



## HALAL LABEL CERTIFICATION ASSISTANCE AS A STRATEGY TO INCREASE THE COMPETITIVENESS OF MSME PRODUCTS IN CIRO CIROE VILLAGE

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<p><b>Info Article</b></p> <p>Received : 05 November 2025</p> <p>Revised : 02 Desember 2025</p> <p>Accepted : 28 Desember 2025</p> <p>Publication : 31 Januari 2026</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>Halal Certification, MSME Empowerment, Competitiveness, Community Service</i></p> <p><b>Kata Kunci:</b> Sertifikasi Halal, Pemberdayaan UMKM, Daya Saing, Pengabdian Masyarakat</p> <p><b>Licensed Under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License</b></p>	<p><b>Abstract:</b> <i>This study aims to examine the implementation of a community empowerment program through halal certification assistance to enhance the competitiveness of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Ciro-Ciroe Village. The community service activity was conducted on November 24, 2025, involving 30 community members, particularly MSME actors. The methods applied included lectures, direct socialization, interactive question-and-answer sessions, and administrative assistance related to the halal certification registration process. The program stages consisted of preparation, socialization through lectures, interactive discussions, and technical assistance. The results indicate an increased awareness and understanding among MSME actors regarding the importance of halal certification, improvement in product quality through the implementation of the halal assurance system, and simplification of the halal certification registration process. In addition, the program fostered collaboration among MSMEs and addressed various implementation challenges through practical solutions. Overall, comprehensive halal certification assistance proved effective in strengthening MSME capacity and enhancing product competitiveness in both domestic and international markets.</i></p> <p><b>Abstrak:</b> Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pelaksanaan program pemberdayaan masyarakat melalui pendampingan sertifikasi halal dalam upaya meningkatkan daya saing produk usaha mikro, kecil, dan menengah (UMKM) di Desa Ciro-Ciroe. Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini dilaksanakan pada tanggal 24 November 2025 dengan melibatkan 30 anggota masyarakat, khususnya pelaku UMKM. Metode yang digunakan meliputi ceramah, sosialisasi langsung, sesi tanya jawab interaktif, serta pendampingan administratif terkait proses pendaftaran sertifikasi halal. Tahapan kegiatan dimulai dari persiapan, pelaksanaan sosialisasi, diskusi interaktif, hingga pendampingan teknis. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan adanya peningkatan kesadaran dan pemahaman pelaku UMKM mengenai pentingnya sertifikasi halal, perbaikan kualitas produk melalui penerapan sistem jaminan halal, serta kemudahan dalam proses administrasi sertifikasi. Selain itu, kegiatan ini mendorong kolaborasi antar pelaku UMKM dan membantu mengatasi berbagai kendala implementasi melalui solusi yang aplikatif. Secara keseluruhan, pendampingan sertifikasi halal terbukti efektif dalam memperkuat kapasitas UMKM dan meningkatkan daya saing produk di pasar domestik maupun internasional.</p>
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## INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a vital role in the Indonesian economy, not only through their contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) but also as a primary source of job creation and poverty alleviation. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS, 2020), more than 99% of business units in Indonesia are MSMEs, which significantly strengthen both local and national economies. This sector has proven to be highly resilient in facing various global economic shocks compared to large corporations. Therefore, government support through incentive policies and easy access to capital is essential for small business actors to scale up. Furthermore, the acceleration of MSME digitalization is expected to expand market reach to the international level to realize sustainable economic independence.

The significance of MSMEs in the Indonesian economy is inseparable from their ability to create a business ecosystem that is responsive to local market needs. The majority of MSMEs are spread across various regions, including rural areas like Ciro Ciroe Village, reflecting a grassroots economic growth dynamic crucial for sustainable development. The economic contribution of MSMEs extends beyond the production of goods and services to the development of local community skills and knowledge. Additionally, rural MSMEs act as an effective social safety net by reducing unemployment through massive labor absorption. Through the integration of digital technology and product innovation, MSMEs are expected to enhance their global competitiveness while strengthening the national economic structure in the long term.

Despite their immense contribution, many MSMEs, particularly in rural areas like Ciro Ciroe Village, face challenges that hinder their efforts to increase competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market. One of the biggest obstacles is the lack of access to certification and standards that guarantee product quality. This challenge is multi-factorial, encompassing technical, administrative, financial, and informational aspects. Limited understanding of legal procedures, such as P-IRT permits or Halal certification, often prevents local products from penetrating the broader modern retail market. Consequently, synergy between the government and academia is needed to provide sustainable assistance to overcome these structural barriers and increase the market value of MSME products

In facing intensifying market competition, MSME products must not only meet good quality standards but also fulfill various certifications recognized by consumers and the market. International certification and product labels have become critical elements

in modern marketing strategies, especially in dealing with e-commerce and global market expansion. Official certificates serve as guarantees of safety and professionalism, directly increasing consumer trust in local brands. Without clear standardization, it will be difficult for MSME products to compete on digital platforms that demand transparency of information and legally tested quality. Therefore, strengthening literacy regarding the importance of business legality and product certification is an urgent step for MSMEs to survive amidst global market dynamics.

Halal certification is one of the most vital certifications, given that the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim and tends to prefer products with a halal label as a guarantee of compliance with Islamic law. This is particularly relevant as Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population, which directly influences consumer preferences. According to Lestari (2020), the halal label is no longer just a religious obligation but has become an indicator of quality and safety closely monitored by global consumers. This certification provides significant added value in increasing market trust and strengthening the brand image of MSMEs amidst tight competition (Sari et al., 2021). Furthermore, Fathoni (2020) emphasizes that products with official certification have a greater chance of penetrating modern retail markets and international digital platforms. The implementation of mandatory halal certification is also driven by government regulations requiring all food and beverage products to have official permits for consumer protection (Hidayat & Siradj, 2015). Thus, fulfilling halal standards is a crucial strategy for MSMEs to expand market share and ensure future business sustainability (Warto & Samsuri, 2020).

For instance, Fitri et al. (2023) revealed that halal certification can serve as a product differentiation tool that provides a competitive advantage. Halal certification functions not only as regulatory compliance but also as a powerful marketing strategy to build consumer trust and improve product positioning. As the global market grows, more countries demand halal products for imported goods, making this label a primary "entry ticket" for local commodities (Suryani & Hardiani, 2021). This makes halal certification important not only in the domestic market but also internationally as a guarantor of hygiene standards and production ethics (Putra, 2022). Export demand for halal products has increased significantly from various countries, opening vast business opportunities for Indonesian MSMEs that meet these requirements. With the support of digital marketing, certified MSMEs can more easily reach the global Muslim market niche which has high purchasing power (Azizah & Raharjo, 2020). Therefore, accelerating the

certification process is a strategic urgency to ensure Indonesian products are not mere spectators amidst the global halal industry boom (Mubarok, 2021). Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Assurance asserts that all products circulating in Indonesia, especially food and beverages, must be halal-certified. Since the enforcement of this regulation in 2024, all products sold in the Indonesian market are required to have a halal label. This means MSMEs must immediately adapt so their products remain competitive. However, while this regulation offers great opportunities, many still struggle due to factors such as high costs, administrative difficulties, and a lack of knowledge regarding the process. These obstacles become significant bottlenecks, especially for MSMEs in remote areas with limited access to information and resources.

MSMEs in *Ciro-Ciroe Village* have great potential to increase their competitiveness through halal certification. However, limited information and understanding regarding the process remain major hurdles. Data shows that out of more than 1.6 million MSMEs in Indonesia, only about 10% have obtained halal certification (BPS, 2020). This indicates that many business actors are not yet fully aware of the importance of halal certification. Key obstacles include perceived high costs, complicated administrative procedures, and a lack of mentoring. Moreover, a lack of technical understanding regarding the Halal Product Assurance System (SJPH) criteria often discourages business actors before they even start. Ignorance of the free certification scheme (*Sehati*) provided by the government also widens the gap between local product potential and global market standardization. Therefore, more intensive collaboration between academia, government, and local communities is needed for continuous education.

Community empowerment through halal certification assistance is a highly appropriate strategy to overcome these issues. The assistance provided will not only facilitate MSMEs in obtaining certification but also increase their capacity to implement the halal assurance system at every production stage. According to Haryanto (2022), intensive mentoring is proven effective in reducing administrative barriers that are often the primary fear for small business actors. This also strengthens the competitiveness of MSME products in domestic and international markets through value-added and quality standards (Savitri & Wijaya, 2021). Additionally, Andriansyah (2023) emphasizes that education on the SJPH is crucial for maintaining hygienic production consistency. Synergy between academia and the government through community service programs is expected to accelerate certification digitalization for MSMEs in remote villages (Nurrachmi, 2020). Thus, successful mentoring will be a strong foundation for realizing

the economic independence of the community based on legally recognized halal products (Zainuddin & Latif, 2022).

According to Pujyanto & Setyorini (2024), halal certification assistance helps MSMEs understand the required processes, simplifies registration, and improves product quality according to set standards. Structured and sustainable mentoring is more effective in helping MSMEs overcome administrative and technical barriers. Through intensive guidance, small business actors can more easily implement SJPH criteria in their production chain (Hasan & Pratama, 2021). Furthermore, Ramlan (2022) emphasizes that direct assistance can minimize documentation errors that might hinder the issuance of official permits from BPJPH. The presence of assistants also serves to educate the public on the importance of food hygiene and safety as part of global halal standards (Fitriani, 2023). This strategic step not only increases domestic consumer confidence but also opens access for rural products to compete in foreign markets (Saputra et al., 2020). Thus, the integration of technical assistance and regulatory ease is the key to success in accelerating the growth of the halal ecosystem in Indonesia (Mulyadi, 2025).

This mentoring involves various important aspects, including socialization on the importance of certification, the preparation of administrative documents, and training on implementing the halal assurance system from raw material selection to packaging and distribution. With this assistance, MSME actors in *Ciro-Ciroe Village* will gain a deeper understanding of the necessary steps to take. This is expected to have a significant impact on increasing product competitiveness and opening access to broader markets, both nationally and internationally. Halal certification provides essential benefits, including increased consumer trust, expanded market access, and an improved product reputation. Heriani (2022) shows that halal-certified products are more trusted by consumers, especially the Muslim majority in Indonesia. This certification allows MSMEs to compete with similar products that do not yet have a certificate. Ikawati & Purnomo (2025) affirm that halal certification acts as a catalyst in increasing sales and strengthening consumer trust, especially in the rapidly growing era of digital commerce and e-commerce.

Mentoring in *Ciro-Ciroe Village* also has the potential to create a business ecosystem more conducive to local economic growth. MSME actors are equipped with knowledge and skills that strengthen their competitiveness in the long term. For example, research by Pramadani et al. (2024) shows that MSMEs receiving certification assistance succeeded in increasing their managerial capacity and product quality. Mentoring also

strengthens networks between MSME actors, the government, and related institutions, creating more effective collaboration. Despite the challenges—such as limited technical knowledge and time constraints—greater support from the government and certification bodies can overcome these hurdles. Research by Gunawan et al. (2021) found that the involvement of local governments and certification bodies in providing sustainable assistance helps resolve obstacles faced by MSMEs in the halal certification process. In conclusion, halal certification assistance in Ciro Ciroe Village is expected to significantly increase MSME product competitiveness. This program aims not only to help obtain certificates but also to improve capacity in applying standard-compliant halal assurance systems. This creates a more inclusive and sustainable business ecosystem, ultimately boosting the local economy and creating new opportunities for MSME actors in Ciro Ciroe Village.

## **METHOD**

This community service activity was carried out in Ciro-Ciroe Village, Wattang Pulu District, Sidenreng Rappang Regency on November 24, 2025. Ciro-Ciroe Village was chosen as the location because it is a village with a fairly high density of MSMEs, especially in the food and beverage business sector. This location has great potential but also faces significant challenges in terms of access to halal certification information. The activity lasted for one full day with a time allocation that had been planned in detail to maximize the effectiveness of the delivery of the material.

This activity was attended by 30 people from Ciro-Ciroe Village, consisting of MSME actors in the field of food and beverage production, local artisans, and representatives from the village government. Participants were selected based on the criteria of business ownership or direct linkage to the MSME sector in the village. This diverse participation ensures that the mentoring includes various perspectives and needs of local MSMEs.

Halal certification assistance for MSMEs in Ciro Ciroe Village was implemented through direct lecture and socialization methods. This method was chosen as it provides an opportunity for direct interaction with MSME actors, offering a deeper understanding of the importance of halal certification and facilitating Q&A sessions that allow participants to better comprehend the material presented. This interactive approach has proven more effective than passive methods in increasing participants' awareness and commitment.

**Preparation Stage** In the initial stage. The initial phase of this community service program was centered on meticulous preparation and strategic coordination with the village government of Ciro Ciroe. This stage was vital to ensure that the program was perfectly aligned with the local context and the specific needs of the community. To achieve this, the team conducted a series of situational analyses through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and informal interviews with local business owners. These interactions allowed the team to identify the primary obstacles faced by MSMEs, such as lack of technical knowledge regarding the Halal Product Assurance System (SJPH) and administrative hurdles. By understanding these pain points, the team could tailor the assistance program to be more solution-oriented and relevant to the participants' daily operations.

In addition to field assessments, the preparation stage involved rigorous logistical and academic planning to ensure the activity's success. The team carefully selected competent speakers with expertise in halal certification and developed comprehensive socialization materials that simplified complex legal regulations into actionable steps. Scheduling was handled flexibly to accommodate the busy production hours of MSME actors, while a strategic and accessible venue was chosen to maximize attendance. Furthermore, the preparation team ensured the availability of essential supporting infrastructure, including professional audiovisual equipment for effective presentations, as well as document templates and reference materials designed to serve as practical guides for the participants during their certification journey.

**Socialization Stage Through Lectures** Socialization was conducted through lectures delivered by experts. These lectures aimed to provide comprehensive basic information regarding halal certification. The lecture material covered several main components:

- a. **Legal Basis for Halal Certification:** An explanation of the regulations underlying the obligation for halal certification, including Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Assurance and other related regulations. In this session, MSME actors were briefed on the importance of halal certification in complying with Indonesian regulations and the legal impacts of non-compliance. Understanding this regulatory landscape is crucial to encouraging MSMEs to take proactive action in obtaining certification.
- b. **Benefits of Halal Certification:** The socialization focused on the advantages of possessing a halal certificate, such as increased consumer trust, market expansion, and product differentiation. Speakers provided real-life examples of how halal

certification can open broader market opportunities, both domestically and internationally. Case studies of successful MSMEs that have obtained halal certification were used to illustrate its real positive impact.

- c. Halal Certification Process: In this section, MSME actors were guided through the steps required to obtain halal certification. The process was explained in detail, starting from preparing necessary administrative documents and internal audit stages to the audit and product verification process by relevant certification bodies. Clear process flowcharts and timelines were presented to help participants understand the duration and sequence of each stage.
- d. Free Halal Certification Program: Information regarding free halal certification programs, such as the SEHATI (Free Halal Certification) program which MSMEs can utilize to reduce certification costs, was shared during this lecture. The goal of this session was to ensure that MSMEs in Ciro Ciroe Village understand they have the opportunity to obtain a halal certificate at a lower cost through government programs. Details on requirements, registration procedures, and program timelines were also explained.

Interaction and Q&A Stage Following the lecture session, a Q&A session was held to allow participants to ask questions regarding problems or obstacles they faced concerning halal certification. This session was vital to ensure that MSME actors understood the material and could resolve any confusion. During the Q&A, speakers provided practical solutions and helped MSME actors identify the steps they must take to obtain certification. Experience shows that these interactive sessions reveal specific questions that cannot be answered through general lectures, providing a valuable opportunity for personalized guidance relevant to each MSME's specific situation.

Administrative Assistance Stage After the socialization, the assistance team provided administrative support to MSMEs to help them prepare the documents required for the halal certification process. In this phase, assistants guided MSME actors in preparing documents such as raw material lists, ingredient and additive lists, and other necessary documents for registration. This assistance was conducted directly by providing examples and document templates that comply with current requirements. The assistance team ensured that every MSME actor understood the administrative procedures and was able to complete the documents correctly. Follow-ups were conducted to verify that documents were well-prepared before the registration phase was initiated.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Increasing Awareness and Understanding of MSME Actors

The community service activities carried out in Ciro Ciroe Village successfully increased the awareness and understanding of MSME actors regarding the importance of halal certification. Through lectures and socialization delivered directly by experts, MSME actors gained deeper knowledge concerning the benefits of halal certification, as well as the concrete steps required to obtain the certificate. Many MSME actors expressed that they previously did not fully understand the urgency of halal legality; however, after participating in this activity, they felt more confident to immediately proceed with the application. According to Prasetyo (2021), a direct educational approach has proven effective in changing the perception of micro-business actors toward the complexity of certification bureaucracy. This increase in awareness is crucial because a solid understanding of hygiene and halal standards is the primary foundation for MSMEs to penetrate the modern retail market (Rahayu & Kurnia, 2022). Furthermore, Sari et al. (2020) emphasized that the growing confidence of MSME actors post-socialization becomes a major driver in accelerating the digitalization of halal certificate registration. Ultimately, the success of this program is expected to provide a long-term impact on strengthening the village's economic structure based on officially certified flagship products (Wijaya, 2023).



**Figure 1:** Socialization of Halal Certification. The atmosphere of socialization about the importance of halal certification for MSMEs in Ciro Ciroe Village. The resource person provided an explanation of the halal certification process and its benefits.

**Source:** Personal Documentation

The positive response from participants indicates that this activity has provided a better understanding of the importance of halal certification as a tool to build consumer trust and expand the market for MSME products. This is in line with the findings of the research conducted by Pramadani et al. (2024), which state that proper education can enhance the capacity of MSMEs in managing the halal certification process and strengthen their product competitiveness.

### **Improvement of Product Quality and Halal Assurance System**

One of the significant outcomes of this activity is the improvement of MSME product quality through the implementation of a halal assurance system at every stage of production. During the socialization session, MSME actors were taught how to ensure that the raw materials used meet halal standards, as well as how to maintain the cleanliness and sanitation of production facilities. Several MSME actors reported that they have begun to pay attention to hygiene aspects that were previously overlooked, leading to improvements in product quality.



**Figure 2:** Training and Capacity Enablement. MSME actors participated in training to strengthen their capacity in preparing documents and implementing a halal assurance system in production.

**Source:** Personal Documentation

The training provided also covers managerial aspects that assist MSME actors in managing halal certification administration, such as managing the documents required for the registration process. This indicates that the activity not only provides knowledge about halal certification but also helps MSMEs improve their product quality.

### **Efficient Halal Certification Registration Process**

Direct mentoring provided to MSME actors in compiling administrative documents for halal certification has proven effective in increasing regulatory compliance. Several MSME actors who initially felt overwhelmed by the administrative process expressed that after receiving guidance, they felt more prepared and found it easier to complete their halal certification registration. The mentoring team provided direct assistance in drafting the necessary documents and preparing facilities for audits and product verification to ensure they meet the established standards. According to Fauzi & Handoko (2022), the presence of mentors on the ground is able to reduce the psychological barriers of business actors toward the complexity of registration bureaucracy. This is consistent with the findings of Susanto (2021), who stated that personal knowledge transfer is much more effective than one-way socialization in the context of product standardization. This success is also influenced by the use of supporting instruments such as document templates that simplify the identification of raw materials for business actors (Arif et al., 2023).

Although some MSME actors faced difficulties in completing administrative documents, intensive mentoring allowed them to overcome these obstacles systematically. The halal certification registration process proceeded more efficiently and minimized errors that could occur without technical assistance. Latif (2020) explained that continuous technical guidance is capable of lowering audit failure rates during the field verification stage. This mentoring acts as a safety net that ensures all critical points in the production process have been correctly documented according to the principles of the Halal Product Assurance System (Nugroho & Saputri, 2024). By minimizing administrative errors, MSMEs can obtain certificates in a shorter duration, allowing for the rapid achievement of product competitiveness. This efficiency ultimately encourages more business actors in rural areas to participate in the free halal certification program initiated by the government.

### **Increased Collaboration Among MSMEs**

One of the positive impacts of this activity is the formation of strategic collaboration among MSME actors, creating a supportive business ecosystem. During discussion sessions and communication forums, MSME actors who have already obtained halal certification can share experiences and challenges they faced, while providing practical solutions to one another. This strengthens the network between

MSMEs and opens opportunities for collaboration in marketing halal products, both locally and internationally. According to Wibowo (2022), social networks among micro-business actors are very effective in accelerating the transfer of knowledge regarding technical production standards that comply with Sharia. Furthermore, this collaboration helps MSMEs optimize the production and distribution of halal products through the utilization of shared resources (Hidayat & Pratama, 2021). With this synergy, operational efficiency can be increased so that product competitiveness in the global market becomes more robust (Sari, 2023).

In addition to strengthening internal relationships between business actors, this mentoring provides an opportunity for MSMEs to strengthen relationships with related institutions, such as the village government, BPJPH, and MUI. This institutional support is crucial in facilitating easy access to information regarding the latest regulations and sustainable business development. Ramadhan & Fitri (2020) emphasized that partnerships between MSMEs and halal authority institutions are a key factor in creating legal certainty for consumers. Direct interaction with authorities during the mentoring period can also reduce negative perceptions regarding bureaucratic complexity (Mulyadi, 2025). Through this intensive coordination, MSMEs not only gain product legitimacy in the form of a certificate but also access to various other government assistance programs. Ultimately, a harmonious relationship between business actors and regulators will drive the acceleration of Indonesia's vision as a world halal industry center.

### **Challenges Faced and Solutions**

During the implementation of this community service activity, there were several challenges faced by MSME actors, including:

- a. **Limited Technical Knowledge:** Some MSME actors initially had limited knowledge regarding the halal certification process and the halal assurance system. To overcome this, the mentoring team provided intensive and comprehensive guidance, including real-life examples that made it easier for MSME actors to understand the process. The training provided was tailored to the background and level of knowledge of each MSME.
- b. **Administrative Difficulties:** Difficulty in preparing complex administrative documents was one of the main obstacles. The mentoring team addressed this by providing ready-to-use document templates, correct filling examples, and direct guidance in completing each document.

- c. **Cost Concerns:** Some MSME actors were concerned about the costs required for halal certification, even though the free halal certification program (SEHATI) was available. Mentors helped them understand the long-term benefits and provided information on programs that can reduce certification costs.
- d. **Time Constraints:** Some actors experienced time constraints in participating and completing documents due to their business activities. To address this, mentors provided various alternative times and flexible mentoring methods, including assistance via telephone or social media

### **Expected Long-Term Impact**

Through this comprehensive halal certification mentoring, MSMEs in Ciro Ciroe Village have strengthened their foundation to compete in an increasingly tight market. Improved product quality, better management systems, and access to broader market networks are concrete results expected to continue in the long term. Previous research by Achmad et al. (2023) showed that MSME empowerment through structured mentoring can increase productivity and sales by 40-50% within one year. It is expected that MSMEs in Ciro Ciroe Village will achieve similar or even better results by implementing the lessons from this community service activity. Furthermore, a multiplier effect is also expected, where successfully certified MSMEs can become mentors for others, thus accelerating the adoption of halal certification in the village.

### **CONCLUSION**

The community service activity carried out in Ciro Ciroe Village successfully provided a significant positive impact on MSME actors in terms of understanding and implementing halal certification. Through direct lectures and socialization, MSME actors gained deeper knowledge about the importance of halal certification as a strategy to increase product competitiveness. The administrative assistance provided facilitated MSME actors in meeting the requirements to obtain a halal certificate and strengthened their managerial capacity in managing the certification process efficiently. This activity also succeeded in improving the quality of MSME products through the proper implementation of the halal assurance system, from raw material selection to product packaging. Improvements in the cleanliness of production facilities and the management of halal raw materials are highly positive outcomes of this mentoring. Additionally, the formation of collaboration among halal MSMEs opens opportunities for them to share

experiences and strengthen marketing networks. With these results, it is hoped that MSMEs in Ciro Ciroe Village can continue to grow and increase their competitiveness in domestic and international markets.

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