

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

UK Offshore Low-Carbon Energy Sector

North East Scotland Energy Supply Chain | Week Ending 9 May 2026

Prepared by ExportCentral AI

Coverage Period	Audience	Classification
2 – 9 May 2026	NES Tier 2/3 Energy Supply Chain	Weekly Market Intelligence

A regular intelligence briefing for North East Scotland energy supply chain companies presenting the latest news, trends, developments and sales opportunities in the UK offshore low-carbon sector — including offshore wind, hydrogen, CCUS, marine energy, hydropower, geothermal, decommissioning and other offshore renewables.

Executive Summary

This was a pivotal week for UK offshore low-carbon policy and supply-chain signalling, headlined by **OEUK's Wind Insight 2026 launch in Aberdeen and London on 6–7 May** and BP's decision to **seek partners for its UK carbon capture stakes**. OEUK warned the UK must deliver at least **5 GW of new offshore wind every year through 2030** to meet the Government's clean-power target — and called for AR8 to award up to **7 GW** — placing supply-chain capacity, grid build-out and CIB design squarely at the centre of the next 60 days of decision-making.

In CCUS, **BP confirmed on 8 May that it is seeking buyers for stakes in Net Zero Teesside (NZN) and the Northern Endurance Partnership (NEP)** — both anchor projects in the East Coast Cluster — citing a strategic refocus under new CEO Meg O'Neill. The move arrives mid-window in the ECC NPT Pathfinder selection process and signals a major reshaping of UK CCS sponsor structures, with Equinor and TotalEnergies remaining as JV partners.

In decommissioning, sector media on **7 May** put fresh weight behind the **Apache / Well-Safe Solutions Forties Field decommissioning programme** — re-stating the £27 billion 2023–2032 UKCS spending forecast and the constrained MODU vessel pool, reinforcing the directly Aberdeen-anchored opportunity for NES Tier 2/3 firms. In a separate but globally significant announcement, **Geothermal Engineering Limited's United Downs project in Cornwall** (covered widely on 7 May) became the UK's first commercial deep-geothermal-and-lithium plant, expanding to a planned 10 MW by 2030 — a meaningful precedent for Scottish geothermal-from-coal-mine and granite-bearing prospects.

Other notable signals: **Iberdrola/ScottishPower won British Business Awards "Investor of the Year" on 5 May** on a record £27 million UK clean-energy spend; **Port of Tyne welcomed Crown Estate Round 6 on 1 May** (over 6 GW north-east England seabed); and the **AR8 Clean Industry Bonus application window opens 13 May**, so most policy and procurement attention now shifts to All-Energy 2026 (13–14 May, Glasgow).

1. Offshore Wind — Fixed Bottom

OEUK Wind Insight 2026 — Aberdeen & London Briefings (6–7 May 2026)

On **6 May 2026**, Offshore Energies UK (OEUK) hosted its "Capability & Capacity" breakfast briefing at **P&J Live, Aberdeen**, followed by the "Capital & Clarity" briefing in London on 7 May — formally launching OEUK's **Wind Insight 2026** report (commissioned with BVGA) and updated UK Offshore Wind Farm Development Processes

Guidelines, sponsored by Deloitte. The headline finding: at the current rate of progress, the UK will reach only **just over 30 GW of offshore wind by 2030** — well short of the planned 43 GW target. To close the gap, OEUK called for **5 GW per year of new awards from 2026 to 2030, up to 7 GW awarded in AR8**, and all planned grid upgrades completed by 2028.

Aberdeen panellists included Ben Andrew (Acteon/2H), Adam Morrison (Ocean Winds), Derek Christie (Siemens Energy), Susan McDonald (Deloitte), Enrique Cornejo and Thibaut Cheret (OEUK). London speakers included Will Apps (The Crown Estate), Tim Pick MBE (Offshore Wind Growth Partnership) and Richard Crossick (Ørsted).

OEUK's Thibaut Cheret stated: **"Offshore wind's fast growth is possible due to established expertise in related fields including subsea engineering, marine operations and project management as well as rigorous HSE protocols. If progress slows, the UK risks falling behind globally and losing both projects and their supporting industrial base."** Updated guidelines incorporate the Clean Industry Bonus (CIB) and AR7-onward reforms.

NES Sales Opportunity: OEUK's 5 GW/year framing is a direct procurement-volume signal for NES tier-2/3 firms. Aberdeen-area subsea engineering, marine operations, fabrication, environmental and HSE service providers should reference Wind Insight 2026 figures in tier-1 bid responses for AR8-bound projects (Bellrock, Muir Mhòr, MarramWind, Outer Dowsing, East Anglia Three follow-on) — the report's explicit attribution of offshore wind's success to oil-and-gas-derived supply-chain capability is a tailored supporting narrative for NES contractors.

Port of Tyne Welcomes Crown Estate Round 6 — North-East Seabed

On **1 May 2026**, the Port of Tyne formally welcomed The Crown Estate's confirmation of the **Round 6 North East Seabed Leasing Area** — projected to deliver **over 6 GW of clean energy capacity** (powering more than six million homes). CEO Matt Beeton highlighted the port's 230-acre Tyne Clean Energy Park, Investment Zone status and existing track record on Dogger Bank, Sofia and Hornsea 3. The announcement frames the North-East England leasing as the next major fixed-bottom procurement window after AR8.

NES Sales Opportunity: Round 6 in north-east England is a natural geographic and supply-chain extension for Aberdeen-area fabrication, monopile/transition-piece, jacket and subsea-cable contractors. NES firms with East-Coast logistics access should pre-qualify with Round 6 prospective bidders during 2026, while project sponsors are still finalising supplier shortlists ahead of FEED in 2027.

Iberdrola / ScottishPower Named "Investor of the Year" — Record UK Clean-Energy Spend

On **5 May 2026**, Iberdrola announced that its UK subsidiary ScottishPower had been named **"Investor of the Year"** at the British Business Awards, recognising **record investment of over €27 million** to accelerate UK clean energy. Iberdrola cited the Eastern Link transmission project and "some of the world's largest offshore wind farms currently under construction off East Anglia" — a clear reference to ScottishPower-Masdar's East Anglia THREE 1.4 GW project where **the first 14 MW Siemens Gamesa turbine was installed in April 2026**. The award reinforces ScottishPower's long-term Scottish-domiciled supply-chain strategy.

UK Offshore Wind Capacity to Grow ~20% in 2026

A **6 May 2026** BusinessGreen study summary confirmed UK offshore wind capacity is on track to **increase by around 20% during 2026**, with industry pressing for "strategic commitment" to prioritise homegrown energy. The data, published alongside the OEUK Wind Insight 2026 cycle, contextualises a return to growth after 2025 was widely characterised as a year of "record project cancellations" globally.

2. Floating Offshore Wind

Floating Wind Pipeline Status — Post-Vattenfall, Pre-AR8

Following the previous week's Vattenfall exit from Muir Mhòr (with Fred. Olsen Seawind taking 100%), the ScotWind floating pipeline **Bellrock (1.8 GW, Nadara), Muir Mhòr (up to 1 GW), MarramWind (3 GW, ScottishPower Renewables), Cenos, Salamander and Ayre** enters the 2–8 May window in single-sponsor consolidation mode. OEUK's Wind Insight 2026 (6 May) identified floating wind as integral to closing the 30 GW vs 43 GW 2030 gap, and the All-Energy 2026 conference (13–14 May, Glasgow) is the next major sector touchpoint — with the UK Energy Minister confirmed as keynote speaker.

NES Sales Opportunity: NES floating-wind suppliers (mooring, dynamic-cable, substructure fabrication, marine survey) should treat the next two weeks as the prime window to engage Fred. Olsen Seawind, Nadara and ScottishPower Renewables in advance of All-Energy 2026 plenary sessions and OEUK's Capability & Capacity Aberdeen briefing follow-up. Coordinated bids covering both Muir Mhòr and Bellrock will continue to outperform single-project pitches given overlapping FEED windows.

Buchan Offshore Wind — Glasgow Operational Base Open

Buchan Offshore Wind, the BP / EnBW joint-venture floating project off the Aberdeenshire coast, has continued to operationalise its **new Glasgow base** (opened by Energy Minister Michael Shanks earlier in the spring), reinforcing Scotland's position as the operational anchor for ScotWind floating projects. The Glasgow base will host project engineering, supply-chain engagement and stakeholder activities through development.

Pipeline Scale Reminder

Industry data continues to put the UK floating wind pipeline at over **20 projects / \$55 billion** across UK waters, with Scotland holding the dominant share via ScotWind. Port-side infrastructure — Cromarty Firth, Kishorn, Ardersier — remains the principal pre-construction procurement window for 2026–2028.

3. Hydrogen

UK Hydrogen Outlook — Demand-Creation Bottleneck Persists

Following the previous week's **29 April HyNet coalition letter to Ed Miliband**, no formal Government decision on the first regional hydrogen network was issued during 2–8 May — but sector commentary across Argus, Energies Media and trade press during this window continued to highlight that **demand creation remains the principal UK hydrogen bottleneck**: over 81% of organisations seeking offtakers report difficulty securing offtake agreements (per the Xoserve analysis cited at HyNet 2026 conference references). Decisions on the **first Hydrogen Transport and Storage allocation round** remain targeted for launch in 2026.

Cromarty, Whitelee and HAR2 — Scottish Pipeline Status

Cromarty Hydrogen (HAR1 named project) and ScottishPower's Whitelee 20 MW green hydrogen project remain the most advanced electrolytic projects in Scotland through Q2 2026. The HAR2 shortlist of approximately **765 MW** is expected to advance toward final award decisions by mid-2026. With HyNet expected to set the procurement model precedent for any subsequent Scottish (Cromarty / Acorn-linked) and Humber (H2H Saltend / Aldbrough) hydrogen networks, NES suppliers should track HyNet decision signals very closely through May–June 2026.

NES Sales Opportunity: NES electrolyser-integration, hydrogen compression, purification, storage-vessel and instrumentation firms should treat the HyNet decision window as a "model template" exercise: use the procurement structure of the first allocation as the basis for tender-ready capability statements aimed at follow-on Scottish networks. Companies that can credibly bring named offtakers (industrial process, mobility, blending) into project conversations will continue to outperform pure-engineering bids with developers.

4. Carbon Capture, Utilisation & Storage (CCUS)

BP Seeks Partners for Net Zero Teesside and Northern Endurance Partnership Stakes (8 May 2026)

On **8 May 2026**, BP publicly confirmed it is **seeking buyers for portions of its stakes in Net Zero Teesside (NZT) and the Northern Endurance Partnership (NEP)** — both anchor assets of the East Coast Cluster, with construction already underway. NZT will be the UK's first carbon-capture-equipped gas-fired power station; NEP will build the offshore CO₂ transport and storage infrastructure beneath the North Sea. JV partners **Equinor and TotalEnergies** remain in place. BP did not disclose stake size or whether buyer discussions are underway. The move follows new CEO Meg O'Neill's stated intent to dismantle BP's gas and low-carbon division, and reports of a broader UK / North Sea exit. Former CEO Bernard Looney had originally framed both projects as a major industrial-decarbonisation opportunity.

NES Sales Opportunity: A change of CCS investor structure mid-construction creates a focused commercial moment for NES service firms. Aberdeen-based subsea, well services, monitoring, marine survey and CO₂-injection-experienced contractors should **re-engage Equinor and TotalEnergies** — and any incoming partners — directly during 2026. Reduced BP commitment may also accelerate restructured procurement timelines for NZT/NEP, opening tier-2 sub-contract scopes for proven oil-and-gas suppliers. The ECC NPT Pathfinder process (engagement w/c 4 May, EOI 12 May, full apps 12 June) remains the time-critical adjacent CCUS window.

ECC NPT Pathfinder — Live Engagement and EOI Window

The DESNZ **East Coast Cluster (ECC) Non-Pipeline Transport (NPT) Pathfinder** selection process moved into its formal engagement phase during the reporting week, with engagement sessions hosted online (Eventbrite). Expressions of Interest must be submitted by **11:59pm on 12 May 2026**; full applications close on 12 June 2026. Successful applicants will access remaining offshore CO₂ storage capacity at the Endurance site in the southern North Sea, with first injections targeted by 2032. The BP stake-sale announcement places this Pathfinder process under heightened market scrutiny.

UK CCS Funding Landscape — Track-1 / Track-2 Status

Track-1 capture projects (NZT Power, BP NZT, HyNet capture, Equinor H2H Saltend, ENI Liverpool Bay, Viking, Acorn) remain in pre-construction and FID-preparation phases. The UK's December 2025 second carbon-storage licensing round delivered **14 storage applications** from developers, and government has reaffirmed the £21.7 billion Track-1 funding envelope. The OEUK **North Sea CCS & Hydrogen Summit (1–2 June, Edinburgh)** is now the most focused business-development event of the next 60 days for Scottish CCUS supply-chain firms.

5. Marine & Tidal Energy

EMEC, MeyGen and the Marine Energy Wales / UK Pipeline

No new fully-confirmed project announcements were issued in the 2–8 May 2026 window. EMEC continues to operate Orkney as the UK's flagship test centre, with the **£15 million UKRI Blue Horizon investment** already moving the centre from single-device trials to multi-device array demonstrations. MeyGen Phase 2 in the Pentland Firth remains the UK's commercial tidal flagship. The **Marine Energy Wales Conference 2026** cycle and continuing call for the AR8 tidal-stream CfD ringfence to be increased remain the principal political pressure points for the sector.

NES Sales Opportunity: Aberdeen subsea engineering, mooring, marine survey and ROV firms continue to have direct route-to-market through MeyGen Phase 2 and EMEC Blue Horizon. Suppliers should monitor AR8 ringfencing decisions ahead of the July 2026 auction opening — any uplift in the dedicated tidal stream pot will reshape near-term project-side procurement calendars.

6. Geothermal

UK's First Commercial Deep Geothermal Plant Live in Cornwall — Lithium Co-Product (7 May 2026 coverage)

Sector and global media on **7 May 2026** put new attention on **Geothermal Engineering Limited's (GEL) United Downs project near Redruth, Cornwall** — the UK's first commercial deep-geothermal-plus-lithium plant. The proof-of-concept facility delivers **3 MW of geothermal electricity** (covering ~10,000 homes) from wells reaching **5,057 m depth** through the Porthtowan Fault Zone, with brine extracted at temperatures above 170 °C. Octopus Energy holds the power purchase agreement; Hatch supported the parallel lithium facility. GEL has confirmed plans to expand to **approximately 10 MW by 2030** across additional Cornwall sites. The project also produces around **100 t/yr of battery-grade lithium carbonate** from the same brine via direct lithium extraction — a UK first.

Total proof-of-concept capex: **about \$68 million**. Lifecycle CO₂ intensity: 5–15 g/kWh. UK granite formations reach **up to 200 °C at 5 km depth** (per British Geological Survey), suggesting commercial scalability in geologically suitable regions including parts of Scotland.

NES Sales Opportunity: Although Cornwall-anchored, GEL's validated technology stack is directly relevant to **Scottish geothermal prospects** (granite-bearing zones, mine-water heat networks). NES drilling, well-completion, downhole monitoring, brine-handling and ORC/turbine integration firms should engage GEL and the UK Geothermal Platform to position for the planned expansion. The **Aberdeen-hosted "Geothermal 2026 — Accelerating Geothermal Energy"** SPE event remains the highest-leverage business-development engagement for Aberdeen geothermal entrants.

7. Decommissioning

Forties Field Decommissioning — Renewed Sector Coverage (7 May 2026)

Following the previous week's **Apache / Well-Safe Solutions multi-year contract** to decommission Forties Field platform and subsea wells (described by Well-Safe as the "largest-ever North Sea decommissioning scope" awarded), wider sector media on **7 May 2026** provided context that frames the deal alongside oil-price volatility (physical North Sea Forties hit a record \$148.87/bbl during the Hormuz disruption). Reporting reinforced the structural picture: **£27 billion of UKCS decommissioning spend forecast 2023–2032** (NSTA), **£44 billion to fully decommission the remaining UKCS scope**, and **1,500 wells due for plug-and-abandonment by 2030** against a UKCS rig pool that has fallen to just **five remaining semi-submersible rigs**.

NSTA enforcement remains active: the **£16.5 million (\$22.5 million) fine on EnQuest Heather** (announced 9 April for failing to decommission 33 inactive wells) is being cited as a precedent supporting NSTA's push for stronger enforcement powers. NSTA is also driving field trials for next-generation P&A tools (resins, polymers, bismuth, advanced logging and perforation tech).

NES Sales Opportunity: The Forties scope continues to anchor a **multi-year direct procurement opportunity for NES Tier 2/3 firms**: well intervention, casing and tubing, completions, ROV, marine

logistics, MODU support, environmental monitoring, accommodation and crew change. Constrained MODU availability means integrated service offerings that reduce rig-time exposure will continue to win on commercial terms. Supply-chain firms should also monitor NSTA's P&A field-trial programmes — early adopter positions on next-gen tooling are a credible multi-decade differentiator.

OPRED Decommissioning Charging Regulations 2026 — Active Framework

The OPRED Decommissioning Charging Regulations 2026 guidance, updated in April 2026, sets the current regulatory framework for offshore oil and gas decommissioning under the Petroleum Act 1998. Combined with the Forties award and the Redwater Insights £15bn / 25,000-jobs assessment, sector activity in the central and northern North Sea is on a clear upward trajectory through Q3 2026.

8. Hydropower & Pumped Storage

Low-Head Hydropower Research Breakthrough (Exeter, 7 May 2026)

Sector media on **7 May 2026** covered **low-head hydropower research from the University of Exeter** (lead: Dr David A. Smith), demonstrating a technology stack capable of generating electricity from rivers, canals and urban water flows **without large dams** or significant landscape alteration. Pilot projects are now in development to demonstrate feasibility and efficiency. The work explicitly targets the UK's 70%-renewable-by-2030 and net-zero-by-2050 trajectories.

LDES Cap and Floor — Coire Glas, Earba, Loch Kemp Pre-FID Status

Industry analysis published in March/April 2026 continues to flag 2026 as the **"critical year"** for cap-and-floor allocation decisions under the Long Duration Electricity Storage (LDES) regime — administered by Ofgem. Outcomes will drive FID for SSE Renewables' **Coire Glas pumped storage hydro project** on Loch Lochy (up to 1,300 MW / 30 GWh) and a wider 11-scheme, 10 GW UK PSH pipeline including **Earba Storage (1.8 GW), Loch Kemp and Loch na Cathrach (Statkraft)**. Ofgem's March 2026 call for input on draft Special Licence Conditions for LDES has now closed. SSE has invested £100m in Coire Glas pre-FID development; grid connection confirmed for October 2029.

NES Sales Opportunity: NES civil engineering, tunnelling, electrical infrastructure, geotechnical, environmental monitoring and grid-connection specialists should engage the Coire Glas, Earba and Statkraft procurement teams during Q2 2026 — the cap-and-floor outcome window aligns with FID decisions later this year. Highland-located civil works represent a multi-year procurement window for Scottish supply chain firms with cost-competitive logistics access.

9. Policy & Regulatory Developments

AR8 Clean Industry Bonus — Application Window Opens 13 May

The DESNZ AR8 Clean Industry Bonus framework is now finalised, with the formal **CIB application window opening on 13 May 2026 and closing 21 May 2026** (no extensions). AR8 itself is targeted to open in July 2026 with results expected late 2026. Both fixed-bottom and floating offshore wind project guidance is live on GOV.UK. Combined with the OEUK Wind Insight 2026 call for up to **7 GW awarded under AR8**, the CIB window is now the binding commercial gate for the entire AR8-bound wind supply chain.

NES Sales Opportunity: NES Tier 2/3 contractors must finalise their CIB-aligned value propositions this week. Bid teams should embed UK-content, regional employment and own-operation decarbonisation

evidence in tier-1 sub-contract submissions for Bellrock, Muir Mhòr, MarramWind, Outer Dowsing and East Anglia Three follow-on procurement immediately. The 13–21 May window is fixed.

NESO Connections Reform — Strategic Spatial Energy Plan

NESO's Connections Reform process continues to drive firm grid-connection dates for ScotWind floating projects. Firm connection dates for Bellrock are still expected by **early 2027**. Strategic Spatial Energy Plan inputs are now being integrated, and the OEUK Wind Insight 2026 report explicitly flagged 2028 grid-build completion as essential to the 5 GW/year scenario.

UK Habitats and Species (Offshore Wind) Regulations

Following the 27 April Commons General Committees debate of the Draft Conservation of Habitats and Species (Offshore Wind) regulations, secondary legislation continues progressing through Parliament. The reform aims to streamline environmental consenting for offshore wind NSIPs while maintaining UK Habitats Directive obligations — directly improving the visibility of NES tier-2 procurement into 2027–2028.

10. Key Upcoming Events for NES Companies

Event	Date	Location	Relevance
ECC NPT Pathfinder EOI Deadline	12 May 2026	Online	CCUS East Coast Cluster project access
AR8 Clean Industry Bonus Application Window	13–21 May 2026	Online (DESNZ)	CfD CIB statutory window — final framework live
All-Energy 2026	13–14 May 2026	SEC, Glasgow	UK's leading renewable & low-carbon energy event
OEUK North Sea CCS & Hydrogen Summit	1–2 June 2026	Sheraton, Edinburgh	CCS / hydrogen project intelligence
SPE Aberdeen Well Decommissioning 2026	3–4 June 2026	P&J Live, Aberdeen	Decommissioning sector — post Forties announcement
ECC NPT Pathfinder Application Deadline	12 June 2026	Online	CCUS Pathfinder full submissions close
Global Offshore Wind 2026	16–17 June 2026	Manchester Central	Full offshore wind value chain
Floating Offshore Wind 2026	7–8 October 2026	P&J Live, Aberdeen	RenewableUK floating wind summit

11. Grant Funding & Support Mechanisms Active This Week

Fund / Mechanism	Value	Deadline	Eligible NES Companies
AR8 Clean Industry Bonus	CfD-linked premium	13–21 May 2026 application window	Fixed-bottom & floating offshore wind developers and supply chain partners (UK content, regional jobs)

Fund / Mechanism	Value	Deadline	Eligible NES Companies
GBE Supply Chain Fund: Offshore Wind & Networks	Up to £300m capital grants	10 December 2026	Manufacturers of offshore wind components, cables, foundations, nacelles
OWGP Industrial Growth Fund	£300k – £25m per project	Rolling	Supply chain firms expanding/building offshore wind manufacturing
ECC NPT Pathfinder Selection Process	Project support	12 June 2026 (EOI: 12 May)	CCUS project developers and supply chain
LDES Cap and Floor (Ofgem)	Revenue support framework	2026 — outcomes pending	Pumped storage hydro developers and Scottish civil/electrical supply chain
UK Hydrogen Allocation Round 2 (HAR2)	CfD-style revenue support	Decisions expected mid-2026	Electrolyser integrators, EPC contractors and supply chain for ~765 MW shortlist

12. Sales Opportunity Summary for NES Supply Chain Companies

Sector	Opportunity	Timing	Priority
Policy / CfD	AR8 Clean Industry Bonus — 13–21 May application window	Urgent	★★★★★
CCUS	BP exits NZT/NEP stakes — re-engage Equinor, TotalEnergies & incoming partners	Now (8 May)	★★★★★
CCUS	ECC NPT Pathfinder — EOI 12 May, full apps 12 June	Urgent	★★★★★
Decommissioning	Well-Safe Solutions / Apache Forties Field — sub-contract pull-through	Immediate (2026)	★★★★★
Floating Wind	Muir Mhòr (Fred. Olsen Seawind) + Bellrock (Nadara) paired engagement	Now–2030	★★★★★
Fixed Wind	OEUK 5 GW/year case — supply-chain narrative for AR8 tier-1 bids	Immediate	★★★★
Fixed Wind	Crown Estate Round 6 (Port of Tyne, 6 GW) — pre-FEED positioning	Now–2027	★★★★
Decommissioning	1,500 UKCS wells due by 2030 + constrained MODU pool	Immediate	★★★★
Pumped Storage	Coire Glas / Earba / Statkraft — civil, electrical, grid pre-FID	2026–2029	★★★
Hydrogen	HyNet decision precedent + Cromarty + HAR2 (~765 MW)	2026–2027	★★★
Geothermal	GEL Cornwall scale-up to ~10 MW by 2030 + Scottish prospects	2026–2030	★★★

Sector	Opportunity	Timing	Priority
Marine / Tidal	EMEC Blue Horizon array, MeyGen Phase 2 + AR8 ringfence	2026–2028	★★★
Hydropower	Exeter low-head hydropower pilots — long-tail opportunity	2026–2029	★★

This briefing covers the period 2 – 9 May 2026. All opportunity ratings reflect proximity, scale, and fit with typical NES Tier 2/3 company capabilities. This briefing is prepared by ExportCentral AI for use by North East Scotland energy supply sector participants.

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