/2022/04/science-needs-comprehensive-summary/>

Applicants must specify how the research supports any of the CCMP Ecosystem Targets, Outcomes, Objectives, Strategies, or Implementation Actions. Vague references to the broad themes of the CCMP will not be sufficient. Proposals that incorporate the underlying principles of resilience to climate change, long-term sustainability, and environmental justice are encouraged.

For the purposes of this RFP, research is defined as natural and/or social scientific endeavors with **explicit and testable hypotheses** that strive to answer “why” and “how” questions. Proposals that focus primarily on model development and/or synthesis efforts must be hypothesis-driven and those that seek to describe or monitor conditions and do not identify or test a specific hypothesis will not be considered.

This Call encourages the submission of larger-scale research proposals that combine topic areas or themes, embrace interdisciplinary approaches, or involve multiple partners to produce actionable, management-relevant outputs. Research outputs should provide explanations, models, or tools to understand and forecast the response of LIS to anthropogenic stressors and to support management measures to prevent, reduce, or mitigate these stressors.

#### **1. End Users**

The project must engage end users from the beginning and throughout the project. An end user is defined as a person or group in a position to apply the information or tools being produced, evaluated, or transferred through a research project in a way that is of direct consequence to the ecological, social, or economic integrity of LIS and/or surrounding watershed(s). Examples of end users include, but are not limited to, public, private, or non-governmental decision/policymakers,

including landowners, resource managers, land use planners, and educators at all levels.

Proposals must identify likely end users that would benefit from this research and briefly describe the mutual benefits of collaboration. Applicants must also clearly identify the actionable information, tools, or outputs to be produced by the research. More details and a letter of support from end users are highly encouraged in full proposals. Submissions that merely state that the information generated has value to managers, without adequate elaboration, will not be competitive. Applicants should consider involving the end users/beneficiaries early in the process. Extension specialists at CTSG and NYSG may be able to assist with identifying and connecting with potential users and beneficiaries.

### **B. Duration and Funding**

At this time and subject to federal funding, the program anticipates awarding approximately \$5,500,000 to cover the entire duration of all selected projects. The program will support one- or two-year projects. Proposals of any amount are welcome up to a **maximum funding level of \$1,000,000 (\$500,000/year cap) and this must include all direct plus indirect costs**. Proposals in excess of \$250,000/year must explicitly demonstrate interdisciplinary approaches to complex problems, involve collaborative research teams, and produce outputs with the potential for high impact. Proposals that exceed the maximum amount will be discarded without review.

**Match Requirements:** This funding Call requires that at least 50% of the federal dollars awarded must be matched by non-federal funds. This Call therefore requires that proposals include at least a 50% match, i.e., \$1 in non-federal match for every \$2 of federal funds requested.

### **C. Eligibility**

Proposals from the following eligible groups may be accepted and approved for funding:

- A. Faculty at universities and colleges,
- B. Researchers at not-for-profit institutions,
- C. Researchers who are personnel of state or local agencies, and
- D. Researchers at for-profit institutions or companies.

Eligibility is not limited to individuals from New York and Connecticut. However, the project must have direct relevance to Long Island Sound. The primary professional base of the lead investigator must be in the United States. U.S. citizens located in other countries are not eligible. Federal employees and institutions are not eligible to receive compensation, equipment, or budgeted items of any sort, but they may be involved with the project. Students and NYSG and CTSG staff cannot have Principal Investigator, co-PI, or Associate Investigator status.

## II. DETAILS FOR FULL PROPOSALS

### **A. General Information**

Full proposals have been encouraged only from those prospective principal investigators with the highest-ranked preliminary proposals following Panel review and selection. Summary comments relating to the evaluation of each pre-proposal will be disseminated to the lead investigator by email on or about August 31, 2022.

The full proposal requires submission of the materials described below and in accordance with these Instructions. It is essential that the proposal contains all of the listed components and be submitted in the format described. ***Proposals that are not received by the deadline will be discarded without review, as will proposals that fail to comply with content, format, budget, and other requirements.***

The full proposal must be single-spaced, typed in a font equivalent to 12-point Times New Roman or larger on letter size paper with 1-inch margins on all pages.

**QAPP Requirement:** The EPA requires that a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is developed and approved for all projects, funded directly by EPA or through sub-awards to another entity, involving the collection or analysis of environmental data. The applicant will be responsible for developing the QAPP and submitting it to Sea Grant for review and approval by EPA. **The completion, submission, and approval of a QAPP is required before any data collection can be conducted by PIs.** Applicants should include the development of the QAPP in their full proposal work plan and budget. Information regarding developing a QAPP is available at <http://www.epa.gov/quality/qapps.html>. Questions on the requirements to develop a QAPP can be directed to Melissa Duvall ([Duvall.Melissa@epa.gov](mailto:Duvall.Melissa@epa.gov)), the project officer for the grant agreement between EPA and the Connecticut and New York Sea Grant Programs.

### **B. Full Proposal Components - Instructions**

- Title Page:** The form for the title page, along with examples, are downloadable at <https://seagrant.sunysb.edu/articles/t/grants-policies-downloadable-forms-for-proposal-submission>. Be sure to include pages for subcontracting institutions (follow examples). Obtain all required signatures and scan all title pages as PDF files in order to submit them electronically.
- Project Summary Form:** The form for the project summary (form 90-2), along with an example, is downloadable at <https://seagrant.sunysb.edu/articles/t/grants-policies-downloadable-forms-for-proposal-submission>. The Project Summary Form should very briefly convey all essential elements of the proposed activities. The entire Project Summary may not exceed 2 pages in length.
- Project Narrative:** **This description must not exceed 10 consecutively numbered pages,** exclusive of support letters and the references cited. Any attachments, appendices, figures,

tables, etc. to the project narrative will be counted toward the 10-page limit. Proposals that exceed this page limit will not be accepted.

- a. **Project Title:** The title should be brief, specific, and descriptive of the activity.
- b. **Objectives:** List the objectives of the proposed research (should be the same as the objectives listed in the Project Summary Form, 90-2) and the hypotheses being tested during the project.
- c. **Justification:** This section should include any background or introductory information that would help explain the objectives of the study. You should carefully review other related work and demonstrate how your proposed research will build on this base. Tell why your project is important, and to whom. Spell out and explain how the proposed project addresses the specific Topic Area you are targeting, from pages 2-3 above.
- d. **Research Design and Methods:** Outline the research design, methods, and techniques that you intend to employ in meeting the objectives you have stated. Be sure to describe:
  - i. the steps and techniques that will be used;
  - ii. the experimental design;
  - iii. data sources and means by which you will tap them;
  - iv. roles and responsibilities of personnel, including students, as related to the project; and
  - v. facilities available to conduct the research.

If the project's work is being proposed in conjunction with other projects or proposals, or will coordinate with other known efforts, be sure to describe and explain these linkages and potential overlaps.

Letters verifying the collaboration of other investigators/organizations to be involved with the project (if any) must be included in your proposal submission but are not counted as part of the page limit for the project narrative.

- e. **Expected Outputs and Outcomes:** Describe the outputs (products such as reports, technologies, presentations, etc.) and outcomes (such as economic or environmental impacts, transfer, and use of a new technology, changes in practices or behavior, etc.) you expect to achieve during the project period, detailing potential impacts and benefits that will accrue from your proposed project and your plan for tracking and measuring progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. Outputs and outcomes must be well-defined and results-oriented. You are encouraged to attach letters of support from other entities indicating support and intended use for

the proposed project and its potential results, in your proposal submission; such letters are not counted as part of the page limit for the project narrative.

- f. Management Implications:** Specifically identify how the results of the research will be actionable and applied to the management of Long Island Sound. Explain and provide specific examples of how the research and anticipated results will be used to inform and direct management of Long Island Sound and its resources. Specify anticipated end-users or managers that will use the results/products of the project. It is recommended that PIs obtain engagement and support of anticipated end users during proposal development.
  - g. Demonstration of interdisciplinary approaches:** In accordance with the RFP, proposals in excess of \$250,000/year must explicitly demonstrate interdisciplinary approaches to complex problems, involve collaborative research teams, and produce outputs with the potential for high impact. If you are seeking more than \$250,000/year, please explain how you qualify for this higher funding level.
  - h. General Project Information:** Discuss other information relevant to the potential success of the project that has not been included above. This should include the project timeline for benchmarks and expected outputs (follow example at <https://seagrant.sunysb.edu/articles/t/grants-policies-downloadable-forms-for-proposal-submission>), a description of proposed project management, interactions with other institutions, and other pertinent information.
  - i. Previous LISS Funding:** If you have received funding from the LISS Research Competition since 2017, please briefly describe the status and outputs of this research and explain how the proposed research builds on or utilizes previous funded work.
- 4. Literature Cited:** Begin on a new page, include the complete citation for each publication referenced within the proposal. This list is not part of the 10-page maximum narrative page count.
  - 5. Current and Pending Support:** The applicants (senior personnel: PI, co-PI, AI) must identify any current and pending financial resources that are intended to support research, and their relationship to the proposal being submitted under this Call. Updates of this information may be requested during the evaluation process.
  - 6. Budget Form 90-4:** The applicant must present a detailed, itemized budget for the entire project, including any cost share or matching funds. This budget must utilize the Sea Grant Project Budget Form 90-4, available with examples at: <https://seagrant.sunysb.edu/articles/t/grants-policies-downloadable-forms-for-proposal-submission>.

The total budget request for all projects under this Call may not exceed \$500,000 a year for up to 2 years, including all direct and indirect costs. This Call requires that proposals include at least a 50% match, i.e. \$1.00 in non-federal match for every \$2.00 requested.

Note that the budget for a full proposal is expected not to deviate substantially from its pre-proposal submission. A substantial increase in the final budget request will be viewed negatively and likely will result in either rejection of the project or budget cuts without changes in the scope of work.

Under section A. Salaries and Wages, actual numbers of personnel should be shown in the column after the categories, e.g., co-principal investigator (2), if there are 2 co-PIs. Total time to be spent on the project should be shown in person-months to the nearest tenth in the appropriate box.

In calculating the share of salaries, the actual time to be spent on the project should be used. If a researcher will spend one-fourth of his/her time on the project during the academic year, and his/her academic year salary is \$45,000, the calculation will be \$45,000 divided by four (\$11,125), and the time shown will be nine months divided by four (2.25 months). An effort calculator is provided in the 90-4 spreadsheet.

Definitions for the various personnel categories follows, numbered to correspond with the 90-4 budget form:

**A. SALARIES AND WAGES**

**1. Senior Personnel**

a. The Principal Investigator is responsible for the conduct of this activity. If responsibility is shared equally among two persons, they should be shown as co-principal investigators. NOTE: Curricula vitae, two pages in length, for all persons in this category must be submitted with the proposal (see "8" below).

b. Associate Investigators (faculty or staff) are professional persons who are full-time on the faculty or staff of the submitting institution.

**2. Other Personnel**

a. Research Associates and Technicians are research support positions that do not hold the rank of faculty, but work under the direction of a Principal Investigator or faculty member who directs the research they are directly engaged in the research endeavor. Consultants should be listed under "Other Costs" because fringe benefits or some elements of indirect costs may not be computed on their compensation.

b. Post-docs are Ph.D. recipients, temporarily engaged in mentored research and/or scholarly training for the purposes of acquiring professional skills to pursue their chosen career path who are working on the project.

c. Graduate Research Assistants are part- or full-time graduate students who hold at least a bachelor's degree.

- d. Professional School students are students enrolled in medical, legal, and other professional schools.
- e. Pre-baccalaureates are undergraduate students enrolled either part-time or full-time in a course leading to a degree, including an Associate Degree, in the case of students in two-year programs, or a certificate in the case of some vocational students. Pre-Bac students may be employed as aides or helpers on project either on salary as part-time employees or on an hourly basis.
- f. Secretarial-Clerical is a category for office personnel. This is generally not allowable as a direct charge. The person's work must be project specific and clearly justified.
- g. Technical Shop is a category for technicians, shop personnel and other persons with special, but non-professional skills.
- h. Miscellaneous Personnel may be used for "other" persons not included in categories a through h and should be described.

**B. FRINGE BENEFITS.** Use your institution's approved rates.

**C. PERMANENT EQUIPMENT.** The rationale for the purchase and use of permanent equipment with a cost of \$1,000 or more per unit should be explained. Note that, you must use \$1,000 for the cost threshold for permanent equipment for the purposes of this Call. If you are proposing to purchase permanent equipment that could be leased, please include a lease vs. purchase analysis. Include a full list, with justification for each item of permanent equipment, on the Budget Justification page of your proposal.

**D. EXPENDABLE SUPPLIES.** Supplies may include chemicals, laboratory supplies and other expendable items. This includes office supplies specific to the project only, general office supplies are not allowable as they are considered an indirect cost. Describe the need for these supplies in implementing the project. Show the total cost in the budget summary. If supplies are unusual in nature or amount, explain on the Budget Justification page. Greater detail is necessary for supplies costing over \$1,500 or 5% of an award.

**E. TRAVEL.** Show the basis for travel in the Budget Justification as "X" trips at "Y" average cost of "Z" days. *Per diem* for travel must be based on the regulations of the proposing institution and included in the travel budget total. Domestic travel includes travel to all U.S. Possessions or Trusts (including Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the Trust Territories, Guam, and Samoa). All other travel is considered "international," and the trip must be justified and approved in advance. In the current climate of shrinking budgets, the Sea Grant offices will scrutinize requests for travel funds very closely—please ensure that all requests are reasonable and necessary to the proposed project.

**F. PUBLICATIONS AND DOCUMENTATION COSTS.** Widespread dissemination of information is implicit in all grants, and publication in "open access" journals is strongly encouraged. Include within your budget the cost of manuscript preparation. Please put journal and page reprint charges on a separate line. We require all publications resulting from funded projects to acknowledge CT and NY Sea Grant and EPA LISS support.



**G. OTHER COSTS.** List such items as data management and archiving expenses, high-performance computing, reimbursement of sub-awards, equipment rental, consultants, boat time ("X" days at "Y" cost per day), etc. Note that facilities rental and other costs not allowable under the federal portion of the grant may be listed as "Other Costs" in the grantee cost-share column, if they will be provided by others. All necessary funding for data management and archiving activities should be included in the budget unless explained otherwise.

**H. INDIRECT COSTS.** The basis for computing indirect costs should be stated in the Budget Justification. Note that indirect costs apply to the matching funds column as well as the Sea Grant funds column.

**I. MATCHING COSTS (COST-SHARE).** This funding Call requires that at least 50% of the awarded federal dollars made through this Call be matched by state or private funds, i.e. \$1.00 in non-federal must be provided as match for every \$2.00 requested. Cost-Share is entered in column G.

- 7. Budget Justification:** The budget justification should explain the rationale and basis for calculating the personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual support, and other costs identified in the itemized budget and explain the basis for their calculation (special attention should be given to explaining the travel, equipment, and contracts). This should also include an explanation of how the indirect costs were calculated. If cost share or matching funds are included in the budget, describe what role they have in the overall project.

Personnel needs should show names, percentage of time (months of effort), and best estimates of salaries. Fringe benefit rates must be presented. Equipment must be listed with an explanation of the need for larger items (items greater than \$1,000 in cost). Categories of supplies should be shown.

- 8. Curriculum Vitae:** The resumes of all senior personnel (PI, co-PI, AI) must be included. CVs for other key co-workers are not required. Each resume must not exceed two pages.
- 9. Letters of Collaboration, Support, and Cost-Share Commitment:** As appropriate, include correspondence regarding expected impacts and benefits, collaborative efforts and/or others' support for the project, and letters certifying match commitment (required). Scan hard copies of such materials or have them sent to you by email so that you can include them as part of your electronic submission. Faxes, emails, and hard copies sent separately to either Sea Grant program will not be accepted.
- 10. Permits:** Project PIs should assess the need for any required permits or permissions to conduct the research and mention/list here what they are and the likelihood of obtaining them. The process of obtaining any required permits or permissions should be included in the project timeline.

- 11. Data Management Plan:** Data and information collected and/or created under this EPA

grant must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements. The requirement has two basic parts: (1) environmental data generated by a grant project must be made available after a reasonable period of exclusive use, and (2) the grant application must describe the plan to make the data available.

Each full proposal must include a complete Data Management Plan Form outlining the Data Sharing Plan and include descriptions of the types of data and information created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, sharing, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data.

The Data Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) must be made publicly available at time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with the published data. Failing to share data and information collected using the grant funds may lead to disallowed costs and be considered in making future award decisions. If your proposed activities do not generate any data, you are still required to include a data sharing plan. Such a data sharing plan could include the statement that “this project will not generate any data”.

All necessary funding for data management activities should be included in the budget unless explained otherwise.

Water quality data should be deposited at EPA’s Water Quality Exchange (WQX):  
<https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/water-quality-data>

The NCEI is also a preferred data repository, though might not be appropriate or available for all data collected: <https://www.nodc.noaa.gov/>.

Complete and include DMP form found at: <http://seagrant.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1985/2017/04/Full-Proposal-DMP-Form.docx>)

### **III. SUBMISSION**

The completed Full Proposal, as a single PDF file, the 90-4 excel file, and Budget Justification in word (three files total) must be submitted using NY Sea Grant’s (NYSG) electronic submission website [www.NYSGProposal.org](http://www.NYSGProposal.org) for receipt no later than by 5:00 pm EDT on Friday, October 14, 2022. Late or incomplete proposals will not be processed. Hard copy, email, and fax submissions will NOT be accepted.

*Please note that*, although the submissions are to NYSG’s website, this is a jointly administered funding opportunity, and all the submissions will be processed by both programs, CTSG and NYSG, as a single pool. Full proposals that are not received by the deadline will be discarded

without review, as will proposals that fail to comply with content, format, budget and length requirements (i.e. any proposals submitted that are missing any components (1-9), and or exceed length requirements listed above will be rejected).

All proposals must be reviewed and approved by the Principal Investigator's Sponsored Programs Office prior to submittal. Proposals that have not been approved with appropriate signatures from an authorized institutional representative (the principal investigator is generally NOT an authorized institutional representative) will not be reviewed. Subcontract budgets must also have appropriate signatures from an authorized representative of the other institution(s) in order to be accepted for review.

Please double-check your Full Proposal file before uploading at the submission website to make sure it is complete, in order, and that it is your final version. It must be a single pdf file. Be sure that your submission includes the signed cover page(s). In addition to the single PDF file, upload the 90-4 excel file, and Budget Justification in word (three files total). You will receive an auto-receipt with a time and date stamp from the website confirming your submission, but this is not an indication that your file is readable. If the file contains a virus or is unreadable, your submission cannot be accepted. A Sea Grant check of your submission's readability prior to the submission deadline cannot be guaranteed. It is up to you to send a readable file. Early submission is recommended. If you find an error or mistake in your proposal, you may upload a revised version if you do so before the submission deadline. The most recently uploaded files will be the versions reviewed.

#### **IV. PROPOSAL REVIEW AND EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Full proposals will be subject to external peer reviews followed by a Review Panel, and assessed on the basis of the evaluation criteria listed below.

##### **1. Justification:**

- Responsiveness to the Call for research focused on the topics and concerns outlined in the Call for Preliminary Proposals for 2023-2025 Long Island Sound Research and in this document on pages 2 and 3; and
- Significance of the problem, or rationale and importance of the work to the management of Long Island Sound resources.

##### **2. Scientific and Technical Merit, Appropriate and Cost-effective Budget, and Technical Capacity:**

- Clarity and attainability of the objectives detailed in the project description;
- Adequacy of the proposed methodology to test hypotheses and accomplish stated objectives, including the soundness of the technical approach, scientific design, methods, timeline, and data interpretation;

- Adequacy of the proposed budget to accomplish the stated objectives and of the budget justification in explaining the need for resources;
- Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources to successfully achieve the goals of the project;

In addition to information provided by the applicant in its submission, in evaluating the applicant under these criteria the reviewers may consider information from other sources including agency files. Poor past performance and/or reporting history of applicants previously awarded an LISS grant(s) will be considered within the review process.

### **3. Expected Outputs and Outcomes, Management Implications, and Anticipated Usefulness of the Results:**

- **Strength** of the applicant’s description of outputs and outcomes, which must be well-defined and results-oriented; and

Degree to which the anticipated results of the project will actionably inform, strengthen and direct the science-based management of the Long Island Sound ecosystem and its resources, and be actively useful to LIS managers and/ or end-users/beneficiaries.

In addition to the evaluation criteria above, the following selection criteria can be applied to the final determination of the proposals selected for funding:

- Diversity of the topics addressed.

### **V. TIMELINE FOR PROPOSAL PROCESS**

October 14 -- Full proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. EDT via [www.NYSGproposal.org](http://www.NYSGproposal.org)

December 19 -- Sea Grant notifies lead investigators about decisions

January 8 -- Provide peer reviews and a summary of Full Proposal Review Panel results

March 1, 2023 -- Year 1 funding starts (if a QAPP has been submitted and approved). Prior to data collection or use – PIs must submit and receive EPA approval for project Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). No data collection can be conducted by PIs until a QAPP has been approved.

Jan 1, 2024 – 10-month progress report due to Sea Grant offices.

March 1, 2024 -- Year 2 funding starts (if Year 1 progress is satisfactory).

May 1, 2025 – Final report due to Sea Grant offices.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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