Cameroon Case Study
Analysis of National Strategies for Sustainable Development

This document is one of 19 country case studies that form the knowledge base for a synthesis report entitled “National Strategies for Sustainable Development: Challenges, Approaches, and Innovations Based on a 19-country Analysis.” The synthesis report and country case studies are available electronically at:

http://www.iisd.org/measure/capacity/sdsip.asp
http://www.gtz.de/rioplus/download

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Notice to Reader

Information in the country case studies was obtained primarily from publicly available sources (e.g., Internet and literature sources) and, where possible, was supplemented through interviews with government officials. The information was up-to-date as of May 2004. Every effort was made to ensure that official national sustainable development focal point contacts had the opportunity to provide feedback on the research, but such contacts were not successful in all cases. This case study is in an unedited, working paper format.

These case studies are made publicly available to add to the national sustainable development strategy knowledge base. The project’s research partners accept responsibility for any inaccuracies or omissions. The views expressed in this working paper do not necessarily represent the views of the funding partners.

The research partners welcome your comments on this country case study. Please e-mail comments to Darren Swanson at dswanson@iisd.ca.

This National Sustainable Development Strategy research project is a collaborative effort. Its research partners are the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the Canadian consulting firm Stratos Inc., and the Environmental Policy Research Centre of the Freie Universität Berlin (FFU). The study has been funded by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ; commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development – BMZ), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Department of Foreign Affairs Canada, and Environment Canada. Advisors to the project include IUCN – The World Conservation Union and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

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1 Introduction: Country Description

Cameroon is a country of 15.7 million people situated along the Bight of Biafra, between Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria. In 1961, former French Cameroon and part of British Cameroon joined to form present-day Cameroon.

Economy
The Cameroon economy as measured by 2002 GDP is $26.84 billion (purchasing power parity) with a real growth rate of 4% (CIA World Fact Book 2004). GDP per capita in 2002 was $1,700. The economy is powered by agriculture (46%); industry (21%) and services (33%). The labor force by occupation is 70% agriculture, 13% industry and commerce, and 17% other services. The UNDP Human Poverty Index for Cameroon is 35.9, placing the country as the 58th poorest among 94 developing countries (UNDP 2003a).

Society
The country is run by a unitary republic, multiparty presidential regime (CIA World Fact Book 2004). Opposition parties were legalized only in 1990. The chief of state, President Paul Biya, has served since 1982, and was elected by popular vote for a seven year term in 1997. However, supporters of the opposition candidates boycotted the elections following the government's refusal to change Cameroon's widely criticised electoral system (IPS 2004). The head of government (Prime Minister) Peter Mafany Musonge, was appointed by the president, as are members of cabinet from proposals submitted by the Prime Minister. The UNDP Human Development Index for Cameroon is 0.499, ranked 142nd of 175 countries (UNDP 2003b).

French and English are the official languages along with 24 major African language groups. There are numerous ethnic groups including Cameroon Highlanders 31%, Equatorial Bantu 19%, Kirdi 11%, Fulani 10%, Northwestern Bantu 8%, Eastern Nigritic 7%, other African 13%, non-African less than 1% (CIA World Fact Book 2004). Religious belief in the country includes 40% indigenous beliefs, 40% Christian, and 20% Muslim.

Environment
Cameroon as the hinge of Africa, covers 475,440 square kilometres. The terrain is diverse with coastal plains in southwest, mountains in west, plains in north, all surrounding a plateau region. Cameroon’s climate is tropical along the coast and semiarid and hot in the north. There is an abundance of natural resources in the form of petroleum, timber, hydropower, and minerals such as iron ore and bauxite. Active volcanoes exist in Cameroon, and among them is Mount Cameroon, the highest point in western Sub-Saharan Africa. The Environmental Sustainability Index for Cameroon was 45.9, placing the country 93rd out of 142 countries (Yale University & Columbia University 2002). The per capita emission of greenhouse gases in Cameroon in 1998 measured 0.112 tonnes of CO₂ per person (GEO 3 1998).

In 2002 Cameroon was awarded the potentially oil rich Bakassi Peninsula and offshore region in 2002. The award however, was rejected by Nigeria, and the two
countries have formed a Joint Border Commission to resolve the differences (CIA World Fact Book 2004). Lake Chad remains a site of armed clashes among locals and militia as the Lake Chad Commission continues to urge Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria to ratify a delimitation treaty over the lake region. Under the treaty, Nigeria has agreed to ratify the treaty and relinquish sovereignty of disputed lands to Cameroon by December 2003.

Note to reader
This report is compiled using information based on self-written government documents (e.g., Cameroon’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper–PRSP), external assessments (International Monetary Fund staff assessment of the PRSP), and an internal national assessment (e.g., civil society and NGO assessment of the National Environmental Management Plan - NEMP).

Costa Rica’s Profile by Selected Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Development Index (and ranking)</td>
<td>0.499, ranked 142rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Poverty Index (and ranking)</td>
<td>35.9 ranked 58th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Sustainability Index</td>
<td>45.9 ranked 93rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHG Emissions</td>
<td>0.112 tonnes CO₂ per capita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP and GDP per capita</td>
<td>$26.84 billion, $1,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Content of the National Sustainable Development Strategy

Cameroon has several strategy processes underway that relate to the three dimensions of sustainable development. Most notable of these include the NEMP, PRSP, the National Programme on Good Governance (NPGG), the National Plan for the Fight against Corruption, and a national strategic plan addressing HIV Aids. The NEMP is officially cited by the government of Cameroon as its national sustainable development strategy process and has been the focus of several recent WSSD preparatory reports and assessments. However, this country report focuses on the PRSP process and document because the PRSP has just recently been completed, and contains some innovative features that were not a part of the NEMP. Notwithstanding, we do consider the NEMP in sufficient detail to understand any linkages with the PRSP process.

Strategy Content - Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

PRSPs describe a country’s macroeconomic, structural, and social policies in support of growth and poverty reduction, as well as associated external financing needs and major sources of financing. (PRSP 2003, page 1). The papers are prepared by eligible countries of the initiative for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC).¹ Cited as “debt relief for sustainable development”, eligible countries of the HIPC initiative

¹ HIPC countries are among the poorest countries that are eligible for highly concessional assistance from the International Development Association (IDA) and from the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility Of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These countries face an unsustainable debt situation even after the full application of traditional debt relief mechanisms (World Bank 2004).
implement integrated programs for poverty reduction and economic reform (World Bank 2004).

For a country to complete the first stage of eligibility for HIPC debt relief, it must establish a three year track record of good performance and work with civil society to develop a PRSP. To complete the second stage and reach the decision point for debt relief, the country must build another track record by implementing a subset of policies that are linked to the PRSP. These policies are identified from among Cameroon’s seven strategic focus areas for attacking poverty:

- Priority 1: promoting a stable macroeconomic framework;
- Priority 2: strengthening growth by diversifying the economy;
- Priority 3: revitalizing the private sector as the main engine of growth and a partner in delivering social services;
- Priority 4: developing basic infrastructures and natural resources while protecting the environment;
- Priority 5: accelerating regional integration in the framework of CEMAC;
- Priority 6: strengthening human resources and the social sector and facilitating the integration of vulnerable groups into the economy;
- Priority 7: improving the institutional framework, administrative management, and governance.” (PRSP 2003, page xii)

Framed within these seven priority areas are 14 policy fields and 193 specific measures each with a target date for achievement (summarized in Table 1).

Table 1. Overview of Cameroon’s PRSPs policy objectives and specific measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Policy Fields</th>
<th>Measures and Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Promotion of a stable macroeconomic framework | ▪ Macroeconomic and budgetary framework  
▪ Pursue the implementation of the action plan for improving management of public expenditure  
▪ Continue structural reforms  
▪ Mobilize non-oil internal income | 16 specific measures and indicators |
| Strengthening growth through diversification of the economy | ▪ Development of the rural sector  
▪ Development of the industrial sector  
▪ Development of tourism, cultural services and support services for the productive sector | 33 specific measures and indicators |
| Energizing the private sector | | 8 specific measures and indicators |
| Development of economic infrastructure and natural resources | ▪ Development of basic infrastructure  
▪ Development of telecommunications and the technologies of information communications | 34 specific measures and indicators |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management of natural resources</th>
<th>Implementation of the education strategy</th>
<th>88 specific measures and indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening and enhancing human services</td>
<td>Implementation of the health strategy</td>
<td>14 specific measures and indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other social development and health strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduction of urban poverty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of the institutional framework and governance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coordination and Linkages with Other Strategies or Planning Processes**

The PRSP is a national integrated socio-economic development strategy. As a cross-sectoral strategy it is comprehensive; unfortunately, there is no linkage or coordination between the PRSP and the National Environmental Management Plan (NEMP), despite the many important links between poverty and the environment.

One of the seven policy areas of the PRSP includes infrastructure, natural resources and the environment; however, the NEMP is not mentioned by name in this section of the strategy. Additionally, the PRSP does not mention the National Consultative Council on Sustainable Development (NCCSD) – the multi-stakeholder body responsible for monitoring and implementation of the NEMP. The Inter-ministerial Committee on the Environment (ICE), another cross-institutional mechanism of the NEMP, is mentioned in only one sentence of the PRSP.

The PRSP articulates the main characteristics and functionalities of the strategy document as a “framework for blending a new generation of economic and social policies into a coherent set for accelerating growth and fighting poverty in a sustainable fashion.” The PRSP is intended to serve Cameroon as a framework in several ways including: an integrated development framework and a means for achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDG); and a coordinating framework for government programs and donor assistance (PRSP 2003, page x). The environmental dimension of sustainable development is not articulated in the services that Cameroon envisions for the PRSP. This is a systemic weakness of the PRSP process in all countries of the HIPC initiative.

The MDG process presents another integration challenge for Cameroon. Two reports have now been prepared for the United Nations on Cameroon’s progress related to MDGs, and it appears that the parties involved in the development of these documents were not the same as those responsible for the PRSP. In addition, a process has been initiated at the regional level in Africa for the creation of MDG Agenda documents that outline national strategies for reaching the MDGs. The overlap with the PRSP is obvious, and the responsibility for ensuring the integration of the two documents cannot rest only on Cameroon – coordination at the international level related to required strategy documents will be essential.
Integration of Sustainable Development Principles
The PRSP inherently focuses on the economic and social aspects of sustainability given its cross-sectoral socio-economic mandate. Within these two dimensions of sustainable development, the strategic approach of the PRSP does not appear to be based on any conceptual framework of poverty alleviation such as sustainable livelihoods or recent thinking related to Amartya Sen’s freedoms and capabilities approach (Sen 1999). However, despite the lack of a conceptual framework for understanding poverty, an analysis to determine the principle determinants of poverty was performed and did result in the identification of social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainability including: 1. education and health for strengthening human capital; 2. Growth for generating employment and income; and 3. accessible infrastructure (roads, water, etc.; PRSP 2003, page 18).

In terms of how the PRSP addresses the sustainable development principle of inter-generational equity, this would appear to be inherently accomplished through the specific policy measures and targets pursued in the PRSP. However, these are primarily process related targets and do not monitor or ascribe targets to improving the state of socio-economic conditions. Filling this gap at this time is Cameroon’s report on progress toward the Millennium Development Goals. This progress report notes that the PRSP monitoring system fits well with the MDGs and should result in improved progress.

3 Institutional and Procedural Aspects of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Process

3.1 Development and Institutional Aspects

Cameroon’s PRSP was submitted to the HIPC initiative in April 2003. It was prepared by the government as a condition for consideration of assistance under the HIPC initiative. An inter-ministerial committee chaired by the Prime Minister, with the assistance of the Cameroon’s Technical Committee for Monitoring Economic Progress, will supervise the implementation of the PRSP, and is also responsible for monitoring progress. Funding for the strategy was provided the World Bank, United Nations Development Program, GTZ, and the government of Cameroon.

3.2 Participation Aspects

The PRSP was prepared through an extensive multi-stakeholder participatory process that included:

- government, including parliamentarians, local government and administrative workers;
- economic operators in the private sector;
- labor unions and professional organizations; and
- civil society organizations, specifically NGOs, community-based initiative groups, savings and loan cooperatives, community credit unions, women's associations and youth groups, various organizations (street children, the handicapped, etc.), specific groups (Bororo, Pygmies, fishing communities,
etc.), development committees and religious congregations (PRSP 2003, page 19).

The institutional body responsible for the overseeing the process was the Committee for Consultations and Monitoring of HIPC Resources Management. The participatory process included four main stages (Box 1) including an initial workshop to discuss the determinants of poverty, two rounds of participatory consultations, a working retreat to draft the full PRSP, and finally, a public workshop to get feedback from civil society. Discussions during the initial round of participatory consultations were conducted in the presence of observers from the IMF, the World Bank, and the German cooperation agency GTZ.

It is interesting to note that the participatory process for the PRSP did not involve Cameroon’s National Consultative Council for Sustainable Development (NCCSD) established under the NEMP. This would have helped to identify the linkages between poverty and the environment. One of the possible reasons for the NCCSD’s non-involvement in the PRSP process could be its rather in-operational status six years after its conception (WSSD Synthesis 2001, p. 9).

A civil society assessment of the NEMP process in 2002 also provides some insight into the nature of participatory processes in Cameroon. In this assessment it was acknowledged that coordinating activities within segments of the civil society remains a major challenge. In addition, there appears to be a great suspicion by government towards active input from non-governmental actors in the law-making process, and the non-functional nature of multi-stakeholder processes set up within various government programs has kept civil society out of policy making and evaluation and monitoring processes (WSSD Synthesis 2001, p. 9). This assessment poses challenges for the PRSP’s proposed participatory monitoring process – the National Poverty Reduction Network (NPRN) – discussed in detail in the next section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1. Stages of Cameroon’s PRSP Participatory Process</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• January 2000 seminar-workshop that brought together representatives of public and government, universities, NGOs, religious organizations and donors for an initial exchange of views on the determinants of poverty in Cameroon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An initial round of participatory consultations (March-April 2000) took place in all 58 departments of the country, involving 203 target groups representing the various components of civil society, as well as individual activists. In total, nearly 10,000 people, 40 percent of whom were women, expressed their views during these consultations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A second round of participatory consultations took place in all 58 departments of Cameroon, involving about 6000 individuals from different social categories to comment on regional poverty profiles, learn about poverty reduction activities and strategies planned under the HIPC initiative, make suggestions for improving the PRSP, and put forward ideas for poverty reduction projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A working retreat was organized for drafting the full PRSP. This work was performed by a multidisciplinary team consisting of national experts and advisers from the public administrations concerned, as well as experts from civil society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A public workshop was held to formulate input by civil society to the draft the PRSP. Participants had the opportunity to understand the PRSP process, examine the role of civil society in implementing the PRSP, and prepare a strategy for involving civil society as a partner in implementing the PRSP.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 Monitoring Aspects

As previously mentioned, the PRSP is based on pursuit of 193 specific measures directed at 14 policy fields framed by the seven strategic priority areas of the PRSP (Table 1). Target dates and responsible parties are listed for each policy measure. The measures are process related, such as preparing plans, and therefore do not ascribe targets for poverty conditions. In this regard, the PRSP also lists 29 core poverty indicators for the seven priority areas; however, targets are not provided.

There are clear mechanisms to ensure that the policy objectives and targets are being met, the most central being the requirement to demonstrate to the international financial institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank, a track record of performance in order to reach the HIPC completion point – the time at which debt is relieved.

The inter-ministerial committee chaired by the PM is responsible for monitoring progress toward meeting the HIPC completion point. This committee is assisted by the Technical Committee for Monitoring Economic Programs (CTS), which played the lead role in coordinating the preparation of the PRSP (IMF 2003 PRSP Assessment). The CTS will issue semi-annual reports on PRSP progress, and after validation by the Inter-ministerial Supervision Committee. The reports and indicators will be disseminated to as many segments of the population as possible through media, publications, seminars and through other mechanisms including (PRSP 2003, p 131):

- Poverty Mapping – a geographic visualization of all the poverty data;
- the National Poverty Reduction Network (NPRN) – a forum for dialogue and consensus-building that will permit social supervision of all poverty reduction activities; and
- the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) – supported by the IMF.

The proposed NPRN would comprise representatives of civil society organizations and of the central and local governments. The objectives of the network are to communicate the main actions implemented under the PRSP to civil society and engage it in monitoring the impact of the actions on the poor (IMF 2003). Details of the NPRN are summarized in Box 2.
In terms of weaknesses of the monitoring system, the IMF joint Staff review of the PRSP identified that only broad targets beyond 2004 had been established and encouraged the government to set specific annual targets related to the specific policy measures identified in the PRSP. The monitoring system and indicators also do not integrate the linkages between ecosystem services and poverty, reflecting the socio-economic focus of the PRSP.

The monitoring related to the specific policy measures of the PRSP are mostly of the process type. That is, they do not set targets for the conditions of poverty, only the means by which to improve conditions. A core set of poverty condition indicators is monitored, but no targets are set, except indirectly when they relate to the MDGs.

Box 2: Overview of the National Poverty Reduction Network

**Description**
The NPRN will act above all as a forum for sharing experiences and exchanging data among groups and regarding participatory approaches, as well as a framework for societal supervision of all the activities undertaken to implement the poverty reduction strategy.

**Setup**
With support from the UNDP, the GTZ, and the World Bank, the Cameroon government ran a seminar to identify the structure, management, steering, funding and relations with the development stakeholder community. The seminar was attended by key figures in civil society, representatives of NGOs and of different religious confessions, university professors, trade union representatives, mayors’ associations, and government officials.

**Participation**
The RNRP will be open to all development players and facilitate a partnership between civil society and the government. Through this network, the government expects to gain insight into the way grassroots segments of the population rate the effectiveness and efficiency of public spending on the social sectors and basic infrastructure, and to hear their suggestions for improving budget execution.

**Implementation**
The NPRN will be tested in pilot form before extending to all of Cameroon.

3.4 Implementation Aspects

The inter-ministerial Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister will supervise the implementation of the PRSP. Implementation of the PRSP will be financed via the governments budgeting process and through international development assistance, IMF concessional financial assistance, and debt relief under the HIPC initiative.

It is difficult to assess the strengths and weaknesses of PRSP implementation at this early stage. However, it is clear that the PRSP will not be a document that only sits on the shelf as implementation of many of the specific policy measures are a condition of reaching the HIPC completion point.

Some lessons learned during the implementation of the NEMP are noteworthy here. Implementation of many of the programs revealed that NGOs are insufficiently organised to exert the required influence. It was acknowledged by a civil society assessment of the NEMP that National NGOs are usually inexperienced and lack the necessary training, material and financial resources (WSSD Synthesis 2001, p. 9). It was also identified that the strong influence by international research and donor organizations who fund their programmes limits their approach and action which should be based on their knowledge of the locality and not on the priorities of the donor organizations.
### 3.5 Country summary of national SD strategy – Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

A summary of Cameroon’s PRSP is provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Summary of Cameroon’s National Sustainable Development Strategy Process – The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content of SDS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Typology</td>
<td>The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is a cross-sectoral strategy (socio-economic). Note: The National Environmental Management Plan is formally recognized within Cameroon as its national SD strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Content</td>
<td>Presents seven priority areas are 14 policy fields and 193 specific measures each with a target date for achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Linkages with other strategies and planning processes</td>
<td>No linkage with the National Environmental Management Plan. No mention of the National Consultative Council on SD. Currently a separate process from Cameroon’s progress reporting for the Millennium Development Goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development Aspects</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- legal basis, state of process</td>
<td>Adopted April 2003. Prepared by the government as a condition for concessional assistance from the World Bank and the IMF, and for debt relief under the enhanced heavily indebted poor countries debt initiative (HIPC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Institutions, responsible agencies</td>
<td>Inter-ministerial Committee, chaired by PM will supervise the implementation of the PRSP. Also responsible for monitoring progress. Assisted by the Technical Committee for Monitoring Economic Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Decisions and negotiation</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- External Support</td>
<td>Funding support from WB, UNDP, GTZ and Cameroon budget for the participatory process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Coordination</td>
<td>1. The Committee for Consultations and Monitoring of HIPC Resources Management; 2. National Poverty Reduction Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Inter-governmental actors</td>
<td>Involved representatives of parliamentarians, local government and administrative workers, economic operators in the private sector, labor unions and professional organizations, and civil society organizations, specifically NGOs, community-based initiative groups, savings and loan cooperatives, community credit unions, women's associations and youth groups, various organizations, specific groups (Bororo, Pygmies, fishing communities, etc.), development committees and religious congregations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Civil society, NGOs actors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitoring, Reporting and Adaptation Aspects</strong></td>
<td>The inter-ministerial committee chaired by the PM. Targets are presented in a detailed policy matrix that summarizes priority actions in key sectors for 2003-06. The PRSP provides quantitative targets related to the MDGs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Responsibilities &amp; Mechanisms</td>
<td>Attainment of key policy measures is required for authorization of debt relief under the HIPC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Compliance mechanisms</td>
<td>No formal process for learning and adapting based on monitoring data. The National Poverty Reduction Network will likely facilitate this process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning and Adaptation</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Application of Strategic Environmental Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implementation Aspects
- Responsibility and coordination - Coordinated by Inter-ministerial Committee, chaired by PM
- Financing and capacity - Financed by Government of Cameroon, IDA and IMF financial assistance, debt relief under the enhanced HIPC initiative.
- Communication - National Poverty Reduction Network

Specific SD Initiatives
- National Poverty Reduction Network
- Millennium Development Goals Progress Reports

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