



Global Forum on Sustainable Energy

Activity Report, August 2023 – July 2025 Draft Report

Imprint

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Reprint allowed in parts and with detailed reference only.

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1 Introduction

The Global Forum on Sustainable Energy (GFSE) is a neutral multi-stakeholder platform facilitating international dialogue on energy for sustainable development by taking into account the special interests and challenges of developing countries. GFSE aims at the establishment of a sustainable world energy system from a social, economic and environmental perspective.

GFSE contributes to both international discourse and information dissemination on sustainable energy. The multi-stakeholder platform plays a crucial role in facilitating sustainable energy projects by bringing together donors, investors and project developers. Their interaction creates new opportunities and enhances existing initiatives in the field of sustainable energy.

GFSE operates at the intersection of international energy discourse and diplomacy. Conferences and regional fora or workshops are the visible peak of the GFSE activities. GFSE activities can be grouped into three categories, namely networking, dissemination of information and facilitation of project initiatives.

1. GFSE is a networking agent

The Global Forum on Sustainable Energy interacts and networks with other energy initiatives and organizations in the energy field and thereby enhances synergies and complementarities. GFSE has been playing an active role in bringing together several energy-related initiatives, launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 in Johannesburg. GFSE works as an information provider and networking agent for several stakeholders.

2. GFSE informs on sustainable energy

GFSE prepares and initiates events devoted to the promotion of and dissemination of energy technologies in the renewable energy and energy efficiency fields in the context of sustainable development, and to showcasing and discussing inclusive solutions for the transition towards a sustainable energy system.

3. GFSE facilitates project initiatives

GFSE fosters partnerships and facilitates energy for sustainable development initiatives. It supports private-public partnerships by presenting opportunities and identifying partnership possibilities.

1.1 History of GFSE Activities

Since its establishment in 1999, the Global Forum on Sustainable Energy has engaged in numerous activities and has significantly contributed to shape the national and international debate on sustainable energy and development.

The Vienna Energy Forum (VEF) developed out of a series of international and regional GFSE Meetings, which addressed different aspects of energy for sustainable development.

More recent activities and publications of the Global Forum on Sustainable Energy are described in this report. The GFSE Activity Reports, including the one for the period 2023-2025 can be found on our website www.gfse.at.

2 GFSE Events

In order to bring together various stakeholders actively working in the energy, climate and developmental fields, the Global Forum on Sustainable Energy regularly organizes thematic workshops and expert discussion rounds. In total, three events were organized during the 2023 – 2025 phase. Therefore, an additional event was held beyond the contractual obligation.

2.1 IVECF 2023 Solution Session: High wellbeing with low energy demand towards modern net-zero cities

The International Vienna Energy and Climate Forum (IVECF), co-organized by UNIDO, the Austrian Government, and IIASA, highlights innovative solutions and best practices to drive an inclusive energy transition and support global climate action, advancing progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.



Picture 1 Frontal view of the panel discussion, © GFSE

(from left to right: Mag.a Dr.in Irene Giner-Reichl, Daniela Huber, Alessio Mastrucci, Elisabeth Sibille, Bas van Ruijven)

During the International Vienna Energy and Climate Forum (IVECF) 2023, GFSE held a Solutions Event in collaboration with the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA). This event was held as a side-event by invitation only on 3 November 2023, from 09:45 – 10:45.

The event centered around the significant impact of building sector on energy consumption, the production of greenhouse gas emissions, as well as waste protection. A contributing factor to the large end-consumption of the buildings sector are the materials in use, which are the prime emitter of greenhouse gas emissions.

Experts from the building sector and from IIASA collaborated throughout the event, showcasing elements of key energy efficiency aspects in buildings. Inputs were showcased from Bas van Ruijven, Senior Research Scholar at the International Institute for Applied Systems

Analysis at IIASA, Alessio Mastrucci, Research Scholar at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis at IIASA, Elisabeth Sibille, Energy Efficient Buildings Expert at klimaaktiv and Daniela Huber, Head of Property Management at Sozialbau.

The aim of the session was to identify pathways to a just net-zero society through solutions for urban transformation, decarbonization and reducing energy demand in the building sector. Austrian best practices were illustrated that could be widely adopted and lead to the desired future prospects. In addition to technical and systematic solutions, the focus was also placed on social aspects by presenting non-profit housing projects in Vienna. The refurbishment programmes represent effective measures that can contribute to achieving energy efficiency and resilience, decarbonisation and sustainability goals. The renovation measures also have positive secondary effects, such as improving living standards and inclusion of social solutions.

In summary, a holistic approach combining demand reduction, technological innovation, sustainable urban policies, and social inclusion is essential for climate-friendly, equitable urban development.

Kindly find the event recap [here](#)

2.2 Event “Green Skills in the Sustainable Building Sector”

GFSE, in collaboration with the University of Applied Sciences – Campus Vienna, hosted the event Green Skills in the Sustainable Building Sector, addressing key challenges and innovations in sustainable construction. The event featured four keynote speakers from academia and industry.

Professor Rieger-Jandl discussed the ecological benefits of using clay in construction, while Professor Sint highlighted the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation in sustainable building education. Dirk Jäger [*Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft*] presented the Holistic Building Program, emphasizing standardized green building criteria and klimaaktiv silver standards for new constructions. Susanne Formanek [*GRÜNSTATTGRAU*] explored the role of green facades in urban cooling and cross-sector collaboration.

A panel discussion, moderated by GFSE President Dr. Irene Giner-Reichl, covered topics such as the demand for green skills training, standardization in sustainable building permits, and gender equality in the sector. The event was conducted in German.



Picture 1 Frontal view of the panel discussion, © GFSE

(from left to right: Dipl.-Ing.in Susanne Formanek, Mag. Dirk Jäger, Mag.a Dr.in Irene Giner-Reichl, Ao. Univ. Prof.in Dipl.-Ing.in Dr.in phil. Andrea Rieger-Jandl, DI.in Dr.in Hildegard Sint)

A more in-depth recap of the event is published on the GFSE website, [here](#).

2.3 Event “Innovative Solutions to combat Energy Poverty”



Picture 2 Frontal view of the panel discussion, © GFSE

(from left to right: Dušana Dokupilová, Anna Breuer, Clemens Griesauer, Mag.a Dr.in Irene Giner-Reichl, Algaë Thun-Hagg, Hannes Velik)

GFSE held the bilingual event Innovative Solutions to combat Energy Poverty / Innovative Lösungen zur Bekämpfung der Energiearmut on Tuesday, 1 April 2025 at the Austrian Energy Agency (AEA) in Vienna, Austria. This event addressed current critical challenges of energy poverty in two European Union countries as well as featuring examples of energy poverty in Africa.

Energy poverty is a complex problem that depends on various factors and the local context. In developing countries, it often refers to the lack of access to modern energy sources that are essential for the provision of basic energy services.

Renewable energy offers a promising opportunity to combat energy poverty in developing countries by providing access to sustainable and affordable energy. Studies show that the use of photovoltaic systems and energy storage can provide a reliable power supply, especially in remote areas without a grid connection and with limited infrastructure. Renewable energies offer clear advantages here, as they can be operated independently of central power grids and therefore represent an ideal solution for regions in which conventional energy supply is hardly feasible. The costs per kilowatt hour are often within the affordable range, which makes renewable energies an attractive solution. International initiatives are promoting the expansion of renewable energy to electrify rural areas and thereby improve education, healthcare and economic activities. Such approaches show the great potential of renewable energies to improve access to energy while reducing energy poverty.

Women are disproportionately affected by energy poverty because they are often responsible for tasks such as cooking, water collection and childcare that depend on a reliable energy supply. Households headed by women are particularly at risk of poverty. Access to clean, sustainable and affordable energy is therefore crucial to improve their quality of life and achieve the goals of SDG5 (Gender equality).

In addition, women often have little influence on energy-related decisions, so their specific needs are often not taken into account. Policies that promote access to clean energy, include women in decision-making processes and create educational opportunities are crucial to strengthening their role in the energy transition. Gender-responsive energy strategies and targeted women's empowerment programs can help make the energy sector more inclusive and sustainable.

The event featured five compelling keynotes, beginning with Mr Hannes Velik from Jugend eine Welt, speaking to the pivotal role of education in the combat of energy poverty throughout Africa. Mr Velik emphasized capacity building and continuous awareness raising as crucial elements in overcoming energy poverty. Ms Aglaë Hagg-Thun built on the topic of education, presenting the WEZIZA project in Benin. Insights from practice were gained directly through the presentation of a mobile solar PV unit, in active use in Benin, showcasing the prominent 'pay-as-you-go' feature.

Energy poverty not only has the consequence of limited access to electricity, but also interlinks to other vital aspects of daily life. Therefore, Ms Clemens Griesauer of Horizont3000 addressed the implications for the clean cooking sector throughout Uganda, additionally focusing on the gender perspective, as it remains common practice to utilize charcoal as the main heating source for preparing meals within the home. Furthermore, Mr Griesauer's keynote shifted to the carbon crediting system, highlighting the distinct features of 'contribution claim' and 'offsetting' throughout the field of carbon credits. The contribution claim

does not allow companies to claim that they are carbon-neutral when they buy carbon credits without undertaking carbon mitigation measures in their own operations.

Redirecting the spotlight to the European Union, Ms Anna Breuer of klimaaktiv, granted an in-depth overview of Austria's newly established capacity building programme Soziale Energieberatung Social Energy Consultation. This programme is directed at supporting households effected by energy poverty through consultations and relies on existing networks of social advisors who are trained to become social energy advisors. Ms Dušana Dokupilová of the Slovak Academy of Sciences rounded off the keynote presentations, having been involved within the research of energy poverty in Slovakia for a tenure of over twenty years. Ms Dokupilová spoke to the indicators and differentiations of energy poverty within Slovakia and the European Union, emphasizing that the discussion on the topic has picked up in recent years. She pointed out that the definition of energy poverty is crucial to determine the number of people and households considered as energy poor. She also highlighted that, in addition to the fraction of income spent on energy, it is important to consider the amount of income left for other needs such as education, health, food and water.

A panel discussion with active inputs from the audience wrapped up the event. Moderated by GFSE President Dr. Irene Giner-Reichl, the audience and keynote speakers addressed further demand for resilience of energy sources, as well as the demand for continuing data assessment on monitoring energy poverty worldwide.

2.4 GFSE Policy Briefs

The Global Forum on Sustainable Energy develops policy briefs on particular topics of global relevance in the context of sustainable energy and development, which serve as tools to aid the interaction and knowledge exchange between private and public stakeholders on all levels, policy makers and technical experts. The reporting period features three new policy briefs available publicly on the GFSE website.

2.4.1 GFSE Policy Brief #16: Green Skills for Green Buildings and Solar PV

This policy brief addresses green skills requirements and measures in the green buildings and solar PV sectors. Green skills play a central role in the renewable energy transition and decarbonisation of the energy sector. The demand for green skills is increasing, resulting in a shortage of workforce in the energy market. It is crucial to take measures to mitigate the risk of skills shortages, support the new skill development, re- and upskill existing workforce and match market requirements with the skills qualifications. This policy brief provides a general overview of green skills in the energy sector, and further addresses green skills in the solar PV sector, in the sustainable building sector and the inclusion of women and importance of gender equality in the energy transition based on theoretical analysis, policy measures and best practice examples. Kindly find the policy brief [here](#)

2.4.2 GFSE Policy Brief #17: Renewable hydrogen and ammonia in North Africa

This policy brief presents an overview of current developments in the renewable ammonia and methanol sectors at the global level as well the renewable hydrogen sector in North Africa. It describes ongoing cooperation agreements between the European Union and North African countries, hydrogen strategies, the current status of renewable electricity generation and projects under development. It also presents needs for green skills in the renewable hydrogen sector. Kindly find the policy brief [here](#)

2.4.3 GFSE Policy Brief #18: SDG7: Tackling Energy Poverty through Renewable Energy Solutions

This Policy Brief outlines global actions to reduce energy poverty. In Africa, Productive Uses of Renewable Energy (PURE), such as solar irrigation systems and solar-powered refrigeration, improve agricultural productivity and support local businesses. These renewable solutions create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and reduce reliance on inefficient energy sources, helping to alleviate energy poverty. However, expanding renewable energy infrastructure requires thoughtful land and water management to avoid encroaching on habitats, disrupting migration corridors, or straining local water resources. To be truly regenerative, energy solutions should be integrated into local ecosystems - enhancing biodiversity, restoring soils, and conserving water. Kindly find the policy brief [here](#)

3 Cooperation with International Stakeholders

3.1 Cooperation with UNIDO

GFSE supported the UNIDO during the preparation for the International Vienna Energy and Climate Forum (IVECF) 2023, held on 2-3 November 2023.

GFSE also commented on the following policy briefs, drafted in preparation for the IVECF 2023 by several partners:

- Technological Solutions for the Energy Transition and Economy Decarbonization
- Building a Resilient Clean Energy Supply Chain for the Global South

Further expanding on the expertise, GFSE held a Solution Event in collaboration with IIASA on the social and technological aspects of energy efficient buildings in urbanised areas.

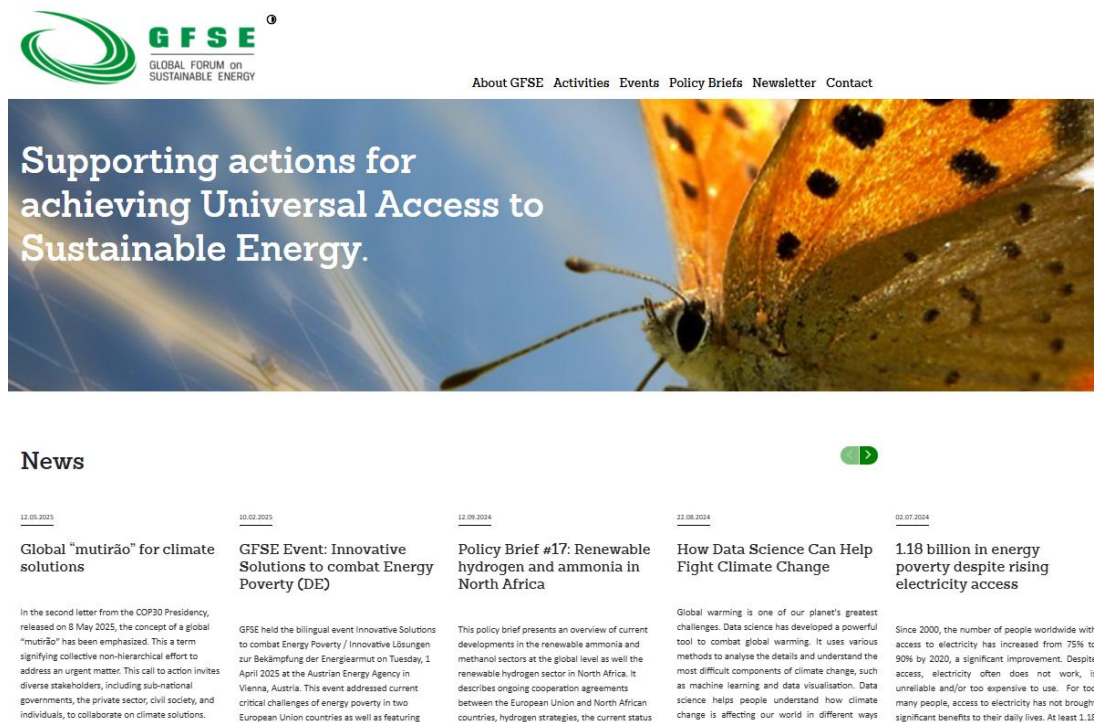
3.2 Cooperation with REN21

GFSE is also a member of REN21 and participated in the General assembly, the election of the new president and the discussion of the vision and strategy 2030 and, specifically, the REN21 change programmes. It also participated in a discussion with the new REN21 president (Mr. Ramon Mendez Galain) about the new vision and strategy of REN21 on 30 April 2025.:

The GFSE policy briefs on energy poverty was featured in the REN21 newsletters in April 2025 .

4 Information and Dissemination Activities

The website of the Global Forum on Sustainable Energy (www.gfse.at) serves to inform national, international stakeholders and members of the general public on latest developments, initiatives and events regarding the global efforts to advance a sustainable energy initiatives. Chronologically, current topics are published on the homepage chronologically.



Picture 3 Screenshot of GFSE Homepage, © GFSE

Therefore, the GFSE website features recent global developments, a general introduction to GFSE, the main activities over the years, as well as an overview of upcoming and past events. The Policy Briefs and Newsletter publications grant overviews on specific topics.

The policy briefs were disseminated through the GFSE, AEA and REN21 newsletters and on social media (twitter and LinkedIn). In addition, the policy brief on "renewable hydrogen and ammonia in North Africa" was distributed to several stakeholders including UNIDO, ADA, Verbund and the GN-SEC.

The GFSE secretariat also held a meeting with a developer of green ammonia projects looking based in the U.S. on the results of the policy brief on "renewable hydrogen and ammonia in North Africa" on 6 May 2025. The discussion focused, among others, on permitting for renewable energy projects and potential business opportunities in the different countries.

5 GFSE Association

The Global Forum on Sustainable Energy is a non-profit association established within the Austrian legal framework.

The Austrian Energy Agency hosts the secretariat of the GFSE and manages the activities of the association. These include care of members, collection of membership fees, management of the financial account in coordination with the responsible bodies of the association, organisation of the general assembly and further tasks as required.

The general assembly convenes once per year after the preparation of annual accounts and successful internal financial audit. The meeting is facilitated and summoned by the Austrian Energy Agency in coordination with the board of the GFSE. The Austrian Energy Agency prepares all documents for the general assembly meetings and ensures the timely execution of the internal financial audit.

Two general assembly meetings were held during the contract period, in October 2023 and October 2024.

6 Outlook on Future GFSE Activities

In the face of accelerating climate change and global energy challenges, effective solutions require inclusive, cross-sectoral collaboration. Renewable energy and energy efficiency can significantly contribute to socio-economic development, job creation, reducing air pollution and GHG emissions as well as improving industrial competitiveness, among others. Efforts to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions should be increased at the global level. Renewable energy and energy efficiency can be integrated into economic activities and improve quality of life. This requires a combination of innovative approaches in policy, business models, governance, financing and citizen's engagement.

Local value chains for RES and EE need to be built. When building local value chains, local actors should develop capacities to at least assemble, install, maintain and repair renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. They also need to prepare to upgrade their local value chains to capture more value added.

Skilled labor is a cornerstone of the sustainable energy transition. Currently, there is a shortage of qualified workers in the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors. Therefore, it is essential to implement measures to support the development of new skills, reskill and up-skill workers and harmonise training requirements and skills. Initiatives to develop skills and create jobs should be pursued, through collaboration between the private sector, governmental and educational institutions and improvements in the quality, modularity and accessibility of training.

The Global Forum on Sustainable Energy will continue to play a role in bringing Austrian and international experts together. As it has done in the past, GFSE will ensure that a dialogue platform exists for the exchange of experience, knowledge and good practice. This dialogue will contribute to strengthen coherence between climate and energy initiatives and development goals, especially in low- and middle-income countries. GFSE will also aim at promoting inclusive participation, particularly of youth, women, and marginalized groups.

Through policy briefs and workshops on key topics, including green energy skills, energy efficiency, women in the sustainable energy sector, energy poverty, renewable energy supply chains and the role of inclusive and sustainable industrialization, GFSE will continue to stimulate the dialogue between national and international stakeholders towards a sustainable energy transition. As such, the Global Forum on Sustainable Energy will continue its successful cooperation with UNIDO, REN21, and the Global Network of Regional Energy Centres (GN-SEC), while also cooperating with other stakeholders at the interface between development cooperation, sustainable energy and climate change. GFSE will maintain its role in showcasing the potential of renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions. It will also continue facilitating knowledge exchange, bridging diverse perspectives and aligning strategies for impactful action.

Annex I: Agenda of GFSE Events

Agenda of the GFSE-IIASA event Solution Event: High wellbeing with low energy demand towards modern net-zero cities

Agenda –High wellbeing with low energy demand towards modern net-zero cities		
09:45	Opening words	Mag. ^a Dr. ⁱⁿ Irene Giner-Reichl President of GFSE
Keynotes		
09:45-10:00	Demand-side solutions that enhance transformation towards net-zero cities	Bas van Ruijven, Senior Research Scholar at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA):
10:00-10:10	Technological, social and systemic innovations to impact on energy demand change in buildings”	Alessio Mastrucci, Research Scholar at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA):
10:10-10:20	Solutions for viable and high-quality building refurbishment in Austria	Elisabeth Sibille, Energy Efficient Buildings Expert at klimaaktiv
10:20-10:30	Energy Transition in the Dwelling Stock, the end of oil and gas floor heating systems in non-profit housing	Daniela Huber, Head of Property Management at Sozialbau
Panel Discussion		
10:30-10:55	Panel discussion and Q&A with the audience (25 min)	With the speakers
10:55-11:00	closing	Mag. ^a Dr. ⁱⁿ Irene Giner-Reichl President of GFSE

Agenda of the GFSE event “Green Skills in the Sustainable Building Sector”

Kindly note that this event was held in German. The agenda has been translated to English.

Agenda – Green Skills in the sustainable building sector		
17:00	Entry and Reception	
17:30	Opening words	Mag. ^a Dr. ⁱⁿ Irene Giner-Reichl President of GFSE
Keynotes		
17:35 - 17:50	Sustainable building with clay: new technologies and skills	Ao. Univ. Prof. ⁱⁿ Dipl.-Ing. ⁱⁿ Dr. ⁱⁿ phil. Andrea Rieger-Jandl FH CAMPUS WIEN
17:55 – 18:10	Transdisciplinarity in teaching	DI. ⁱⁿ Dr. ⁱⁿ Hildegard Sint FH CAMPUS WIEN
18:15 – 18:30	BIG’s Holistic Building Program [HBP]	Mag. Dirk Jäger Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft m.b.h
18:50 – 18:55	New planning approaches in the green industry	Dipl.-Ing. ⁱⁿ Susanne Formanek GRÜNSTATTGRAU Forschungs- und Innovations- GmbH
Panel Discussion		
18:55 – 19:40	Discussion round of the keynote speakers	Mag. ^a Dr. ⁱⁿ Irene Giner-Reichl President of GFSE
19:40 – 19:45	Closing	Mag. ^a Dr. ⁱⁿ Irene Giner-Reichl President of GFSE

Agenda of the GFSE event “Innovative Solutions to combat Energy Poverty”

16:30	Anmeldung & Einlass / Registration	
17:00	Eröffnungsworte / Opening	Irene Giner-Reichl Präsidentin von GFSE
Keynotes		
17:05 – 17:15	Bildung überwindet Energiearmut / Education to overcome Energy Poverty	Hannes Velik Leitung Strategische Partnerschaften Jugend eine Welt
17:15 – 17:25	Energiepartnerschaft in Benin / Energy Partnership in Benin	Aglaë Hagg-Thun Vorstand Oikocredit
17:25 – 17:35	Solar Pledge East Africa Program and Carbon Finance Projekte im Clean Cooking Sektor / Solar Pledge East Africa Program and Carbon Finance Projects throughout the Clean Cooking Sector	Clemens Griesauer Horizont3000
17:35 – 17:45	Soziale Energieberatung in Österreich / Social Energy Consulting in Austria	Anna Breuer klimaaktiv
17:45 – 17:55	Energiearmut in der Slowakei / Energy Poverty in Slovakia	Dušana Dokupilová Slowakische Akademie der Wissenschaften
18:00 – 18:30	Pause mit Snacks / Coffee Break	
Podiumsdiskussion / Panel Discussion		
18:30 – 18:55	Diskussionsrunde der Keynote-Speaker:innen / Panel Discussion Keynote speakers	Moderiert von / Moderated by Irene Giner-Reichl Präsidentin von GFSE
18:55 – 19:00	Closing	Irene Giner-Reichl Präsidentin von GFSE

Annex II: GFSE Newsletters

[Newsletter November 2023](#)

[Newsletter March 2024](#)

[Newsletter June 2024](#)

[Newsletter October 2024](#)

[Newsletter February 2025](#)

[Newsletter May 2025](#)

Annex III: Directories

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