



Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada

AGRICULTURAL CLIMATE SOLUTIONS ON FARM CLIMATE ACTION FUND

2024-2025

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

February 2024





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PURPOSE of the GUIDELINES

These guidelines will:

- 1. Help you determine if you may be eligible for funding from the New Brunswick Soil and Crop Improvement Association Inc. (NBSCIA) a third-party delivery Recipient for the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada **On-Farm Climate Action Fund** (OFCAF) in the Province of New Brunswick.
- 2. Provide instructions and explanations to assist you as the Ultimate Recipient in completing an application for the OFCAF program to the NBSCIA.

NOTE: Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (AAFC) introduced changes to the On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) effective April 1, 2024. As an implementation partner, NBSCIA reserves the right to change program delivery processes, eligibility requirements, funding levels, assessment criteria, and reporting requirements.

Please ensure you are using the most current version of the OFCAF Program Guidelines as shown in the page footer as: 2_NBSCIA_OFCAF_Program-Guidelines_2024-2025_Feb_9_2024 .

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) is an initiative to help farmers tackle climate change. The Fund is part of the Government of Canada's Agricultural Climate Solutions initiative, which falls under the \$4 billion Natural Climate Solutions Fund, a program managed by Natural Resources Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

The New Brunswick Soil and Crop Improvement Association is a delivery partner distributing OFCAF program funding to non organic farmers and groups in New Brunswick. ECOCERT Canada (<u>https://www.ecocert.com</u>) is delivering cover cropping and nitrogen management BMPs to certified organic farmers in New Brunswick.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The objective of the On-Farm Climate Action Fund is to support farmers in adopting beneficial management practices that store carbon and reduce greenhouse gases, specifically in the areas of:

- 1. nitrogen management
- 2. cover cropping
- 3. rotational grazing practices

These practices also provide other environmental benefits such as improved biodiversity and soil health.

NBSCIA activities to support the adoption of beneficial management practices, such as outreach, education and training.

The expected result of the OFCAF program is a resilient food production system in Canada that:

- helps Canada meet national emissions reduction targets
- protects the environment and improves soil health
- builds the strength and competitiveness of our agricultural businesses and economy

! Note: The OFCAF program will only fund implementation of new BMPs, **including expansion of BMPs to a farm area where these BMPs have not been previously employed** in order to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve carbon sequestration. The program will not fund ongoing practices on previously supported acreage.



WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY

All agricultural producers, groups of agricultural producers or cooperatives with a New Brunswick Registered Professional Agricultural Producer (Ex: NB004576) number are eligible for a maximum contribution based on gross farming income as reported on your most recent Income Tax and Benefits Return (line 9659 on T2042 - Statement of Farming Activities) or T2 Corporation Income Tax Return (line 9659 on Schedule 125).

The Maximum Funding amount (see table to right) is the most an Ultimate Recipient may receive for the sum of all projects during the four-year period of the OFCAF program, which ends

| Gross Farm Income | Maximum Funding |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Under \$10,000 | \$10,000 |
| \$10,000 - \$49,999 | \$25,000 |
| \$50,000 - \$99,999 | \$35,000 |
| \$100,000 - \$249,999 | \$50,000 |
| \$250,000 or more | \$75,000 |

March 31, 2025. "Ultimate Recipient" means an individual, body corporate, sole proprietorship, partnership or unincorporated organization, capable of entering into a legally-binding agreement.

Groups of producers must provide a list of partners and ensure that an individual recipient does not exceed the maximum eligible individual contribution for the maximum Gross Farm Income level.

OFCAF contributions are considered taxable income by the Canadian Revenue Agency, therefore Ultimate Recipients must provide a valid Canadian Revenue Agency Corporate Income Tax Number (Ex. 123456789RC0001) or a Social Insurance Number (SIN).

Cost Sharing

Unless otherwise stated eligible costs related to a project will be shared between the OFCAF program and the successful applicant at a ratio of 70:30 (program: applicant). Cash and in-kind contributions will be counted in ultimate recipient (applicants) funding for the cost-sharing ratio.

Applicants must clearly indicate all sources of funding for the project. Sources of funding can include contributions from:

- Applicant directly (your organization)
- Federal government programs
- Provincial/territorial government programs
- Municipal government programs
- Other sources of funding (loans, non-governmental grants, etc.)

Funding from federal, provincial, territorial and municipal government sources for activities within the scope of an Ultimate Recipient's project (individual or group) is limited to 85% of total eligible costs of the Project during the four-year period of the OFCAF program.

Applicants are encouraged to apply for funding for more than one BMP area (nitrogen management, cover cropping, rotational grazing) and element.

PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

Projects are the activities carried out at your farm or location to meet the program objectives. Projects must have clear start dates and end dates with measurable outcomes.

For the purposes of the OFCAF program, each project must be completed and claimed within a fiscal year (Example: April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025). Project examples:

• Inter-seed silage corn in Field 23



- Install cross fencing in west pasture to create paddocks
- Install cross fencing in south pasture to create paddocks and install solar panels for waterer
- Plant winter cover crop after annual crop harvest on 130 acres 2024
- Purchase manure injector

It is recommended that you discuss your plan with the NBSCIA OFCAF Program Administrator, Agrologist (PAg) or Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) prior to completing the application.

HOW TO APPLY

OFCAF registration forms can be accessed at: <u>https://www.nbscia.ca/ofcaf-program-registration/</u>. An OFCAF application form with appropriate Appendices and an Application Guide will be emailed to all registrants. If not received contact the NBSCIA OFCAF Program Administrator by email <u>ofcaf.facf@nbscia.ca</u> or phone 506-392-0408.

Hard copy OFCAF applications are available from the NBSCIA OCAFA Program Administrator; email <u>ofcaf.facf@nbscia.ca</u> or phone 506-392-0408.

Completed registrations and applications can be submitted as follows:

- emailed to: <u>ofcaf.facf@nbscia.ca</u>
- mailed to NBSCIA OFCAF Program Administrator:
 - 150 Woodside Lane Unit 2, Fredericton NB; E3C 2R9

For assistance with the application process contact a member of the NBSCIA OCAFA Program Administration team: Stephen London (506) 392-0408 ofcaf.facf@nbscia.ca; David Walker (506) 461-6046 research@nbscia.ca; David Good (506) 391-9424 drgood449@gmail.com; Ray Carmichael (506) 276-3311 ofcafadmin@nbscia.ca

Applicants must submit a complete application to be considered for funding. The application package consists of the application form and the corresponding Appendix A, B or C for each BMP (A. nitrogen management, B. cover cropping, C. rotational grazing), as well as any project details (such as supplier quotes and estimates) required for each BMP.

For additional information regarding OFCAF Best Management Practices Contact your local NBSCIA regional coordinator, NBDAAF Crop specialist, crop consultant, Professional Agrologist or Certified Crop Advisor.

| Andrew Sytsma | Andrea Versloot | Joseph Graham |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| (506) 245-2220 | (613) 262-5546 | (506) 567-0224 |
| <u>carleton@nbscia.ca</u> | <u>central@nbscia.ca</u> | <u>kings@nbscia.ca</u> |
| Beverly Booth | Jean Mars Jean Francois | Gabrielle Schenkels |
| (506) 364-2853 | 1-581-459-7075 | (506) 625-7718 |
| moncton@nbscia.ca | <u>nwno@nbscica.ca</u> | northshore@nbscia.ca |

Deadline for the first intake of 2024-2025 applications is April 30, 2024 for projects funded in the fiscal year ending March 31,2025. Priority will be given to first time applicants to the OFCAF program.

Subject to the availability of funding the deadline for the second intake of applications is July 31, 2024 for projects funded in the fiscal year ending March 31,2025. Priority will be given to first time applicants to the OFCAF program.



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ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

! Note: Each BMP appendix management plan must be certified by a Professional Agrologist (PAg), Professional Agronomist or Certified Crop Advisor (CCA).

Prior to approval, all applications must include a digital map with georeferenced field location polygons.

ArcGIS shape (shp) files are available from service providers (consultants, custom lime and fertilizer spreaders, JD Operations Center).

KMZ files can be digitized and exported from Google Earth Pro. <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-</u>2sRYiwqzDs



A. Nitrogen Management BMP

Purpose: Activities will focus on appropriate nitrogen management practices to optimize and reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers to reduce GHG emissions. Reducing excess nitrogen can improve water and air quality and increase profit margins of farms. The design and implementation of a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) will ensure that crop requirements are achieved through responsible management practices that will meet target yields and quality without applying nitrogen in excess. NMPs are effective for both environmental and economic sustainability on a farm when completed by an experienced agrologist or crop advisor.

| Financial contributions will be provided for the following BMP elements (as recommended by a PAg. or CCA). | | |
|--|--|---|
| Eligible Activities* | Eligible Costs | Ineligible Activities/Costs |
| Planning, Technical Assessments or Engineered Designs (e.g., nutrient management plan, including crop diversification | a) Development of 3-year N-based Nutrient Management Plans will be funded at \$1,500 for first 100 acres, plus \$10 per additional acre; funded at 70% of actual costs to a | • Management of nutrients other than nitrogen |
| plans to increase legumes and pulses in rotation; engineering or technical design work by a qualified professional) Soil testing and soil mapping Use of dual nitrification and urease inhibitors; polymer coated urea (PCU) products Use of soil organic amendments and synthetic fertilizer substitutes (manure, compost, digestants) Increasing legumes in rotations to account for N credit from legumes in subsequent crop | acte, funded at 70% of actual costs to a maximum of \$4,000 per recipient over the full program. Development of 1 year N-based Fertility Plans will be funded at \$500 for first 100 acres plus \$5 per additional acre; funded at 70% of actual costs to a maximum of \$2,000 per recipient per year b) 70% up to \$18.00 per acre to a maximum of \$20,000 for geo-referenced soil testing and mapping to document OM, support variable rate application of amendments to enhance nitrogen fertilizer efficiency and the adoption of an additional specific nitrogen, cover crop or rotational grazing BMP | • In the case of transitioning to better manure management, only activities that improve manure incorporation in the soil are eligible. Injection is preferred; however, if equipment for this is not available, other methods of incorporation as soon as possible after application are also eligible. |
| Split application of fertilizer with reduced rate as a result of increased crop use efficiency (change from application in spring at seeding only, to application at spring and during crop development to better match plant needs and reduce nitrogen loss) Fertilizer application equipment and equipment upgrades to allow for banding, side dressing and injection Transitioning to better manure management with improved manure incorporation to avoid volatilizationsolid manure should be incorporated as soon as possible to avoid ammonia loss | c) 85% of regular fertilizer and urease and nitrification inhibitor price difference d) 70% up to \$70.00 per acre for purchasing legume seed from registered dealers listed by NBSCIA and planting cost to increase legumes in rotation e) Offsetting higher cost of synthetic fertilizer substitutes (manure, compost, digestates, sludge), where applicable and when incorporated at 70% to a maximum of \$70.00 per acre. f) 70% of cost of fertilizer application equipment and equipment upgrades to a maximum of \$30,000, to allow for split application, banding, side dressing, injection and must support the adoption of an additional specific nitrogen BMP. g) 70% up to \$10.00 per acre for cost of one split nitrogen application | BMPs applied to a specific farm area prior to the Program are ineligible. Note, however, that an expansion of a BMP application on a farm area where these BMPs have not been previously employed is eligible. Nitrification and urease inhibitors applied with polymer coated urea (PCU) products on the same field in the same year. |



| h) If transitioning to better manure management; 70% of costs up to a maximum of \$30,000 associated with improved manure incorporation to avoid volatilization and the adoption of an additional specific nitrogen | |
|--|--|
| i) 85% of price difference between regular nitrogen fertilizer and PCUs | |

Project Requirements

·All activities must be supported by a Professional Agrologist or Certified Crop Advisor, demonstrating the grower's nitrogen management standard practice and change of practice; and the benefits and rationale for the change of practice

All fields approved for projects through this BMP are subject to site visitations and project audits.

Detailed invoices and proof of payment must be included with the project's final report and claim.

•All applications must include a georeferenced aerial photo map with farm and field identification or georeferenced field location polygons for all fields utilized in the BMP, prior to approval.

Successful Applicant Requirements

All applicants must agree that field acreage will be determined from a georeferenced aerial photo map.

B. Cover Cropping BMP

Purpose: Projects will focus on the use of appropriate cover crops and cover crop management to protect soil from erosion, enhance soil organic matter and provide undisturbed cover over winter and early spring months. Cover crop establishment prior to winter will reduce nutrient loss events by retaining residual soil nutrients within the crop during the fall and winter. A well-established cover crop, maintained until the following spring, acts as soil cover by holding topsoil in place outside of the growing season when soil erosion caused by wind and water can be significant. Cover crops can also fix or retain nitrogen, decreasing nitrous oxide emissions and can help build soil organic matter, sequestering carbon.

| Financial contributions will be provided for the following BMP elements (as recommended by a PAg. or CCA). | | |
|---|--|--|
| Eligible Activities* | Eligible Costs | Ineligible Activities/Costs |
| Planning and Technical assessments when needed (e.g., agronomic services) Establishing winter cover crops Intercropping cover crops Fall planted cover crops as well as spring planted cover crops under seeded with the main crop (intercropping) and full season annual and/or perennial cover crops in a rotation Equipment to manage cover crop seeding and maintenance | a) 70% up to \$2,500 for professional service costs related to cover crop planning b) 70% up to \$70.00 per acre for purchasing certified or common seed of recommended cover crop species from registered dealers listed by NBSCIA and cost of planting (tillage and seeding) cover crops. Plus \$35.00 per acre if a legume is included in the mix and seeded prior to Aug 15. c) Up to 70% of the cost of specialized equipment to | Costs for cover crops where growing and leaving cover crops undisturbed over-winter is not new and has been a routine practice used by the farmer Costs related to mechanical or chemical termination of the cover crop Fertilizer and crop protection costs Crops that will be harvested or grazed leaving less than 6 inches (15cm) of cover crop growth over winter Crops that can be harvested in the next growing season intended for market (e.g., winter cereals) Cover crops planted to take land permanently out of production are also not eligible Fall cover crops planted later than October 10 Fertilizer and crop protection costs Costs related to rejuvenation of existing forages, pastures or hay land. |



| better manage cover crops, leaving at least 6 inches (15cm) of cover crop growth over winter | Volunteer cover of seed loss from the preceding harvest (peas, cereals, etc.) or regrowth of existing crops BMPs applied to a specific farm area prior to the Program are ineligible. Note, however, that an expansion of a BMP application on a farm |
|---|--|
| | area where these BMPs have not been previously employed is eligible |

Project Requirements

Details of the cover cropping plan, included with the application, supported by Certified Crop Advisor, or Professional Agrologist (PAg), demonstrating the grower's cover cropping standard practice and change of practice; and the benefits and rationale for the change of practice

All fields approved for projects through this BMP are subject to site visitations or satellite imaging which may occur in the summer, late fall and/or early spring in order to ensure that a commercial crop was grown and that a winter cover crop was established and maintained until the following spring

All applications must include a georeferenced aerial photo map with farm and field identification or georeferenced field location polygons for all fields utilized in the BMP, prior to approval.

Detailed invoices and proof of payment must be included with the project's final report and claim. Successful Applicant Requirements

Agree to establish a winter cover crop following the growing season of a preceding crop

Agree to establish the winter cover crop according to the crop parameters and timelines outlined in the cover crop plan submitted with the application

Agree not to till or plow the winter cover crop following its establishment before the spring tillage All applicants must agree that field acreage will be determined from a georeferenced aerial photo map.



C. Rotational Grazing BMP

Purpose: To support new fencing and livestock watering systems infrastructure to strengthen rotational grazing systems. Managing pastures to control the timing and intensity of grazing animals can mitigate greenhouse gas emissions by maintaining healthier, younger grass that is more digestible for ruminant livestock. This increases feed-use efficiency in grazing ruminant livestock, and subsequently, reduces CH_4 emissions from enteric fermentation processes. It also improves the soil and grass's ability to sequester CO_2 emissions from the atmosphere, and reduces compaction and overgrazing.

Financial contributions will be provided for the following BMP elements (as recommended by a PAg. or CCA).

| Eligible Activities* | Eligible Costs | Ineligible Activities/Costs |
|--|---|--|
| Planning, technical assessments or engineered designs (e.g., rotational grazing plan, engineering or technical design work by a qualified professional) Activities to implement grazing plans Activities to implement low methane pastures (increased alfalfa content, high quality forage and species containing tannin, such as sainfoin) Other intensive, short duration grazing | a) 70% up to \$2,500 grazing management plans and technical assessments, 70% up to \$4,000 for engineered designs b) Up to 70% for rotational grazing infrastructure and installation (e.g., cross fencing, wildlife friendly fencing, temporary fencing, and waterers, including remote watering systems when powered by renewable energy) c) 70% up to \$70.00 per acre for purchasing certified or common seed of recommended legume and grass pasture mixtures from registered dealers listed by NBSCIA seeded prior to Aug 15 in a rotational pasture and cost of seeding for improved pasture composition | Perimeter fences, if construction is not aligned with grazing plan Costs related to removing or replacing old or existing fences Non-renewable power sources such as generators Used fencing materials Texas gates Portable livestock corral panels On-going maintenance costs Barbed wire Fertilizer BMPs applied to a specific farm area prior to the Program are ineligible. Note, however, that an expansion of a BMP application on a farm area where these BMPs have not been previously employed is eligible |

Project Requirements

A brief project summary that includes details regarding the pasture plan, improvement activities, and the timing and livestock density will be required with the application.

All approved projects through this BMP are subject to site visitations to ensure that the rotational grazing practice is being implemented for which this program provided financial assistance.

Detailed invoices and proof of payment must be included with the project report and claim. All applications must include a georeferenced aerial photo map with farm and field identification or georeferenced field location polygons for all fields utilized in the BMP, prior to approval.

Successful Applicant Requirements

All applicants must agree that field acreage will be determined from a georeferenced aerial photo map. All approved projects through this BMP are subject to site visitations to ensure that the rotational grazing practice is being implemented for which this program provided financial assistance.



APPROVAL PROCESS

Approvals will be made by a selection committee consisting of NBSCIA Administrative staff and New Brunswick agricultural industry stakeholders. Applications received during the specified time periods above (HOW TO APPLY) on a first come -first serve basis, however priority will be given to first time applicants, subject to available funding.

The committee will meet regularly and consider applications submitted prior to the meeting date. The committee's decisions will be final.

If approved, you'll receive a letter and contribution agreement by email that outlines your funding amounts and critical time lines. Once you've reviewed the contribution agreement, sign and return the letter of acceptance.

If your application is not approved, you will be notified in writing.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

An application must be complete in order to be assessed by NBSCIA. Applications will be assessed against the following criteria and the OFCAF program objectives.

- eligibility (of applicant, activities, costs, project timelines)
- alignment against the OFCAF program's objective and priorities
- how the project will contribute to the adoption of beneficial management practices that store carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- capability of the applicant to successfully complete the project, including:
 - financial capacity including evaluation and validation of all sources and levels of project financing, both government and private
 - o managerial capability (experience and track record)

SUBMITTING CLAIMS

All 2024-25 activities must be completed and claims submitted by March 31, 2025.

Note that claims for per acre amounts require a georeferenced aerial photo map with farm and field identification with georeferenced field location polygons, prior to payment.

Only expenses directly related to the project activities stipulated in the Letter of Offer are eligible. Expenses that do not follow the guidelines are not eligible. If you are unsure about a particular expense, or if an expense is unusual, please check with NBSCIA OFCAF Administrator before making a financial commitment.

A proof of expenditure and payment is required with claims for reimbursement. Quotes, purchase orders, or packing slips will not be accepted as proof of payment. Examples of acceptable proof of payment include sales receipts, with cancelled cheques, wire payments, EFTs, credit card and e-transfer payment confirmations. PAID in FULL receipts are not acceptable. All claims must have an onsite verification by a NBSCIA OFCAF Administrator prior to payment.

All claim payments are subject to NBSCIA having funds on deposit from the Government of Canada represented by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.



REPORTING

Recipients will be required to report on expenditures, performance and results.

Performance and Results

Recipients may be required to complete a survey which will include a short summary on the impact that the investment has had on the farm enterprise.

Financial Reports

Recipients must submit and retain copies of invoices and proof of payment for eligible project costs incurred, for seven (7) years after the completion of the project.

Other reports may be required at NBSCIA's discretion.



General Ineligible Activities and Costs for Ultimate Recipient (Farmer) Projects • Projects commenced prior to April 1, 2024 Costs of travel, hospitality, meals and accommodations • • Purchase or sale of land, buildings or facilities or • Invoices not issued in the applicant's name associated taxes or fees (e.g., land transfer tax) • Any cost not specifically required for the execution of New building construction a project • Normal operating costs associated with Typical farm equipment (e.g., tractors, skid steers, carrying out or expanding a business's current combines, livestock trailers) and related accessories or attachments (unless specified as an eligible cost operations under one of the three BMP areas) • Taxes, legal fees, financing charges, loan interest • Tile drainage systems payments, bank fees • In-kind payment for third-party services • Lime • Materials from the applicant's inventory • Crop storage facilities Fabricated items, equipment or materials not • Mentoring or coaching services purchased from a recognized dealer. For the • Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and associated purposes of the program, a recognized dealer is components typically defined as a business where • TMR mixers, feed pushers and automated feeding manufacturing is a key service or the business is systems an authorized dealer for certain item(s) • Hand or power tools or attachments • Any cost, including a tax, that is eligible for a • Multi-use items (e.g., items that can reach beyond the rebate, credit or refund (e.g., a refundable scope of the project such as computers, printers, etc.) portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax) • Labour costs, other than as part of installation costs, • Gifts and incentives including wage subsidies • Annual services fees of any type • Administration costs such as office supplies, materials, • Expenses considered regular replacement, repair or space, telecommunications, audiovisual, postage and maintenance; freight • Warranties for equipment or components used to • Capital items not specifically required for the modify equipment execution of the project • Any equipment or equipment customizations that do • Costs for activities that are deemed to be part of not support an increase in soil carbon or a decrease in normal business practice for any recipient nitrogen loss • Costs related to marketing activities and business • Costs related to activities that directly influence or promotion lobby any level of government • Land purchases • Costs of basic research • Goodwill • Costs of ongoing activities • Legal fees • Normal commercial expansion costs • Any portion of any cost that, in NBSCIA's opinion, • Lease of land, buildings and facilities for the purpose exceeds the fair market value for that cost item of starting up a new business or as part of normal • Any cost, such as amortization that would not result in operation or costs for rental of facilities, equipment a direct, out-of-pocket expense for the recipient or machinery • Costs being reimbursed under an existing federal, • Costs of training and skills development that provincial or territorial program fulfill any academic requirements towards • Any other expenditure not specifically listed as eligible completion of a professional certificate. or otherwise approved as eligible diploma or degree program • Permits and approvals Costs of sponsorship of conferences and learning events or initiatives



RESOURCE LINKS

NBSCIA ON FARM CLIMATE ACTION FUND APPLICATION GUIDELINES https://www.nbscia.ca/ofcaf-program-registration/

IPNI Estimates of Nutrient Uptake and Removal-- http://www.ipni.net/article/IPNI-3296

Ontario Soil Fertility Handbook-https://www.ontario.ca/page/soil-fertility-handbook

OMAFRA Agrisuite----- https://agrisuite.omafra.gov.on.ca/

Farmers for Climate Solutions--- https://www.farmlearninghub.ca/collections/atlantic-region

University of Massachusetts -- <u>https://ag.umass.edu/sites/ag.umass.edu/files/fact-sheets/pdf/EstimatingManureInventory%2811-30%29.pdf</u>

Forage U-Pick-- https://upick.beefresearch.ca/



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