



GAICC ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor

Examination Content Outline – February 2026

Global AI Certification Council (GAICC)

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February 2026

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1. Introduction

The Global AI Certification Council (GAICC) offers an advanced professional credential for senior artificial-intelligence governance and compliance leaders known as the GAICC ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor Certification (SLA).

This certification validates a practitioner's competence to lead, coordinate, and report complex audits of Artificial Intelligence Management Systems (AIMS) in accordance with ISO/IEC 42001:2023 and ISO 19011:2018. It affirms the ability to direct multi-disciplinary audit teams, integrate multi-standard management-system assessments, and evaluate the maturity, ethics, and cross-border accountability of AI-governance frameworks.

The Senior Lead Auditor credential represents applied mastery in assessing an organisation's AIMS at strategic and operational levels — analysing governance structures, AI-risk and impact management, data-sovereignty compliance, lifecycle-control effectiveness, transparency mechanisms, and continual-improvement maturity.

GAICC develops and administers its certifications in alignment with ISO/IEC 17024 (Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons) to ensure impartiality, transparency, and validity. Each GAICC examination is competency-based, derived from global practice analyses, and psychometrically validated to reflect the evolving responsibilities of AI-governance auditors, assurance specialists, and regulatory professionals worldwide.

This Examination Content Outline (ECO) defines:

- The domains of competence required of a certified Senior Lead Auditor.
- The tasks and enabling activities that demonstrate capability within each domain.
- The relative weighting of each domain in the overall assessment.

The SLA examination evaluates knowledge and skills required to lead first-, second-, and third-party AIMS audits, manage multi-site and multi-jurisdictional engagements, assess organisational maturity, and advise on continual-improvement and governance-integration strategies.

Questions are authored and validated by international subject-matter experts from government, academia, and industry to ensure accuracy, fairness, and global applicability. Each item maps directly to the GAICC ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor Certification ECO and references authoritative sources including ISO/IEC 42001, ISO 19011, GAICC Guidance Documents, and related standards such as ISO 9001 (Quality Management), ISO/IEC 27001 (Information Security Management), ISO/IEC 27701 (Privacy Information Management), and ISO 37301 (Compliance Management Systems).

This document serves as both the blueprint for the GAICC Senior Lead Auditor examination and a professional-development guide for audit-team leaders, consultants, and organisations committed to advancing responsible, transparent, and accountable AI-governance practice.

2. Exam Content Outline

The GAICC ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor Certification (SLA) examination measures a candidate's ability to apply advanced auditing principles and techniques to plan, direct, and evaluate complex Artificial Intelligence Management System (AIMS) audits in accordance with ISO/IEC 42001:2023 and ISO 19011:2018.

The outline below defines the major domains of professional competence and the approximate weighting of questions from each domain on the examination.

Each domain comprises a series of tasks — the key responsibilities expected of a Senior Lead Auditor — and corresponding enablers, which illustrate the knowledge, behaviours, and artefacts demonstrating mastery in practice.

The distribution ensures balanced coverage across the full AIMS audit and leadership lifecycle, encompassing governance and strategic leadership of AI audit programmes; multi-standard and cross-jurisdictional integration; performance and maturity evaluation; and ethical, transparent, and accountable audit conduct in responsible-AI ecosystems.

Domains and Weightings

Domain	Description	Approximate Weight on Exam
I. Strategic Governance and Leadership in AI Management Systems	Evaluating how top management defines the AIMS scope, governance structures, leadership roles, and policy direction; assessing organisational accountability, ethical leadership, and alignment with ISO/IEC 42001 and strategic objectives.	25 %
II. Advanced Audit of Implementation and Operational Control	Assessing the effectiveness of AIMS implementation and operation across multiple sites or jurisdictions — verifying AI-risk and impact assessments, data-governance and lifecycle controls, and conformance with Annex A–D guidance. Includes evaluation of cross-standard integration (27001, 27701, 9001) and multi-disciplinary audit leadership.	35 %
III. Performance, Maturity, and Continual Improvement	Auditing monitoring and measurement systems, management reviews, and CAPA processes; leading maturity assessments; benchmarking continual-improvement effectiveness and readiness for certification or re-certification.	25 %
IV. Ethics, Transparency, and Cross-Border Engagement	Evaluating integration of responsible-AI principles, explainability and transparency practices, supplier and stakeholder engagement, and cross-border data-sovereignty compliance within complex global audit contexts.	15 %

Domain	Description	Approximate Weight on Exam
Total		100 %

3. Domains, Tasks and Enablers

In the GAICC ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor Certification (SLA) framework, a domain represents a major area of advanced professional competence required to lead, coordinate, and evaluate complex audits of an organisation’s Artificial Intelligence Management System (AIMS).

Each domain comprises tasks — the measurable responsibilities of a Senior Lead Auditor, including directing audit teams, integrating multiple standards, and providing assurance on AI-governance maturity and accountability — and enablers, examples of tangible evidence, behaviours, or leadership actions that demonstrate these competencies in practice.

Enablers are illustrative rather than exhaustive, allowing flexibility across sectors, audit scopes, team structures, and organisational maturity levels. They accommodate single-site, multi-site, and cross-jurisdictional AIMS audits.

Domain I – Strategic Governance and Leadership in AI Management Systems (≈ 25 %)

Purpose:

To evaluate and lead audits of how senior management defines, governs, and continually strengthens the AIMS — ensuring that AI policies, objectives, and accountabilities align with strategic priorities, ethical values, and ISO/IEC 42001 requirements across multi-site or multi-standard environments.

Task	Illustrative Enablers / Examples
1. Assess strategic direction and scope of the AIMS.	Documented scope statements, context registers, cross-functional risk maps, and evidence of alignment between AI strategy and enterprise objectives.
2. Evaluate top-management commitment and governance structures.	Leadership evidence packs, governance-committee minutes, policy-approval trails, and resource-allocation records demonstrating accountability.
3. Verify integration of AIMS objectives into corporate and sustainability strategies.	Balanced-scorecard references, AI-objective dashboards, KPIs linked to ESG or compliance goals, and management-review follow-ups.
4. Assess leadership in ethical and responsible AI culture.	Communications from executives, ethics-training records, tone-from-the-top campaigns,

Task	Illustrative Enablers / Examples
	and recognition of ethical decision-making.
5. Audit Annex B implementation guidance for policy coherence and lifecycle governance.	Annex B audit matrices, policy-to-control traceability maps, and lifecycle-integration evidence across design, deployment, and retirement stages.
6. Lead audit-team planning for multi-standard or multi-jurisdictional contexts.	Integrated audit plans referencing ISO 42001 with 27001/27701/9001, team-competence matrices, risk-based sampling strategies, and stakeholder-communication plans.

Domain II – Advanced Audit of Implementation and Operational Control (≈ 35 %)

Purpose:

To lead and evaluate complex audits of an organisation's AIMS implementation and operations — verifying AI-risk management, data-governance, lifecycle controls, and integration with other ISO management systems (e.g., 27001, 27701, 9001). The Senior Lead Auditor ensures that operational evidence demonstrates effectiveness, traceability, and compliance with Annex A through D requirements.

Task	Illustrative Enablers / Examples
1. Evaluate AI-risk assessment and impact-analysis processes (AI-SIA).	Multi-system risk registers, AI-SIA records covering fairness, safety, and transparency; evidence of risk-ownership and treatment validation.
2. Verify risk-treatment and control implementation across Annex A families.	Treatment plans with proportional controls; SoA references; cross-walk to security and privacy standards; audit sampling of mitigation evidence.
3. Assess data-governance and AI-lifecycle controls.	Procedures for data quality, bias management, model validation, change control, and retirement; technical logs and audit trails.
4. Audit resource and competence management for AIMS operations.	Competence matrices, training plans, resource allocations by risk area, and evidence of cross-functional AI ethics awareness.
5. Evaluate communication and document-control effectiveness.	Communication matrices, documented-information controls, version-history and retention evidence, and access-management records.

Task	Illustrative Enablers / Examples
6. Audit operational planning and control through the AI lifecycle.	Sampled AI projects from design to decommissioning; change-management records; traceability matrices linking risks → controls → outcomes.
7. Lead integrated audits across multiple management systems.	Combined audit programmes, interface evidence logs, sector-specific control maps (health, finance, education).
8. Apply advanced audit techniques and AI-assisted tools.	AI analytics for pattern detection in risk data, automated sampling dashboards, audit management software records, and validation of tool ethics and bias.

Domain III – Performance, Maturity, and Continual Improvement (≈ 25 %)

Purpose:

To evaluate, lead, and benchmark an organisation’s AIMS performance and maturity — verifying that monitoring, measurement, and continual-improvement processes achieve measurable results, sustain compliance, and drive innovation in responsible-AI governance.

Task	Illustrative Enablers / Examples
1. Audit AIMS performance monitoring and measurement systems.	KPI dashboards (fairness, accuracy, drift), incident trend analyses, and evidence of data-driven decision making.
2. Evaluate internal-audit programmes and management reviews.	Audit schedules, independence records, review minutes, and management-follow-up actions demonstrating Clause 9 conformance.
3. Assess non-conformity and corrective-action effectiveness.	Root-cause analyses, CAPA logs, verification of effectiveness checks, and evidence of preventive triggers.
4. Lead maturity assessments for AIMS processes.	Maturity-model scoring sheets, rating calibration criteria, trend comparisons between audit cycles, and executive presentations of findings.
5. Benchmark continual-improvement initiatives and outcomes.	Improvement trackers, lessons-learned repositories, innovation registers, and cross-functional review outputs.
6. Provide strategic insight to top management on AIMS effectiveness and readiness.	Consolidated audit summary reports, maturity heat maps, and recommendations for policy and

Task	Illustrative Enablers / Examples
	risk framework updates.

Domain IV – Ethics, Transparency, and Cross-Border Engagement (≈ 15 %)

Purpose:

To assess and lead audits that verify whether AI systems and governance frameworks uphold ethical principles, transparency, and accountability — ensuring that cross-border operations, data transfers, and third-party relationships align with international obligations, cultural values, and responsible-AI standards.

Task	Illustrative Enablers / Examples
1. Evaluate integration of ethical and responsible-AI principles in governance and operations.	Ethical risk-control maps, fairness review evidence, bias testing results, and human-oversight protocols.
2. Assess transparency and explainability of AI decision-making.	Model documentation, user-facing explanation templates, traceability logs, and disclosure statements.
3. Audit stakeholder and community engagement processes.	Stakeholder consultation records, responsible-AI and sustainability reports, public disclosures, and feedback analysis.
4. Verify cross-border data-sovereignty and legal compliance.	Data-localisation registers, jurisdictional mapping (GDPR, HIPAA, Māori data principles), evidence of consent and transfer controls.
5. Evaluate supplier and third-party compliance with AIMS requirements.	Supplier audit reports, contractual assurance clauses, and third-party performance reviews.
6. Assess readiness for future technologies and autonomous AI auditing.	Future-tech audit scenario decks, blockchain traceability demonstrations, quantum-resilience planning, and auditor competency-readiness records.
7. Lead ethical and multicultural audit teams.	Team-diversity plans, conflict-of-interest declarations, cultural-sensitivity briefings, and ethical decision documentation during complex audits.

Cognitive Depth and Assessment Approach

The GAICC ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor Certification (SLA) examination assesses advanced professional judgement and leadership capability in directing, integrating, and evaluating complex AIMS audits.

The assessment measures competence across three progressive cognitive levels, consistent with international best practice in auditor certification and ISO 19011 guidance on auditor competence.

- **Understanding** – Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of ISO/IEC 42001, its clauses, annexes, and related ISO standards; understands the relationships among governance, ethics, risk, and lifecycle management within AI ecosystems.
- **Application** – Applies audit methodologies, sampling techniques, and evaluation frameworks to multi-standard, multi-site, and cross-jurisdictional audit contexts; translates findings into actionable recommendations for governance improvement.
- **Analysis, Evaluation, and Leadership** – Interprets complex audit evidence, integrates data from multiple systems, exercises ethical and strategic judgement, and leads multidisciplinary audit teams in assessing AIMS maturity, cross-border compliance, and organisational accountability.

Each examination item is designed to test one or more of these levels, ensuring a balanced measurement of technical expertise, analytical reasoning, and leadership capability. Scenario-based questions require candidates to synthesise evidence, justify audit conclusions, and demonstrate the ability to communicate results credibly to senior management and regulatory stakeholders.

4. GAICC Application & Payment

GAICC Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for the GAICC ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor Certification (SLA), candidates must demonstrate advanced education, professional experience, and structured training aligned with the competencies required to lead, coordinate, and evaluate complex Artificial Intelligence Management System (AIMS) audits.

Educational Background	Recommended Professional Experience	Formal Training Requirement
Diploma or equivalent	Five (5) years of cumulative professional experience, including at least two (2) years in auditing or assurance roles involving ISO-based management systems, AI governance, or digital-risk oversight.	Completion of at least 40 contact hours of structured Senior Lead Auditor training delivered by GAICC-authorized providers or equivalent recognised institutions. Students can also fulfil this requirement by completing GAICC self-paced courses.
Bachelor's degree or higher	Three (3) years of relevant experience, including documented participation in multi-site, multi-standard, or cross-border audits of AI systems or other ISO management frameworks.	Completion of at least 40 contact hours of structured Senior Lead Auditor training delivered by GAICC-authorized providers or equivalent recognised institutions. Students can also fulfil this requirement by completing GAICC self-paced

Educational Background	Recommended Professional Experience	Formal Training Requirement
		courses.

Additional Notes

- Experience must include leadership or coordination of audit teams, preparation of audit reports, and evaluation of corrective-action effectiveness.
- Training hours must be obtained through GAICC-authorised providers or equivalent recognised institutions delivering courses mapped to ISO/IEC 42001 and ISO 19011 competencies.
- Individuals who hold the GAICC ISO/IEC 42001 Lead Auditor Certification automatically meet the prerequisite knowledge requirement and may apply directly for the Senior Lead Auditor examination after demonstrating the additional professional-experience threshold.

5. GAICC Examination Information

The GAICC ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor Certification (SLA) examination is a competency-based assessment designed to evaluate a candidate's ability to lead, coordinate, and report complex AIMS audits in accordance with ISO/IEC 42001:2023 and ISO 19011:2018.

It measures advanced mastery of audit leadership, strategic analysis, and governance maturity evaluation across multi-standard and cross-border contexts.

The examination tests the candidate's ability to integrate audit objectives and risk criteria into multi-site audit programmes; direct audit teams and evaluate evidence for conformity, performance, and ethical accountability; and interpret complex governance data, exercise professional judgement, and communicate findings credibly to executive and regulatory audiences.

Exam Structure

Component	Description
Total Questions	80
Format	Multiple-choice and scenario-based questions featuring simulated multi-site and multi-standard audit cases, delivered through the GAICC Online Testing Platform.
Allotted Time	120 minutes (2 hours) total testing time.
Pre-Exam Tutorial & Post-Exam Survey	A short interactive tutorial precedes the exam, and an optional survey follows it. Neither counts toward the official exam duration.

Exam Delivery

The SLA examination is available as online AI-proctored or centre-based testing. All questions appear in random order. Once a section is submitted, answers cannot be revisited.

The GAICC testing platform includes:

- Built-in timer and progress bar.
- Flag-for-review function for marked questions.
- Automatic submission at time expiry to ensure fairness and consistency.

Scoring and Results

- Each scored question is worth one (1) mark.
- Results are reported immediately upon completion of the exam.
- Feedback is provided by domain: Strategic Governance and Leadership; Advanced Implementation and Operational Control; Performance, Maturity, and Continual Improvement; and Ethics, Transparency, and Cross-Border Engagement.
- A minimum scaled score of 70% is required to pass.

All scores are verified through GAICC's psychometric calibration process to maintain fairness and comparability across testing sessions and delivery modes.

Retake Policy

Each candidate is granted a single exam attempt. Retakes are permitted without limit, subject to payment of the applicable resit fee for each attempt.

Additional Information

GAICC conducts regular psychometric reviews to preserve exam validity, reliability, and global relevance.

If an exam session is affected by confirmed technical issues or system irregularities, the candidate will be offered a free re-examination without penalty.

6. GAICC ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor Certification – Fees

Examination, membership and renewal fees are published in the applicable GAICC Candidate Handbook and on the GAICC website (www.gaicc.org). To maintain a single source of truth, fee amounts are not reproduced in this Examination Content Outline.

7. GAICC Certification Maintenance and Renewal Requirements Certification Validity

The GAICC ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor Certification is valid for three (3) years from the date of issue. To maintain active status, certified professionals must demonstrate continuing leadership, learning, and engagement in AI governance, audit, and ISO/IEC 42001 implementation.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Requirements

During each three-year certification cycle, GAICC-certified Senior Lead Auditors must earn and record a minimum of 40 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) hours, distributed across the following categories:

CPD Category	Description	Minimum Hours
1. Professional Learning	Participation in GAICC-recognised advanced training, webinars, or workshops focused on audit-leadership, ISO integration (42001 + 27001 + 27701 + 9001), AI-ethics assurance, or governance-maturity evaluation.	14
2. Practical Application	Direct leadership of complex or multi-site AIMS audits; supervision of audit teams; mentoring junior auditors; or participation in cross-border and data-sovereignty assessments.	14
3. Contribution & Knowledge Sharing	Authoring or presenting professional papers, leading auditor-training events, participating in standards-development work, or serving on ethics and governance committees.	7
4. Elective Activities	Additional professional-development or community-engagement activities supporting continual growth and leadership capability.	5

Total Minimum Required: 40 CPDs over three years.

Renewal Process

To renew the GAICC ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor Certification, candidates must:

1. Submit a Renewal Application through the GAICC Certification Portal before the certification expiry date.
2. Provide verifiable evidence of at least 40 completed CPD hours earned during the three-year certification cycle.
3. Pay the renewal fee as specified in the current GAICC Fee Schedule.
4. Reaffirm agreement to the GAICC Code of Professional Conduct and the Ethical AI Audit Principles.

Lapsed Certifications

- If renewal requirements are not met by the expiry date, the certification status changes to “Lapsed.”
- Lapsed professionals may reinstate their certification by completing all renewal steps within 12 months of expiry.
- After 12 months, re-certification requires retaking the full Senior Lead Auditor examination.

Audit and Verification

GAICC conducts periodic CPD audits to confirm the accuracy of reported learning and professional-development activities.

Candidates selected for audit must submit supporting documentation such as:

- Certificates of completion or attendance records;
- Publications, presentations, or mentoring logs; or
- Employer or client attestation letters verifying audit participation or learning activity.

8. GAICC Code of Conduct and Ethics Statement

Purpose

The Global AI Certification Council (GAICC) upholds the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and professional behaviour in the certification and practice of Artificial Intelligence Management System (AIMS) professionals.

All GAICC-certified individuals must demonstrate ethical leadership and responsible stewardship in the evaluation, assurance, and governance of AI systems, consistent with the values of ISO/IEC 42001 and the ethical principles defined in ISO 19011.

Commitment to Ethical Practice

By applying for and maintaining GAICC certification, candidates agree to:

1. Act with Integrity and Fairness – Conduct all professional activities honestly, without bias, conflict of interest, or misrepresentation of competence or credentials.
2. Protect Human Rights and Wellbeing – Ensure that AI systems under their influence respect human dignity, fairness, privacy, and non-discrimination.
3. Ensure Transparency and Accountability – Promote explainable and auditable AI outcomes; disclose limitations, risks, and decision criteria in plain language.
4. Safeguard Data and Information – Uphold confidentiality and data-protection principles consistent with ISO/IEC 42001, ISO/IEC 27701, and applicable laws.
5. Exercise Professional Competence – Maintain up-to-date knowledge through continual learning, professional development, and adherence to recognised standards and best practices.
6. Report and Mitigate Misuse – Take appropriate action when encountering unethical AI practices or violations of applicable regulations or standards.
7. Respect Intellectual Property and Diversity of Perspectives – Value collaboration, cultural sensitivity, and inclusiveness across disciplines and communities.

Disciplinary and Enforcement Process

Violations of this Code may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or revocation of GAICC certification.

Complaints or ethics concerns may be submitted confidentially to the GAICC Ethics and Compliance Committee, which oversees investigations, recommendations, and fair resolution procedures.

Acknowledgment

All GAICC-certified professionals are required to confirm their acceptance of the Code of Conduct and Ethics during application, renewal, or recertification. Adherence to this Code reinforces global confidence in GAICC-certified practitioners and the responsible governance of Artificial Intelligence technologies.

9. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

GAICC ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor Certification (SLA)
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Global AI Certification Council (GAICC)

What is the GAICC ISO/IEC 42001 Senior Lead Auditor Certification?

It is an internationally recognised advanced credential that validates the competence of professionals who lead and manage complex Artificial Intelligence Management System (AIMS) audits in accordance with ISO/IEC 42001:2023 and ISO 19011:2018.

The certification demonstrates mastery in multi-standard, multi-site, and cross-border auditing, governance-maturity evaluation, and leadership of audit teams in responsible-AI assurance.

Who should apply for this certification?

This certification is ideal for:

- Experienced AI-governance auditors and compliance managers.
- Audit-programme leaders or consultants managing multi-standard assessments (e.g., 42001 + 27001 + 27701 + 9001).
- Regulatory or assurance professionals overseeing cross-border AI-governance frameworks.
- Senior practitioners mentoring auditors or advising executive leadership on AI-risk governance.

What are the eligibility requirements?

Applicants must meet education, professional-experience, and formal-training criteria:

- Education: Diploma or higher qualification.
- Experience: Diploma holders — minimum five (5) years of relevant AI-governance or ISO-audit experience, including two (2) years in lead-auditor roles; Bachelor's degree or higher — minimum three (3) years of relevant professional experience with documented team-leadership responsibilities.

- Training: Completion of at least 40 contact hours of structured Senior Lead Auditor training (Modules 1–23) delivered by GAICC-authorised providers or equivalent recognised institutions. Students can also fulfil this requirement by completing GAICC self-paced courses.

How many questions are in the exam and how long does it take?

The examination consists of 80 questions (75 scored + 5 unscored pre-test items). Candidates have 120 minutes (2 hours) to complete the exam.

What is the passing score?

A minimum scaled score of 70% is required to pass.

How often can I take the exam?

Each candidate can retake the exam multiple times, but must pay a re-examination fee for each attempt, as there are no free retakes.

What is the certification validity period?

The Senior Lead Auditor Certification is valid for three (3) years from the date of issue.

How do I maintain or renew my certification?

Certified professionals must complete a minimum of 40 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) hours within each three-year cycle and submit a renewal application with the required fee.

What does the exam cover?

The exam assesses knowledge across four domains:

- Strategic Governance and Leadership in AI Management Systems
- Advanced Audit of Implementation and Operational Control
- Performance, Maturity, and Continual Improvement
- Ethics, Transparency, and Cross-Border Engagement

What is the exam format?

The exam includes multiple-choice and audit-scenario-based questions. It is available as AI-proctored online testing or centre-based assessment through GAICC's secure platform.

How much does the exam cost?

Current examination and membership fees are published in the applicable GAICC Candidate Handbook and at www.gaicc.org.

How much is the membership fee?

Current examination and membership fees are published in the applicable GAICC Candidate Handbook and at www.gaicc.org.

How long does GAICC take to process an application?

Online applications are reviewed within five (5) calendar days, provided all training documents are complete. If selected for audit, additional verification may extend processing time.

What happens if I fail to renew my certification?

If renewal requirements are not met by the expiry date, your status becomes “Lapsed.” You may reinstate within 12 months by completing renewal steps; after that period, full re-examination is required.

Does GAICC provide digital credentials?

Yes. Upon certification, you receive a digital badge and certificate that can be shared on LinkedIn, résumés, and professional profiles.

How can I contact GAICC for support?

Global AI Certification Council (GAICC)
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