



ams
SUSTAINABILITY

Annual Sustainability Priorities 2023

JULY 2023

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INTRODUCTION

Dear AMS councillors and UBC student community,

Welcome to AMS Sustainability's 2023 priorities report!

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about our department's operations this year. AMS Sustainability is a department within the Office of the Vice-President Administration. Our responsibilities include overseeing the sustainability of the Society's operations, organizing student-facing sustainability events, and representing the AMS in campus-wide sustainability conversations.

This report highlights the initiatives and actions that AMS Sustainability is aiming to implement in our term. It was created in accordance with AMS Code to guarantee transparency between the Society, its Council, and the students. Furthermore, it helps Councillors become aware of our goals so that Council can hold our operations accountable throughout the year. The goals in this report were created in consultation with various AMS and campus partners to ensure that our operation supports a wide range of actions in current sustainability discourse, ranging from circular economies to climate justice. This year, we're working to ensure that sustainable practices are accessible, and that the Society is transparent with its operations. This will help the Society's actions reflect the voice of its membership and continue to be a leader in sustainable practice.

We are proud to present our goals for the upcoming year and would love to hear your feedback. Please don't hesitate to leave a message on [this anonymous form](#) or send us any questions at the email addresses below. Thank you for your support!

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2023-2024 PRIORITIES OVERVIEW

BUILDING A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Building a circular economy will help make sustainable actions more accessible by creating low-cost, low-barrier lifestyle change opportunities for students.

TAKING CLIMATE ACTION

Climate action is to take urgent action to mitigate climate change and its impacts. This means reducing our emissions and finding justice-based solutions.



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ADVANCING FOOD SUSTAINABILITY

To reduce the impact of our food systems and address food-related inequalities, we'll be making sustainable choices more accessible and take action against food insecurity.

SUPPORTING STUDENT COMMUNITIES

The climate crisis isn't a fight we can tackle alone. We'll be making it easier to join the movement by engaging collaborating with clubs and students.

REVIEWING PLANS AND PROCEDURE

Up-to-date plans and procedures will ensure that sustainability work is continued for years to come.

BUILDING A CIRCULAR ECONOMY



Paul Joseph / UBC Brand & Marketing

Return-It Program

Main ASAP Goal 1.13 → Reducing overall waste generated by the AMS Nest. | Also related to ASAP Goal 1.8, 1.12, 1.14, 1.15, and 2.10

We plan to partner with Return-It to **promote the existing Express & Go container refund station on campus**. We hope that promoting this program will make it more accessible and will incentivize students to start returning and educating students from out-of-town on the recycling culture in BC. Some of the steps we are taking in relation to this project are: meeting with Encorp Canada who manages the Return-It service and meeting with Campus and Community Planning to get data on the usage of the current location. Aside from promoting Express & Go, we will also conduct research on the recyclables of the University and will **explore piloting a Return-It Bin Program in the Nest** where recyclables will be directly collected by Return-It and collected bottle deposit fees will be donated to the AMS Food Bank.

Reusable Containers in the Nest

Main ASAP Goal 2.7 → Increase the availability of reusable foodware options and continue to develop programs such as container sharing and “For Here” options for consumers. | Also related to ASAP Goal 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 2.6, 2.8 and 2.10

In efforts to reduce the consumption of single-use cups and containers—regardless of material—from Nest food outlets, we will **conduct research on implementing a reusable**

container program to all of our Food & Beverage outlets. We will continue working with the University to bring such a program to our outlets, and we hope to form a partnership in the future with an easy, convenient and accessible service that allows students to do a *buy, eat, return, get deposit back* practice in their day to day use of the Nest.

We will also further **promote existing programs to help reduce disposable container consumption in the Nest.** This project would be a part of our collaboration with SEEDS which focuses on the creation of a marketing plan in promoting the circular economy in the Nest and evaluation of the efficacy of existing reusable programs and initiatives.



Credit: Soapstand

The Soapstand Station

Main ASAP Goal 2.10 → Continue to pursue and innovate on zero-waste related strategies and initiatives. | Also related to ASAP Goal 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 2.6, and 2.8

Soapstand is a soap-refilling station that encourages users to bring their own container, **promoting a circular economy by making soap purchasing waste-free, simple, and affordable.** The AMS currently partners with Soapstand to host a machine on the first floor of the Nest. We intend to further promote conscious consumption through continued partnership with Soapstand by collaborating with our clubs, constituencies, and UBC Student Housing to ensure that we are targeting students that are more likely to use the service. As the company works to expand their business on campus, we will support them through a redesign of their space in the Nest. We will also be evaluating the efficacy of the program to ensure it has a positive impact on the student community.

Additionally, we also plan to install a new beverage refill station in the Nest as part of our priorities for the year. The **beverage refill station will offer a wide range of products that will be offered at low cost to all users, and will promote the use of reusable containers** by encouraging the community to choose sustainable and healthy drinking options. Some steps that will be taken in relation to this project are: having pre-launch marketing plans for student engagement; having a trial period to analyze the usage and benefits of the service for students and towards sustainability; and conducting free-tastings to help us gauge what kind of drinks students would appreciate more.



Credit: UBC Sustainability

Textbook Recycling

Main ASAP Goal 1.14 → Supporting new and existing methods of recycling, waste diversion and circular systems including e-waste, soft plastics, composting, and food saving. | Also related to ASAP Goal 1.13

One of the graduation gifts from the graduating class of 2023, the **Little Free Library will build a circular economy around the usage of textbooks**, which are often discarded after a term. AMS Sustainability and the Office of the Vice-President Administration will oversee the implementation of this project due to its low-barrier, cyclical nature and physical space demands. This space will be open year-round for students to take and leave textbooks as they need at no cost, addressing textbook affordability, accessibility, and waste reduction as the Society continues to push for campus-wide adoption of open educational resources.



Credit: UBC Sustainability

Current Student Projects

Main ASAP Goal 1.14 → Supporting new and existing methods of recycling, waste diversion and circular systems including e-waste, soft plastics, composting, and food saving. | Also related to ASAP Goal 5.6

Mosa (Glass Recycling)

Mosa is a student-led startup to encourage a circular economy by selling candles and glassware made from upcycled glass. We have previously supported Mosa by placing glass collection bins in the Nest and granting them funding from the Sustainability Projects Fund. We will continue to support Mosa by providing space for their bins around the Nest as it comes at no cost and supports a student-led project.

Mycoremediation of Cardboard Waste

This is a Sustainability Projects Fund project that is experimenting with mushrooms to reduce cardboard waste. This innovative project is working to grow blue oyster mushrooms on cardboard waste, hopefully eventually finding a way to convert waste into food and prevent soiled cardboard from being sent to landfills. We currently house the project in the ISC, although they plan to relocate in the near future to accommodate an increased physical footprint. For more on this project, read their progress report [here](#).

Lending Library

AMS Sustainability will implement a trial period for the Lending Library project which aims to further integrate sustainability on campus by endorsing circular economies, as a resource-share hub offering equipment and tools at a borrowing rate of \$2-\$5 per week.

TAKING CLIMATE ACTION



Hover Collective / UBC Brand & Marketing

Annual GHG Reduction Strategy

Main ASAP Goal 1.15 → Implementing carbon neutral operational practices in coordination with internal and external stakeholders | Also related to ASAP Goal 1.13, 1.12, 2.15

To ensure that the Society is held accountable on its goal of Net Zero emissions by 2025, AMS Sustainability partners with Ostrom Climate annually to create our Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report. **This report analyzes our carbon emissions for the year to make recommendations on how we can stay on track to achieve Net Zero**, and also allows the Society to maintain its carbon neutral status.

We will start the inventory assessment for the FY2022 report once we receive the report for FY2021 so that next year's team will be able to implement their reduction strategy as soon as possible. We will also be implementing the emission reduction strategies from the most updated version of the report. Lastly, we will make sure that this year, the Sustainability Reports from October 2023 and March 2024 will provide specific updates on our progress relating to GHG Reduction Strategy. The very last time that a GHG Report was presented to Council was in April 2021 and can be found [here](#).

UBC Green Days Advocacy

Main ASAP Goal 3.17 → Work with UBC stakeholders to grow and create new academic, extracurricular, and co-curricular programs centered around sustainability. | Also related to ASAP Goal 3.11, 4.8, and 5.6

UBC Green Days is a monthly initiative established by the Department of Geography 2022. This initiative aims to “**reduce transportation emissions across all UBC bodies**

and encourage an increase in climate content being taught across departments” by encouraging faculty, students, and staff to work, learn, and study remotely.

This year, AMS Sustainability aims to expand its advocacy efforts by advocating for the wider implementation of UBC Green Days. We will release a survey at the start of the year to gauge student reception and get data that will support our work. We will work and meet with the Interdepartmental Climate Action Committee, Campus and Community Planning, UBC Sustainability Hub, members of the Student Senate Caucus, and with the Faculty of Arts. By the end of the year, we aim to have at least three other departments prepared to host Green Days or their own similar initiative.



Credit: Museums and Climate Change Network

Climate Change Exhibit

Main ASAP Goal 5.5 → Create both physical and digital centralized spaces for the sharing of sustainability related programming, information, and projects with the greater student population | Also related to ASAP Goal 1.8, 3.13, 3.14, and 3.17

Visual art can be a powerful tool in helping artists confront nuanced feelings in times of crisis. The climate crisis is no different, and art can help people express experiences that they can't verbalize. Everyone's experience with the climate crisis is different, accounting for physical geography, demographic, and culture—making and viewing art can contribute to conversations regarding one's own positionality.

We plan to host **a climate action exhibit at the Hatch Art Gallery for artists and activists to express their feelings around living through the climate emergency and working to address it.** This project also aims to address the reality of climate anxiety which is defined as 'heightened emotional, mental or somatic distress in response to dangerous changes in the climate system' by *The Handbook of Climate Psychology*.



Credit: UBC Student Services

Bike on Campus Campaign

Main ASAP Goal 3.16 → Seek to advocate for and support other innovative methods of transportation including improved cycling environments, ridesharing, and carsharing | Also related to ASAP Goal 3.6, and 3.12

In 2021, there were over 49,500 Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) trips to and from the UBC campus. In efforts to reduce the amount of emissions produced through transportation, we will be hosting **a campaign to encourage people to ride bikes around campus and start conversations** that change the way we interact with transportation. By hosting this campaign, AMS Sustainability aims to contribute towards one of the targets from the Transportation Status Report of Fall 2021 which is: “By 2040 at least two-thirds of all trips to and from UBC will be made by walking, cycling or transit and maintain at least 50% of all trips to and from the campus on public transit.”

We will be working with the Bike Kitchen, HOPR, Mobi by Shaw Go, Campus and Community Planning, Physical Activity Committee, other businesses and interested student groups throughout the year to flesh out the details of this event.

ADVANCING FOOD SUSTAINABILITY



Paul Joseph / UBC Brand & Marketing

Plant-Based September

Main ASAP Goal 2.1 → Continued development of plant-based menus available for clubs, constituencies, and commercial clients to buy from | Also related to ASAP Goal 2.2,

Plant-Based September **will contribute towards efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions produced by livestock production.** Over 51% of carbon dioxide emissions are produced annually through the production of livestock and their by-products ([UBC Food Vision and Values](#)). To combat the warming of our planet and the drastic impacts of climate change, efforts to reduce carbon emissions are crucial in lowering these statistics.

Plant-Based September brings forth our efforts to reduce the amount of livestock consumption on our campus. Through raffle incentives and special menu promotions for plant-based options, we are hoping to expose students to more sustainable food options that can be incorporated into their diet as they visit the Nest.

Climate-Friendly Food Systems

Main ASAP Goal 2.9 → Work strategically with departmental leadership to create relevant sustainability-related action items at a more detailed level. | Also related to ASAP Goal 2.8, 2.10, 2.11, and 2.15

UBC's Climate-Friendly Food Label program aims **to help consumers make informed decisions at UBC-owned and operated food outlets in efforts to create a**

climate-friendly food system. By placing these labels beside menu items, the goal is to educate consumers about the impact their order has on the environment.



Paul Joseph / UBC Brand & Marketing

We will be continuing this partnership with SEEDS this year to establish the labels at an outlet with a long-term menu. We are currently working with SEEDS and AMS Food & Beverage to assess the carbon footprint of our menu items, and hope to implement the labels at select outlets by September. SEEDS will be assessing the efficacy of the labels throughout the year.

As a part of UBC's Climate-Friendly Food Systems (CFFS) Action Team, we are also **supporting the creation of a student-facing toolkit educating on sustainable food choices.** The first version of this toolkit will be released in the summer, with website development following soon after. Since this is a student-facing resource, we are looking at promoting it through AMS Sustainability.

AMS Sustainable Food Package

Main ASAP Goal 2.4 → Ensure adherence to sustainable purchasing practices when purchasing ingredients, supplies and other food products. | Also related to ASAP Goal 2.2, 3.2, 4.3, 3.12, and 5.3

With 40% of UBC students found to be food insecure ([AMS Food Bank](#)), and Food Bank interactions growing exponentially over the past several years ([2023 Services Report](#)), food insecurity has quickly become a crisis at the forefront of student advocacy.

The AMS Sustainable Food Package is a new initiative **to promote existing campus food security initiatives and provide students with resources and information that would be helpful in implementing sustainable and affordable food choices** in their everyday lives. This package will also include sponsorships, sustainable local food options, and relevant academic resources and literature.

SUPPORTING STUDENT COMMUNITIES



Martin Dee / UBC Brand & Marketing

Sustainability Guidelines

Main ASAP Goal 5.3 → Support clubs and constituencies in transitioning to become more sustainable. | Also related to ASAP Goal 3.8, 4.8 5.4, and 5.6,

Because the AMS is taking significant actions to ensure sustainable operations, we want to ensure that our subsidiaries are adequately representing the Society's values in curating a unified student sustainability effort. In addition to the Equity & Inclusion Guidelines for Event Planning set to be implemented by the Office of the Vice-President Administration and the Operations Committee, we will be creating and implementing a set of Sustainability Guidelines for Event Planning.

These **guidelines will lay out actions that clubs should aim to implement when running events, encouraging mindful sourcing, consumption, and waste management.** The action items will be based off of the AMS Sustainable Action Plan goals.

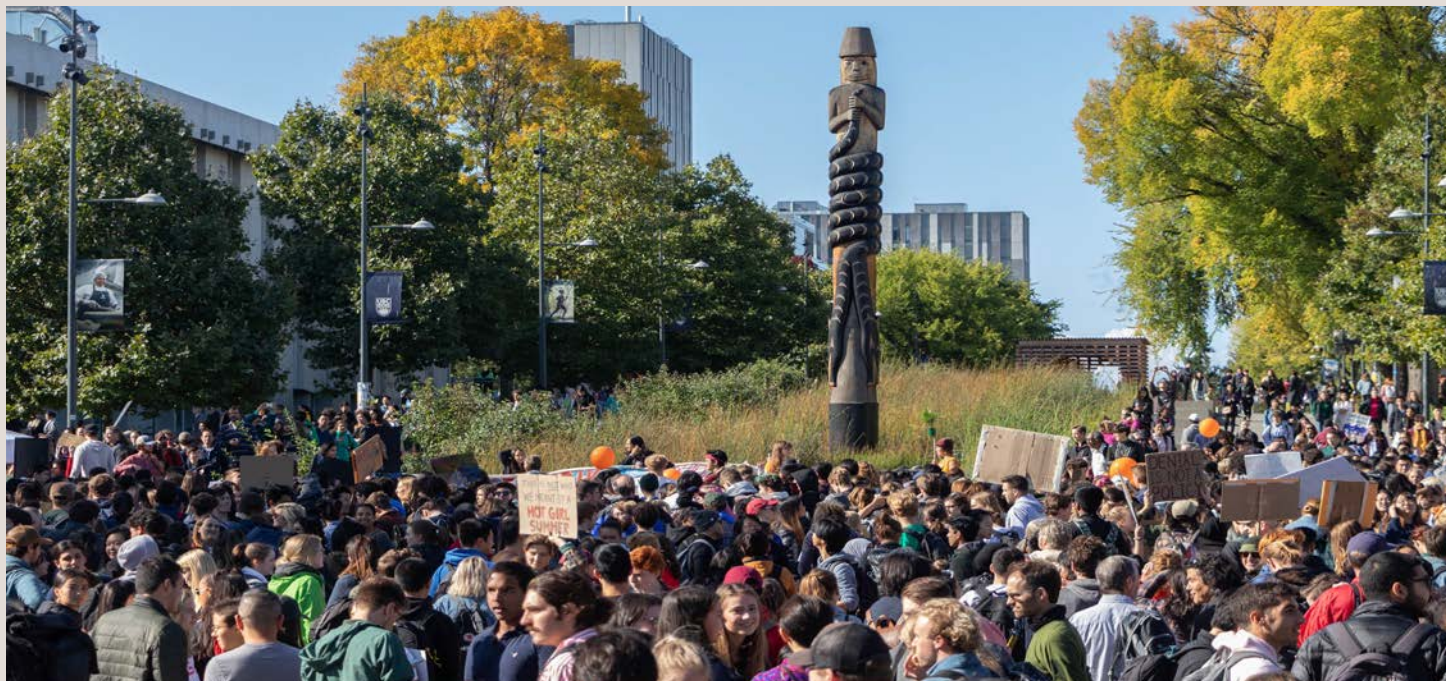
UBC Sustainability Ambassadors

Main ASAP Goal 3.14 → Create more opportunities for student engagement and feedback on issues of sustainability. | Also related to ASAP Goal 3.12, 3.17, 5.2

Last year, the AMS signed a memorandum of understanding with the Sustainability Hub to support the Sustainability Ambassadors, a program for students to further sustainability initiatives on campus. This partnership was predominantly monetarily based, with one of the terms being a \$10,000 allocation of the Sustainability Projects

Fund to the Ambassadors to fund their programming. We will be evaluating the necessity of such a partnership as we clarify the terms of the Sustainability Projects Fund.

Nonetheless, **campus coordination is one of the goals of the AMS Sustainable Action Plan, so we plan to pursue further engagement with the Ambassadors' programming.** Whether this is through annual events like Sustainable Development Goal Week or novel initiatives, we anticipate that the student body would benefit from engagement with the events. More details on this partnership will be available in our October report, as the Ambassador program does not formally begin their work until September.



Credit: Climate Justice UBC

Climate Justice UBC

Main ASAP Goal 3.13 → Support student climate-justice organizations in their operational and advocacy efforts to increase overall work capacity. | Also related to ASAP Goal 3.14 and 5.4

Climate Justice UBC, formerly known as C350, is an on-campus student organization that is committed to tackling climate change by advocating for institutional action on climate policy, environmental justice, and Indigenous sovereignty. As part of our goal **to support student communities and to strengthen our connections with advocacy groups, we hope to offer operational and advocacy support to CJUBC.** This support will include having regular meetings to hear about their priorities and concerns for the year, exploring

the possibility of becoming an official AMS club, and providing them with a space for their events, initiatives, and operations in the Nest.



Credit: Ikhwan Hop

AMS Sustainability Week

Main ASAP Goal 5.6 → Collaborate with other groups and organizations on events that relate to this Action Plan. | Also related to ASAP Goal 3.14, 3.18, 5.2

AMS Sustainability Week will be our contribution to the series of events run for UBC Climate Emergency Week in February. With topics including circular economies, clean operations, and climate justice, **we are aiming to unify the student voice and echo the calls for climate action and sustainability around campus.** All week long, we will be working with community partners to host various programming such as the following:

- Waste Audit Fair
- Sustainability Market
- Campus Clean-up Competition
- Fashion Flea Market
- Climate Action Leadership Workshop

REVIEWING PLANS AND PROCEDURES



Paul H. Joseph / UBC Brand & Marketing

Ethical and Sustainable Operations Policy

Main ASAP Goal 2.4 → Ensure adherence to sustainable purchasing practices when purchasing ingredients, supplies and other food products. | Also related to ASAP Goal 2.4, 2.5, 2.8, 2.12, 2.14, 3.2

Once an AMS policy, the Ethical and Sustainable Purchasing Policy is currently a guideline within the AMS Sustainable Action Plan (ASAP). To ensure that the Society's operations are in compliance with ASAP, this policy will **reinforce that all AMS food procurement is conducted only with suppliers that value ethical labor and sustainable sourcing**. We will expand this policy to ensure that all new partnerships, agreements, and contracts with external parties comply with the Society's sustainability practices and goals as recommended in ASAP Goal 2.5.

The Ethical and Sustainable Operations Policy will be implemented in coordination with Food & Beverage, Nest Catering and Conferences, and other relevant AMS departments.

Sustainability Projects Fund

Main ASAP Goal 5.1 → Work to increase the number of Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF) applications received annually. | Also related to ASAP Goal 3.9, 5.3, 5.4, 5.6,

Keeping with the ASAP goal to increase applications for the Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF), we plan to **streamline the application process and improve transparency with the student body**. We will re-establish the SPF Subcommittee to increase the efficiency

of the SPF Application Evaluation Process. Ideally, this committee would make the process simpler for applicants and stakeholders, saving time in the Sustainability Subcommittee and making the application experience a positive one.

We aim to **feature SPF projects to recognize student efforts in making our community more socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable**. Through featuring our approved and ongoing projects on the SPF website, we can applaud these student efforts and contributions to creating a viable and sustainable future. We also hope that these features will increase the AMS’s transparency with usage of student fees and inspire more students to apply for the Fund. This year, we will also **contribute to campus food security by welcoming student-led food security initiatives** in the SPF.

AMS Sustainable Action Plan 2023

As per the guidelines in the 2020 publication of **the AMS Sustainable Action Plan (ASAP), the Plan is to be reviewed every three years to ensure that the Society reaches its goals**. This process also allows the AMS Sustainability Team to add new goals, staying current with emerging climate action literature and community plans. Although this work was started in 2022/2023, they were unable to publish their plan before their term ended. We will not be using last year’s draft, instead opting to write our own version of the ASAP to ensure it aligns with current AMS leadership’s values.

Our goals for this iteration of the Plan are predominantly to establish action items and incorporate the Indigenous coordination section on other target areas. We will be forming multiple focus groups, which will include AMS Executives and Managers, campus partners, and student organizations, that will provide us with consultation and advisory, in addition to keeping in constant communication with the Sustainability Subcommittee. We are also exploring ways to report progress on previous goals to justify keeping or removing them. Read more about our process in the timeline below.

Timeline	Description	Groups Involved
July 14 to July 30th	<u>Stage 1: Research</u> This stage includes the analysis of the current plan to see which goals can be provided updates on and which goals are now deemed unfeasible. This will also include conducting research on similar	

	plans from other student unions and institutions across Canada. This stage will also include taking a look into the work that was completed by last year's team.	
July 30th to August 8th	<u>Stage 2: Consultation</u> This stage includes meeting with our key partners, focus groups, and AMS departments to consult about the current plan, any concerns they might have, and to provide them an idea with the outline of the review of the plan.	AMS Executive Committee; AMS Indigenous Committee; and ASAP Focus Groups
August 8 to 20th	<u>Stage 3: Drafting</u> This stage includes our initial drafting of the revised plan as overseen by our Working Group and the Sustainability Subcommittee. We will also be assessing the progress of any goals we need to carry over.	Sustainability Subcommittee
August 20 to September 5th	<u>Stage 4: Feedback</u> We will be sharing the initial draft of our plan with key Society and campus partners to receive feedback and ensure that all our goals are accompanied with achievable action items.	AMS Executive Committee; AMS Indigenous Committee; and ASAP Focus Groups
September 5 to September 20th	<u>Stage 5: Revisions and Publication</u> As we receive feedback from our consultations, we will be updating our draft before sending it to AMS Marketing and Communications for formatting. If approved by Council, the final copy will be distributed to key partners and published on the website.	Sustainability Subcommittee; AMS Marketing Communications; and AMS Council
After Approval on September	<u>Stage 6: Update on Priorities</u> This stage will ensure that the AMS Sustainability Team is kept accountable by Council on both the Priorities and the new ASAP. We will incorporate the new ASAP on our Priorities Report in October 2023 and January 2024.	Sustainability Subcommittee

Thank you for reading!

Feel free to provide your questions or feedback through this [link](#) or QR code, or you can also send us an email to sustainability@ams.ubc.ca.



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