A summary of our main changes in response to the reviewer's comments is:

- **Title updated for clarity**: The phrase "seamless integration" was replaced with "tailored for integration" to avoid overstating the status of integration into DGVMs and better reflect the model's compatibility focus (Reviewer 2).
- **Abstract restructured and rewritten**: The abstract was thoroughly revised to align with standard scientific structure, incorporating objectives, methodology, key results (with validation metrics), and contributions to the field (Reviewer 2).
- New section on future integration into DGVMs: A dedicated section titled "Next steps for DGVM integration and future predictions" was added to clearly outline the steps required for implementing the model within DGVM frameworks, including discussion of technical integration challenges (Reviewers 1 and 2).
- Workflow and methodology clarified: The model workflow was revised with a cleaner, more informative figure, removing confusing shapes and colors. Supporting text was added to explain data sources, training and testing splits, and each modeling step including data processing, correlation analysis, and VIF checks (Reviewers 1 and 2).
- Expanded comparison of modeling approaches: The manuscript now contains a more balanced discussion of process-based versus statistical fire modeling, highlighting the rationale behind using GLMs and how mechanistic reasoning was preserved in variable selection (Reviewer 1).
- Model calibration and validation explained in more detail: The periods used for training (2002–2010) and testing (2011–2018) were clarified, and justification was provided for selecting the final model based on parsimony, collinearity, and applicability for DGVM use (Reviewers 1 and 2).
- **Terminology standardized and clarified**: Terms such as MEPI (previously referred to as GPPI) were made consistent throughout, and abbreviations (e.g., GFED regions like SHAF, SHSA) were introduced early and explained clearly (Reviewer 2).
- **Predictor selection and transformation justified**: Detailed rationale was added for including polynomial terms (e.g., for Percentage Tree Cover), applying interaction terms, and using stepwise model building based on prior literature and empirical testing (Reviewer 2).
- Model performance clearly quantified: The manuscript now reports performance across spatial, seasonal, and interannual variability with Normalized Mean Error (NME) and R² values, and provides regional breakdowns to show where model performance is strongest (Reviewer 2).
- **Figures revised for clarity**: Figures were updated to ensure axis formatting (e.g., scientific notation), remove redundant titles, and clearly state the time periods represented. Figure captions were improved for interpretability (Reviewer 1 and 2).
- **Discussion of model limitations and excluded variables expanded**: A revised section addresses model limitations, including the omission of lightning as a predictor, lack of explicit burn severity representation, and the trade-offs involved in excluding variables like FAPAR or litter explicitly (Reviewer 1).

- Clarification of HDI's role: Additional explanation was added to clarify the rationale for including, excluding, or holding HDI constant in different scenarios, and how this affected observed trends in burned area (Reviewers 1 and 2).
- References updated and expanded: The manuscript now cites recent relevant literature (e.g., Son et al., 2024; Nurrohman et al., 2024) to position the work within the current state of DGVM fire modeling and to clarify methodological distinctions.

Reviewer 1

General comments:

The authors developed the statistical simulation model for fire burnt area which was supposed to be incorporated into DGVM. The proposed GLMs as the functions of multiple environmental factors, would give the potential for a very light simulation tool on global scale wildfire.

However, one of my concerns is that the wildfire would be ignited considerably by lighting and expand their burning severity depending on the dry litter amount as fuel, both of which are not considered this time. The predictability for the long-term future is not secured as long as you do not use an accumulated ecosystem carbon stock, which DGVM has the advantage to simulate, but you use the GPP related index which is not necessarily related to fire severity. Statistical models cannot guarantee accuracy when a regime-shift for fire occurrence has happened mechanistically.

Response: The reviewer raises several important points here. It is true that we do not explicitly include litter amount. Initially, we did try to do this with an above ground biomass dataset as a proxy (AGB, Santoro et al. 2021, data not shown). However, we found that this data was not sufficiently sensitive to variations at the low end of AGB that we considered to be important for capturing this dynamic in fuel limited ecosystems. Instead, we do include proxies of both litter quantity and litter type through percentage tree cover, percentage non-tree cover and number of dry days (here dry days are functioning as an inversely related proxy for biomass accumulation in arid areas). We believe that this captures the core dynamic that more fuel produces more burned areas - at least at an appropriate level of complexity for a global model. Regarding burning severity, the model does not explicitly consider burn severity, although we appreciate that higher severity will, all else equal, give higher burned area. However, by using a statistical model with appropriate predictors, our intent is to implicitly include this effect on burnt area through the predictors. We note that when integrated into a DGVM, burn severity (or more likely fire line intensity) can be calculated using the DGVM's carbon pools, thus leveraging the strength of DGVM to give severity/intensity-dependent combustion and mortality.

The use of GPP index (now MEPI in the revised draft) here is not intended directly as fuel accumulation/fire severity proxy but rather is a seasonality predictor to which captures periods of low GPP (relative to that location's maximum).

Regarding lightning, we appreciate that lightning ignitions are regionally important. However, globally, and in most regions, most ignitions are human caused (Balch et al. 2017, Jannsen et al. 2023). We also consider that, most likely, ignitions are not globally a limiting factor (initially based on results in Haas et al. 2022 but also see the more recent Haas et al 2024). Furthermore, there are practical concerns with using lightning. Lightning projections from atmospheric models are not commonly available and highly uncertain, and there are even issues with present day observed lightning data - with the LIS/OTD product only providing climatology for 1995-2014 and the WGLC product having detection inefficiency issues. We therefore deliberately excluded lightning from this global analysis but fully agree that lightning should be considered in regional and future studies.

Finally, clearly there are pros and cons with process-based versus empirical models, and often both types are mixed. Here, we chose a statistical model for burned area, but only using input variables that also make sense from a mechanistic point of view, which also can be simulated by DGVMs or easily be derived from climate model output, to ensure the applicability of the fire model here in DGVMs for future predictions. When choosing such an approach, we think one also must base the final decision on driver variables on the statistical results, even if these are not fully in line with mechanistic hypotheses. However, we acknowledge the relevant point of the reviewer and have changed the text accordingly towards the end of the second paragraph in the introduction. In the second-last paragraph of the introduction (See line 96 – 112), we added the following text: "GLMs are easier to implement into DGVMs, and their partial residual plots show the relationships of each predictor with the response variable when all other drivers are kept constant, which facilitates a discussion of potential underlying mechanisms. The risk of overfitting can be minimized by only choosing potential driver variables that are mechanistically expected to play an important role and by choosing only a limited number of uncorrelated driver variables. Accordingly, Haas et al. (2022) developed a GLM for global burned areas with good model skill but without accounting for seasonal dynamics and without a focus on driver variables that can be predicted with DGVMs. (See line 96 – 104)

Considering the fewer predictors selected for the general representation of wildfire, the linear regression is shown not to be the best model for wildfire though still easy to use compared to machine learning or process-based models. Correlation coefficients for each term should be rearranged when this model was introduced to DGVM to use their simulated GPP and other ecosystem information which must be more or less different from MODIS or satellite products.

Response: Yes, we agree that when integrating in a DGVM, the model should be refitted based on model output as opposed to remotely sensed data. This is a necessary next step for DGVM integration, and it remains to be seen how much the relationships change by using DGVM outputs. We have added a new paragraph entitled "..." to the Discussion explaining which next steps are necessary for DGVM integration (See line 555 – 581). Furthermore, we replaced the formulation "for seamless integration" in the title with "tailored for integration" to avoid the impression that the integration into a DGVM is a trivial task. This point was raised by the second reviewer.

CEAM, BONA, MIDE, and TENA showed a 2-fold difference in interannual variations, which suggests that this model could be parameterized or separately made for vegetation types. A single statistical model cannot estimate the average BA for specific areas.

Response: Yes, good point. We tried this; however, we found very small improvements in our predictions when fitting the model regionally.

Minor Comments:

Page 3, Lines 90-91, you have to identify the typical model name that you criticize here. What you propose here is still a simple GLM based module, so I feel this sentence as contradiction.

Response -Page 3, Lines 90-91: We specified the model being criticized (LPJ-LMfire(v1) and clarified that this model like most other DGVMs was not formally parameterized to predict seasonal fire cycles. We highlight how our approach differs in methodology and performance particularly with regards to statistically predictions of seasonal cycles (See line 105-107).

Page 3, Line 94-95, Use of remote sensing data will reduce the advantage of DGVM which enables the long-term vegetation shift simulation in future. also wanna now the direction from start to end

Response -Page 3, Lines 94-95: We recognize the trade-off between using remote sensing data and DGVM-driven predictions. We clarified that our model is designed outside of the DGVM framework, with the goal of being later integrated using DGVM-simulated predictors (See line 110 - 111).

Page 17, Line 330 does this mean that HDI is going down in these years? you would better show the number in the decadal trend of averaged globally.

Response -Page 17, Line 330: HDI has increased over time, but its negative correlation with burned area leads to an apparent decreasing trend in burned area. We have clarified this by now stating "Excluding and holding HDI constant in the model made the projected trend remain steady, suggesting the role of anthropogenic developments (increasing HDI over time) driving a downward trend in wildfire distribution." (increasing HDI over time) was added (See line 350 – 351).

"Page 22, Lines 425-427: sounds repeated. you merge these two sentences into one.

Response -Page 22, Lines 425-427: Great point, we removed repeating phrases the sentences now read as follows: "Our findings revealed that HDI, MEPI and PPN are negatively associated with trends in global fire extent. For HDI, our findings imply that technological advancements, improved surveillance systems, and effective mitigation efforts play a significant role....." (See line 417 – 418).

Page 23, Lines 463: you also have to mention about the SPITFIRE-based model performance. GlobFIRM is an old version, and we know this is not accurate.

Response -Page 23, Line 463: Great point, however our statistical model is DGVM-agnostic, hence we removed discussions of results from DGVMs (including GlobFIRM) to avoid confusing our readers. As a result, we did not discuss SPITFIRE too

Figure 1: you should add more explanation on the shape of frames, rectangles, rounds, diamonds. what is the data and what is the process

Response -Figure 1: Great point, we revised the workflow diagram by removing colours and shapes that could confuse readers. Additionally, we added more details about the training and testing data that went into the model, including the other processes that were missing such as data processing, correlation analysis and variance inflation factor. (See line 122 -127)

Table 2: explain the condition for color

Response -Table 2: That's true, we explained the legend in the legend caption and the caption now reads "Results of modeling attempts using different combinations of predictor variables using a progressive inclusion of covariates approach. For Normalized Mean Error (NME), higher values are represented by warmer colours (with red indicating the highest error), while lower values appear in cooler colours (green indicating the lowest error). In contrast, for Deviance Explained, higher values are shown in cooler colours (green indicating better performance), and lower values in warmer colours (red indicating poorer performance). An optimal model is indicated by a combination of cooler colours for both metrics, whereas a combination of warmer colours suggests poor model performance (See line 624 – 632). Also, it's important to note that we moved the table to the appendices section as suggested by the editor.

Figure 4: Specify the years for the average

Response -Figure 4: Agreed, we included the years for the average in the revised map. Specifically, we used the average observed of the period 2011 to 2018 and the average predicted for the same period.

Figure 5: The y-axis should be in 10⁶ to reduce the number of digits.

Response -Figure 5: That's true! We revised the y-axis and used the 10⁶ notation to improve readability. (See line 351 – 355).

Citation: https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-2024-3595-RC1

Reviewer 2

General comment

The manuscript entitled "A statistical global burned area model for seamless integration into Dynamic Global Vegetation Models" by Blessing Kavhu and colleagues develops a Generalized Linear Model (GLM) with 19 predictors. The authors designed and tested 26 models using burned

area data from the Global Fire Emissions Database version 5 (GFED5) and combinations of the selected predictors. Model 25 was chosen as the best-performing model, with an explained deviance of 0.568 and a Normalized Mean Error (NME) of 0.718. The authors identified key predictors such as Fire Weather Index (FWI), and Percentage Non-Tree Cover (PNTC), which strongly influence fire occurrence, and Human Development Index (HDI), Gross Primary Productivity Index (GPPI), and Population Density (PPN), which are negatively associated with fire occurrence. While the model demonstrates limited accuracy in predicting global annual burned area variability (Figure 5), it performs well in capturing global seasonal variability (Figure 8). The authors also discussed the comparison between predicted and observed data in terms of spatio temporal variability at the GFED regional level.

In general, I have concern regarding the alignment of the manuscript's title with its methods and objectives. The current title suggests that the authors developed statistical models (GLMs) seamlessly integrated into Dynamic Global Vegetation Models (DGVMs). However, upon reviewing the manuscript, it becomes clear that the GLM was built independently of any DGVM, and the integration is only theoretically explained. According to my understanding, true integration with DGVMs requires a lot and long modification processes, testing within specific DGVM frameworks, reparameterization, new input-output verification, module integration, and validation process. The integration process involves technical adjustments such as modifying input data formats, calibrating modules, and ensuring compatibility with existing model components (e.g., physical, physiological, vegetation, or disturbance, and biogeochemical modules). Without actual implementation and demonstrated results, the claim of "seamless integration" remains unsupported. I suggest revising the title to reflect the study's scope and contributions more accurately. For example, the title could emphasize the development of a GLM, its evaluation of wildfire drivers, and its ability to predict spatio-temporal variability in burned area data. Additionally, the study workflow needs to be presented more systematically. I recommend referencing workflows from published manuscripts in this field and ensuring that critical methodological details, such as data sources, temporal coverage of input data, and prediction periods, are clearly outlined. The abstract section is also not structurally strong enough, it should be rearranged. A clear and detailed workflow will greatly aid readers in understanding the study's methodology. Furthermore, the term "prediction" should be adjusted to "historical prediction" to reflect the study's temporal scope (2002–2018). Overall, I recommend major revision before this manuscript can be considered for publication in Biogeosciences. Addressing the points mentioned above, along with detailed reviewers comments, will significantly enhance the manuscript's clarity and alignment with its objectives. Please find detailed comments below.

Response -Title accuracy :We agree that the phrase "seamless integration" may overstate the current status of DGVM incorporation. Therefore, we have replaced "seamless" from the title. We kept the rest because the choice of predictor variables was strongly influenced by the longer-term aim of integration within DGVMs for future predictions. In other studies, the choice of predictor variables was less constrained (with more focus on the best possible match with the data), but this hampers the integration of the results into DGVMs. We want to make this special focus here already clear in the title. (See line 1-2)

We have added text to the discussion to make clearer which additional steps are necessary for integration into DGVMs. (See line 555 – 581)

Response -Workflow and abstract: Great point on the workflow, this was also raised by Reviewer 1. Hence, we revised the workflow by removing colours and shapes that could confuse readers. Additionally, we added more details about the training and testing data that went into the model, including the other processes that were missing such as data processing, correlation analysis and variance inflation factor. The workflow description will be revised for clarity, ensuring that data sources, temporal coverage, and prediction periods are explicitly outlined. (See line 122-124).

We also revised the abstract following the journal structure to include phrases on problem identification, methodology, key results with numerical values, and contributions to the field. (See line 11 -32).

Detailed Comments

<u>L1</u>"Statistical global burned area model" Could you please specify what kind of statistical model that you used in this study? The phrase is somewhat broad. Consider specifying the nature or methodology of the statistical model (e.g., linear, regression-based, machine learning, empirical, so on). This would make the title more precise and appealing to a specialized audience. "Seamless integration into Dynamic Global Vegetation Models"

Could you please explain what does "seamless integration" means?

The term "seamless integration" is somewhat subjective and may overpromise ease of implementation. Consider replacing it with a more objective phrase or point out the advantages or novelty of this statistical model with existing burned area models that are widely used globally.

Response -L1 (Title):Great points, we revised the title and specified the linear statistical model and replaced the term "seamless integration" with "tailored for integration" to avoid misinterpretation. Our intent with "seamless" was to emphasize that the model uses predictors which are either already available within a typical DGVM or can be easily computed, or for which global gridded data is available including future projections. We suggest the word "tailored" better describes this and so suggest the title:

"A linear statistical global burned area model tailored for integration into Dynamic Global Vegetation Models" (See line 1-2)

L11 The abstract structure is still weak and requires rewriting. Generally, an abstract should include, in sequence: the main problems identified by the authors, the solutions proposed to address these problems, the methodology applied in the study, and the objectives of the research. The results should be summarized, supported by numerical findings and validation metrics, and addition of standard deviations in the result. Additionally, the conclusions and key findings should be highlighted, and the abstract should conclude with a statement on the contribution of the study to the scientific field, which you have partially addressed in the first and final sentence of your current abstract.

Response -L11 (Abstract): Good point! We've completely restructured the abstract to align with standard scientific formatting. We have now included the relevant accuracies, strengths of relationships, and numerical validation metrics for spatial distribution, interannual variability and seasonal variability. (See line 11-32).

L13 Is wildfire modeling challenging solely due to human behavior? What about natural dynamics, such as climate and other environmental variables, that also influence wildfires?

Response -L13: We acknowledge that wildfire modeling is influenced by both human activity and natural drivers. Our intent was to highlight that the early development of global fire models paid much more attention to climate and their environmental drivers. This sentence has been revised as part of the reformulated abstract. It now reads as follows "Fire-enabled Dynamic Global Vegetation Models (DGVMs) play an essential role in predicting vegetation dynamics and biogeochemical cycles amid climate change, but modelling wildfires has been challenging in process-based biophysics-oriented DGVMs, in particular regarding the role of socioeconomic drivers." (See line 11-13).

L14 Is the main goal of this study to demonstrate the relationship between biophysical and socioeconomic factors and wildfire dynamics, including monthly burned area? The manuscript title should clearly reflect the primary objective of your research.

Response -L14: Great point, The main goal of this study is to build a linear statistical model based on the relationship between biophysical and socioeconomic factors and monthly burned area data, tailored for integration with DGVMs. We revised the manuscript title, and it now reflects the primary objective of our research. (See line 1-2).

L15 The sentence, 'We developed Generalised (Generalized?) Linear Models (GLMs) to capture the relationships between potential predictor variables that are simulated by DGVMs...' can be combined with the previous sentence, as both explain the objectives of this study. Combining them would improve the flow and cohesiveness of the text while reducing redundancy.

Response -L15: Agreed! We combined the sentences, and it now reads as follows, "Using monthly burnt area (BA) data from the latest global burned area product from GFED5 as our response variable, we developed Generalised Linear Models (GLMs) to capture the relationships between potential predictor variables (biophysical and socio-economic) that are simulated by DGVMs and/or available in future scenarios." (See line 15–17).

L18 What does the "final model" mean?

Response -L18: Good point, we clarified that the "final model" refers to the best-performing GLM, selected based on minimum collinearity and maximum model performance in terms of reproducing observations. (See line 19-20)

L23 To enhance the scientific rigor and clarity of the manuscript, I suggest including the r-values (correlation coefficients) for both positive and negative correlations between BA and the predictor variables. Reporting these values will provide a clearer understanding of the strength of these relationships. Additionally, where possible, p-values should be included alongside r-values to indicate statistical significance (e.g., p < 0.05). To maintain the brevity of the abstract, p-values can be detailed in another section that elaborates on these findings.

Response -L23 (Correlation Values): We prefer not to include univariate correlation coefficients (r-values) and statistical significance (p-values) for our predictors. Given that a multivariate approach is essential for predicting fire, we believe that reporting univariate correlations does not add useful information. We also deliberately choose not to report t-values from the GLM. This is because there are high levels of spatial autocorrelation in our predictor variables which, although it does not affect the central estimates coefficients, will artificially reduce the estimated

uncertainties and thus make the t-values unreliable. However, some measure of the strengths of relationships can be gleaned from the partial dependence plots (Figure 3). (See line 318-320).

<u>L24</u> Before discussing the model predictions, could you please provide a comparison of your statistical model's performance with the benchmark dataset (GFED5) for burned area? Typically, in modeling, it is essential to first validate the model's performance using historical observation data before applying it to future predictions. This will help contextualize the model's accuracy and allow for a better understanding of its strengths and limitations in comparison to the established dataset.

Response -L24 (Model Comparison to GFED5): We provided details of a direct comparison between our model's predictions and GFED5 observational data for spatial, seasonal and interannual variability using the Normalised Mean Square Error (NME) and R² respectively. We explicitly specified the performance metrics for some of the predictors in the abstract to avoid confusion. (See line 26-28).

L27 The use of 'R > 0.50' is vague. To strengthen this statement, please provide a range of correlation values or specific values for different regions. This will offer a clearer understanding of the model's performance across various areas and enhance the scientific rigor of the analysis.

Response -L27 (R>0.50 Clarification): Good point, we included specific correlation values for differents regions which performed better, and it now reads as follows " ... its standout performance lay in capturing the seasonal variability, especially in regions often characterized by distinct wet and dry seasons, notably southern Africa($R^2 = 0.72$ to 0.99), Australia($R^2 = 0.75$ to 0.90)". (See line 28).

L36 Please specify the year the data is from when mentioning the record fires in Australia and Canada, each burning more than 15 million hectares (Barnes et al., 2023; Jain et al., 2024). Additionally, it would be useful to include a comparison with the wildfires in Australia and Canada from the previous year. This will help strengthen the statement that 'climate change has led to more severe fire weather' by providing a clearer context of how fire severity has evolved over time.

Response -L36 (Fire Events in Australia & Canada): Good point! We provided the year of the latest record-breaking fires (2023) in the manuscript and the included phrase reads "climate change has led to more severe fire weather in large parts of the world and record fires have recently occurred in Australia and Canada, burning more than 15 million (Kirchmeier-Young et al 2024) and 7.8 million ha in 2023 (MacCarthy et al., 2024) respectively". (See line 38-39).

L60 Please explain why the predictive skill of process-based models is often not yet satisfactory. If the explanation is similar to the next point, you may consider combining both sentences, as they both address the limitations of process-based models. This will improve the coherence and conciseness of the text.

Response -L60: The predictive skill of process-based models is often limited due to incomplete representation of fire drivers, uncertainty in parameterization, and difficulties in accurately simulating human-fire interactions. This explanation was integrated in the manuscript for coherence. (See line 62-65).

L63 Please explain why statistical approaches are often used to evaluate human impacts on wildfires. Highlight the advantages of statistical methods.

Response -L63: We clarified why statistical approaches are commonly used to evaluate human impacts on wildfires in the manuscript. Our justification includes that statistical approaches can effectively quantify correlations between fire occurrence and socioeconomic drivers. These methods allow for empirical validation, provide flexibility in handling diverse datasets, and facilitate the inclusion of multiple spatial and temporal scales that can be integrated in DGVMs. This will be clarified in the manuscript.(See line 66-68).

L65 Please explain why the application of statistical models to ecosystems other than those used in their derivation is often not reliable. Highlight the limitations of statistical methods.

Response -L60-L65 (Process-Based vs. Statistical Models): We clarified the limitations behind transferability of statistical methods to be associated with the assumptions behind how they analyse relationships. This has been clarified as follows in the manuscript: "This is mainly because statistical models assume that the relationship between predictors and responses is stationery and context dependent, which is not typical of fires that are stochastic in nature." (See line 69-72).

L88 "However, the integration of these techniques into DGVM is yet to be realized". Please check this article: https://doi.org/10.1029/2023MS003710. Son, et al., 2024 integrated of a Deep-Learning-Based Fire Model Into a Global Land Surface Model. I suggest reviewing the article directly to confirm the specifics of the DGVM's integration approach.

Response -L88: Son et al. did not fully integrate their new fire model into the land surface model JSBACH for future prediction because some of the land surface input variables were remote sensing-based and climate reanalysis, e.g. MODIS LAI and ERA5 soil water. For a full integration and future application that accounts for dynamic vegetation changes one needs to refit the model with simulated land surface characteristics, or, at least, explore how much the relationships change if simulated land surface characteristics are used instead of satellite-derived ones. However, we have now included a new section entitled "Next steps for DGVM integration and future predictions" that also discusses the Son approach, and make mention of it in the Introduction. (See line 97-98)

L90 If possible, please mention the DGVM name you are criticizing to provide clearer information. By specifying which DGVM you are referring to, readers will better understand the context of your critique and the gap in current modeling approaches.

Response -L90: We think that discussing DGVMs will confuse our readers, especially since we don't plan to design this model for specific DGVM. Hence, we removed these phrases and included a new section which details DGVM integration and future predictions.

L93 Please check this article: https://doi.org/10.5194/bg-21-4195-2024. Section 2.4 Model application. Nurrohman, et al., 2024 has integrated SEIB-DGVM with the SPITFIRE fire model and modified DGVM to produce monthly outputs using statistical downscaling methods. The method is able to capture monthly wildfire dynamics with results very similar to GFED4s benchmark data (Figure 5 in that article).

Response -L93: We appreciate the suggestion. The study by Nurrohman et al. (2024) was cited and discussed. Their study is different from our study in that it generates monthly outputs from

downscaling, yet we build a model based on monthly data, and hence our study has strength. (See line 107).

L94 Using up-to-date remote sensing datasets in the DGVM as input or validation dataset?

Response -L94: Good catch, we noticed that this sentence was a bit confusing, hence we rephrased it. We were initially referring to training our algorithm with some recent remotes sensing datasets that better capture fire dynamics.

L95 Please clarify the integration between DGVMs and statistical models, DGVMs and remote sensing datasets, or both. The previous sentence discussed using remote sensing datasets for fire modeling, so it would be helpful to understand how these approaches are integrated and how each component contributes to enhancing the model's fire prediction accuracy.

Response -L95: We did not integrate our statistical model into a DGVM in this paper, however, the integration process of DGVMs with statistical models was explicitly explained in the discussion section (See line 557-583) to highlight their respective contributions to improving fire prediction accuracy.

<u>L111</u> Figure 1: Please create a simple workflow legend that explains the definition of each shape. Additionally, clarify the meaning of the color differences (red and black). There are international standards for workflow/flowchart design, including how to select shapes, so please refer to them. You can also refer to published manuscript in Biogeoscience for example. To enhance readability, when mentioning external datasets or input data, include the dataset names along with the corresponding year ranges for the data you are using.

Response -L111 (Workflow Diagram): This is an important point which was raised by Reviewer 1 as well. We created a simpler and more detailed workflow this time. To remove the confusion and complexity to our readers, we removed the undescribed shapes and colours that were previously included in the workflow.(See line 124-128)

<u>L111</u> I believe the small black boxes below the red tube shape are meant to describe each process, correct? For example, you used Pearson correlation in the correlation matrix, a quasi-binomial GLM, and so on. If this is the case, I recommend avoiding the use of shapes for these descriptions, as shapes can represent processes, data, or other meanings depending on the one selected. Instead, it would be clearer to provide descriptions below each process or explain them in a paragraph beneath Figure 1. This will enhance clarity and avoid redundancy in the diagram.

Response -L111: We created a simpler and more detailed workflow as alluded to in the previous response. Processes such as correlation analysis, VIF and data processing were incorporated in a much simpler way. We also removed the different shapes and colours that were previously included in the workflow. (See line 124-128)

<u>L115</u> Could you please clarify whether you used the entire burned area (BA) time range from the GFED5 dataset for your study, or just specific years such as 2002 and 2018?

Response -L115: We clarified in the manuscript that we used data for the period 2002-2010 for model training and data for 2011 to 2018 for model testing. (See line 135 -136).

<u>L115</u> Please ensure that the abbreviation for the Global Fire Emissions Database is written uniformly as either "GFEDv5" or "GFED5" throughout the manuscript. Consistency in terminology helps maintain clarity and professionalism in scientific writing.

Response -L115: Good point, we used GFED5 consistently across the entire manuscript.

<u>L124</u> At first, please directly explain the predictor variable you are using, then followed by the sentence "whilst" along with the reason why you use those predictors only. This structure will help clarify the rationale behind your choices and ensure a logical flow in your explanation.

Response -L124: That's true. We revised how we explain our predictor variables by first introducing the predictors and then justifying their selection. Here is an example of how we framed it in the manuscript: "We used eight vegetation predictor variables to comprehensively evaluate their role on global fire distribution. These variables encompass Percentage Grass Cover (PGC), Percentage Non-Tree Cover (PNTC), Percentage Crop Cover (PCC), Percentage Graze Cover (PGZC), Percentage Rangeland Cover (PRC), and Percentage Tree Cover (PTC). Previous work emphasizes the important role of vegetation on burnt area dynamics. For example, Thonicke et al. (2010), discussed the crucial role of vegetation structure in shaping fire occurrence, spread and intensity." (See lines 158-159, 167-168, 171-172, 175-176, 186-187, 204-205).

L135 For Table 1, in the source column, I suggest adopting a consistent citation style for all the predictor data used. This means including either the author's name and publication year or the specific time when you accessed the dataset. Be sure to check the "how to cite" instructions for each dataset to provide the correct format. This will ensure clarity and credibility in referencing the data sources. Please check Table 1. Summary of predictor and fire response variables (Haas et al., 2022) https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ac6a69.

L135 Ensure that the table header is repeated on all pages where the table appears, and apply this adjustment to other tables as well.

Response -L135: We standardized the citation format for predictor data sources in Table 1 according to dataset-specific citation guidelines as done in (Haas et al 2022). We also repeated the table header on all pages for consistency. (See lines 152-156)

<u>L155</u> Please check section 2.3 and 2.4. both have a same name "vegetation-related predictors"

Response -L155: Good point, we addressed the duplicate section titles for "Vegetation-related predictors" in Sections 2.3 and 2.4. We revised section 2.4 to topographic predictors. (See lines 157-158, 174-175)

L169 Could you please provide a more detailed explanation of the HDI data? This should include the data range, units (if applicable), and guidance on interpreting the HDI data used in your study. Since your results indicate that HDI predictors have a significant impact, this clarification is necessary to ensure that the discussion aligns with the proper interpretation of the HDI data.

Response -L169 (HDI Data): We provided a detailed explanation of HDI data, its range, and interpretation in the manuscript. Our explanation in the manuscript reads as follows: "HDI is a composite index developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to assess long-

term progress in three basic dimensions of human development, including health (life expectancy at birth), education (mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling), and standard of living (gross national income per capita) (UNDP, 2023). HDI values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating higher levels of human development." (See line 188-192).

L178 I suggest changing the structure of sections 2.3 to 2.6, to become sub-sections under section 2.2. Because it explains about predictor variables specifically, to simplify the reading flow. Example: 2.2. Predictor variables, 2.2.1. Vegetation-related predictors, ... 2.2.4. Weather-related predictors. 2.3. Data processing.

Response -L178: We restructured Sections 2.3 to 2.6 into sub-sections under "2.2 Predictor variables" to enhance readability. They now fall between sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.4 (See lines 157-203)

L190 You describe data processing in subsection 2.7, but this step is not included in Figure 1, the study workflow. I recommend adding data processing to Figure 1 for consistency. Additionally, to enhance clarity for readers, ensure that Section 2 provides a detailed and sequential explanation of the data and study processes, aligning with the workflow illustrated in Figure 1.

Response -L190 (Data Processing in Workflow): We incorporated data processing steps into Figure 1 for consistency. (See line 124-128).

L200 "GPPI was originally defined as the Monthly Ecosystem Productivity Index (MEPI) in the study by Forrest et al. (2024)". After reviewing their work, I see that MEPI evaluates ecosystem productivity, including vegetation health and phenological states. Could you please clarify why you renamed MEPI to GPPI while using the same equation, and why it is referred to as the 'novel GPPI' (as mentioned in lines 20 and 533)?

Response -L200: We adopted MEPI as in Forrest et al. (2024) to avoid confusing our readers. We also revised the phrase that says it's a novel index to a refined index. (See lines 224-226).

L223 Figure 2. This correlation matrix is a part of your results, isn't it? According to Figure 1. Correlation matrix is classified as the first step of your study. If so, please move Figure 2 to the result section.

Response -L223: Figure 2,True! We moved the correlation matrix to the results section since it represents part of the study findings. We also briefly described the results from the correlation matrix. (See lines 286-289).

L229 Is it Figure A3 or Figure 3? Additionally, how many plots did you create ten or eight?

L229 In my opinion, it would be better not to mention the result image (Figure 3) in Section 2, as this section should focus solely on the data and methodology.

Response -L229: We removed the sentence that cites Figure 3 in the methods section and corrected the number of plots created to 8 instead of 10. (See lines 323-326).

L236 What data did you use for model calibration and testing? Was it GFED5? Please include the calibration and testing process in Figure 1 for clarity.

Response -L236: We clarified that we used GFED5 data at different time periods for model calibration (2002 to 2010) and testing (2011 to 2018) of our model. The calibration/testing process was also included in Figure 1 for clarity. (See line 124-128).

L262 You can delete this sentence, as this information is described in the table caption. This paragraph could start with the sentence "The initial models ... so on"

Response -L262: We deleted the redundant sentence and restructured the paragraph for conciseness. (See 149-150).

<u>L274</u> Could you please explain more details about the reason why you chose Model 25 instead of Model 24 or another model with better deviance and NME? If it is for the reason of future projection of RD data, we can refer to the deviance and NME values in the second, third and so on, because based on the explanation, these two variables are a reference for whether the model is good or not. If it is for simpler reasons, you better explain how the model is said to be simple, whether because there is no multiplication between predictor variables or other reasons.

Response -L274 (Model Selection Rationale): Good point, We clarified that we picked Model 25 as opposed to Model 24 due to its parsimony. By simple model we were referring to model parsimony and that has been clarified in the manuscript. (See lines 301-302).

L267 Could you please explain why you introduce polynomial terms for Percentage Tree Cover (PTC)?

Response -L267: . Great point! We did this following finding by Forrest et al 2024 who found that introducing a polynomial term for PTC improves fire predictions for Europe, hence we tried this at a global scale. (See lines 267-269).

L277 Could you please explain how the predictor formula in each model is determined, the reasons for summing or multiplying the predictors?

Response -L277: Sure, we clarified that our approach was motivated by work by Forrest et all who used this approach in Europe. Our justification reads as follows in the manuscript: "We followed the stepwise approach of variable inclusion, exclusion, interaction terms, log transformations, and polynomial transformations as described by Forrest et al. (2024). While their analysis focused on Europe, our objective was to replicate and apply the method at a global scale." . (See lines 267-269).

L287 Please change the exponent symbol (e) to \times 10x

Response -L287: We changed the exponent symbol (e) will be replaced with " \times 10 x " for consistency in notation. . (See lines 307-309).

L302 Could you please explain what Larson and 1972 means? I checked the References and there is no citation information.

Response -L302: Good point! Larson and McCleary (1972) provided a description of the use of partial residual plots in regression analysis in detail. We included the reference of this citation in the list of references (See 781-782).

L303 (GPP) or (GPPI)?

Response -L303: We revised GPPI to MEPI consistently across the manuscript to avoid this confusion.

<u>L308</u> Please search additional references related to similar GLM modeling that have similar or lower explained deviance values than yours, and provide explanations to strengthen your results that the values are accepted.

Response -L308: Great suggestion. Not many studies have used GLM to model fires at this scale, which is one of the strengths of our study. We cited the relevant studies that used GLM for global fire modelling in our discussions.

L322 Please write the year of the observed burnt area (GFED5) and predicted burnt area datasets in Figure 4.

Response -L322: We explicitly indicated the years of the observed burned area (GFED5) and predicted burned area datasets in Figure 4. Specifically, we used the testing period 2011 - 2018 for validation of our predictions using observed data. (See lines 344-347)

L330 Could you please explain the reason for adjusting the HDI predictor to be included, excluded, or constant? I don't see any explanation of this HDI setting in the methods section or in sub-section 2.5. Anthropogenic Influence Predictor.

Response -L330: Good suggestion! We provided the rationale for including, excluding, or keeping HDI constant in the models to be added to the methodology section. The rationale reads "To evaluate model sensitivity to inclusion of HDI, we trained our model based on the three settings: including, excluding and holding HDI constant" (See lines 199-201).

L331 Please remove the title of Figure 5 "Internanual variability .." at the top of the graph, as it is already written in the figure caption.

L331 Please reduce the burnt area unit (y-axis) to be 2 digits, so that the digit is not too long by applying \times 10x

Response -L331: We removed the title in Figure 5 to avoid redundancy. We also formatted the burnt area unit (y-axis) to two digits using "× 10^x" notation. (See lines 355-359).

L338 Please write the full name of the abbreviation SHAF, SHSA, NHAF, CEAS and so on (because it has not been explained before)

Response -L338: Good point! We introduced the full names of abbreviations for all the 14 GFED regions in the methods section. The introduction reads "The 14 GFED regions include, Boreal North America (BONA), Temperate North America (TENA), Central America (CEAM), Northern Africa (NHAF), Southern Africa (SHAF), Europe (EURO), the Middle East (MIDE), Equatorial Asia (EQAS), Southern Asia (SEAS), Boreal Asia (BOAS), Temperate Asia (TEAS), Australia and New Zealand (AUST), and Northern Hemisphere South America (NHSA), and Southern Hemisphere South America (SHSA)" (See lines 276-280).

<u>L345</u> Please clarify the figure caption to be understandable by the reader. Is it a interannual variability comparison of burnt areas between model projections and GFEDv5?

L345 Please clarify the figure caption to be understandable by the reader. Is it a interannual variability comparison of burnt areas between model projections and GFEDv5?

Response -L345: We improved the caption for Figure 5 to indicate that it presents an interannual variability comparison between model projections and GFED5 burned area estimates. The caption now reads "Figure 5: Interannual variability in burnt area extent showing the observed trend (based

on GFED5 burnt estimates detection and model projections under different HDI treatments: when HDI was excluded. included and held constant from the value of the first year in the model". (See lines 359-363).

L355 To make it briefer, you can combine figure 6 and figure 7.

Response -L355: Good suggestion! We merged Figures 6 and 7 to streamline the presentation of our results. (See lines 372-377).

L367 Please remove image title above the graph "Global Seasonal Cycle" and adjust the y-axis not using "k", you can use \times 10x

Response -L367: We removed the figure title "Global Seasonal Cycle" and adjusted the y-axis formatting for to using \times 10x instead of k to ensure consistency across figures. (See lines 393-396).

L372 Please delete the paragraph between section 4. Discussion and sub section 4.1. It's better to discuss the research result directly.

Response -L372: We deleted the paragraph between Section 4 and Subsection 4.1 to allow a direct transition into the discussion without confusing our readers. (See lines 400-401).

L378 I have not seen any explanation about what DGVM you used in this study and how you integrate your GLM with those DGVM, either in the methodology section or elsewhere. How can you state that this GLM is compatible in DGVM? To my current understanding, each DGVM has its own characteristics, starting from their programming language and the flow of how it reads specific input data (so it needs data handling / pre-processing to be integrated into each DGVM).

Response -L378 (DGVM Integration Explanation): We clarified that full DGVM integration requires further modifications and that our study focuses on developing a DGVM agnostic statistical model. We provided a dedicated subsection in the discussion on DGVM integration. (See lines 562-689).

<u>L423</u> Please provide cross-reference form figure that support this statement, so that readers can easily refer to specific figure. In addition, please provide more explanation why your model exhibits stronger performance in those regions including in the northern hemisphere.

Response -L423: We included a cross-reference to a supporting figure. We also included the explanation for why the model performs better in certain regions. It now reads "....other world regions (See Fig. 4). The stronger performance in these areas is likely due to the well-defined and predictable fire regimes in these regions. Since fire activity here is strongly governed by distinct wet-dry seasonal cycles, which align closely with climate variables such as precipitation, temperature, and vegetation productivity, factors that our model captures effectively using linear functions (van der Werf et al., 2017; Archibald et al., 2013). These regions typically exhibit lower interannual variability in fire occurrence, facilitating better model generalization." (See lines 446-461).

L432 After this sentence, it is better to explain how this model contributes to novel insights into the factors that influence global fire trends, and after that you can compare with other studies.

Response -L432: We provided a discussion on how the model contributes to novel insights into global fire trends before comparing it with previous studies. The revised phrase reads "Our model has contributed novel insights to the existing understanding of the factors influencing global fire

trends by revealing that excluding the HDI from our model and holding it constant to the value of the first year predicted a steady trend that deviates from the observed negative trend in global fire extent and including HDI follows a decreasing trend that aligns with the observed trend (Fig. 5)." (See lines 469-468).

L442 "This highlights the significant influence of HDI in projecting the purported negative global ire trend". If so, you can further discuss how the spatio-temporal variability of projected burnt area of each region (in this sub-section or other sub-section), how HDI affects the burnt area in the region. If the HDI data is the same as this source: https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human- development-index#/indicies/HDI, then you can associate regions with low, medium, high and very high HDI.

Response -L442 (HDI Influence Discussion): Very valuable suggestion. While regional analysis of HDI contributions could offer interesting insights, we chose not to pursue this direction to preserve the explanatory power of HDI for the global decline in wildfires, as reported in previous studies such as Andela et al. (2017). Our primary objective is to develop a global statistical model that captures broad-scale trends suitable for integration with DGVMs, rather than focusing on regional patterns.

L442 "The HDI is related to factors like advancements in fire control methods, surveillance, technology, and outreach strategies increasing awareness, particularly in response to the growing human technological developments". Can you add one or some references that supports this statement?

Response -L442: Good point, we included a citation from a paper by Teixeira et al (2023) which supports our discussion. However, we also softened the wording to reflect the HDI is a rather general proxy. The text now reads:

"The HDI is rather broad socioeconomic indicator, which we assume acts as a proxy for factor such as investments and advancements in fire control methods, surveillance, technology, and outreach strategies increasing awareness". (See lines 469-4710.

L450 In this sub-section, you can discuss how the interannual variability of your model in each GFED region (as shown in Figure A1), how your model performs compared to the observational data from GFED5.

Response -L450: Thats a thoughtful suggestion. We deliberately kept the discussion of appendix results brief to maintain clarity and avoid potential confusion, given that the focus of the manuscript is on developing a simple global statistical model. The interannual variability of different regions was included in the appendix to provide additional context without detracting from the global perspective of the core analysis.

L463 Please also discuss another DGVM that used SPITFIRE fire module, as SPITFIRE is an updated fire module from GlobFIRM. SPITFIRE has implemented full burned area calculations and considers natural ignition factors from lightning and ignition and fire suppression based on population density (Thonicke et al., 2010). SPITFIRE effectively includes human fire suppression on other lands because human ignitions first increase and then decrease with increasing population density (Hantson et al., 2016). Models that explicitly simulate the impact of human suppression on fire growth or burnt area (CLM, CLASS-CTEM, JSBACH-SPITFIRE, LPJ-GUESS-SIMFIRE-BLAZE) are

better at representing the spatial pattern in burnt area compared to models which do not include this effect (0.85 and 0.93 respectively). (Hantson et al., 2020) Please try to check the following papers that discuss FireMIP and DGVM used to simulate fire and burned biomass emissions resulting from forest fires. Historical (1700–2012) global multi-model estimates of the fire emissions from the Fire Modeling Intercomparison Project (FireMIP) (Li et al., 2019) The Fire Modeling Intercomparison Project (FireMIP), phase 1: experimental and analytical protocols with detailed model descriptions (Rabin et al., 2017) The status and challenge of global fire modelling (Hantson et al., 2016)

Response -L463 (SPITFIRE and FireMIP Discussion): We fully agree that making reference GlobFIRM only does not give a balanced view and that those papers give a wealth of information about fire modules and different DGVMs. However, we prefer not to focus on any specific DGVM - our reference to GlobFIRM and perhaps by inference LPJ-GUESS was a little misleading in this regard. The fire module here would be compatible with practically any DGVM, so we prefer to keep the discussion general. Therefore we have changed the text to:

"We note that in the recent comparison of fire-enabled DGVMs in the Fire Model Intercomparison Project (FireMIP) project (Hantson et al. 2020), all models did a poorer job of matching the interannual variability than the spatial patterns by a considerable margin. The seven acceptably-performing models achieved a mean spatial NME (across all data and model comparisons) of 0.84 with respect to spatial patterns, but an NME of 1.15 for interannual variability. (See lines 489-492).

L468 "The findings of this study exhibit robustness in capturing seasonal cycles (R2= 0.536)," Could you please include a cross-reference an image that states this? To make it easier for readers to refer to the results you are discussing. Please apply throughout the rest of the section, when you mention the results of the study, include a cross-reference with a supporting figure or table.

Response -L468: A cross-reference to a relevant figure was provided to support the claim that the model captures seasonal cycles well ($R^2 = 0.536$). This practice was applied throughout the section to improve the traceability of results. (See lines 509-510).

<u>L471</u> Could you please provide evidence to support this assertion that it is due to climatic conditions in those regions? You can compare seasonal fire patterns and climatic conditions in those regions and discuss the result in this sub-section.

Response -L471: Great suggestion, we provided a reference to support our attribution of climate to this discussion. This is supported as follows in the manuscript: "This discrepancy could be attributed to the intricate climatic conditions inherent to these regions, which influence fires weather in a manner that eludes simple linear modeling. For instance, regions with clear-cut wet and dry seasons tend to exhibit more regular fire cycles, largely governed by seasonal shifts in precipitation, temperature, and vegetation growth. These predictable patterns make them well-suited to linear modeling approaches (Archibald et al., 2013; van der Werf et al., 2017). In contrast, areas in the northern hemisphere experience more irregular and less seasonally driven fire activity. Here, the interaction of drought events, land management, and socio-economic drivers introduces variability that weakens model performance (Forkel et al., 2019; Chuvieco et al., 2021). Additionally, varied ignition sources in temperate and boreal zones disrupt consistent seasonal fire patterns (Flannigan et al., 2009)" (See lines 512-518).

L478 In my opinion, I think this paragraph is better presented at the beginning of sub section 4.5.

Response -L478: Good suggestion, the paragraph was moved to the beginning of the section for improved logical flow. (See lines 496-507).

L478 Do you do future predictions of annual or seasonal burned area data globally?

Response -L478: Great question, we did not make any future predictions for seasonal and annual burned area in this study, however we splitted our study period into training period (2002 - 2010) and prediction period (2011 - 2018). This was clarified in the method section of the manuscript.

L490 I suggest renaming this sub-section to "model limitation and excluded drivers". Include the explanation and discussion of "model shortcomings" in sub-section 4.7 to this section.

Response -L490: Great suggestion, we renamed the subsection to "model limitations and excluded drivers," and integrated discussions on model shortcomings into this section. (See lines 525-526).

L500 "FAPAR is highly correlated with GPP." Please confirm, according to Figure 2. FAPAR correlation with GPP is 0.59, or do you mean FAPAR in general which includes FAPAR, FAPAR12 and FAPAR6?

Response -L500 (FAPAR-GPP Correlation): Great suggestion, We clarified that FAPAR in general is correlated with GPP to avoid confusion. (See lines 535-536).

L512 I suggest this sub-section be changed to 4.7. Recommendations (after you separate the discussion of shortcomings, as I suggested in L490). Or you could also combine section 5. Conclusions and Recommendations, to harmonize after you discuss the Conclusions, you can suggest recommendations regarding further studies.

Response -L512 (Recommendations Section): Good suggestion, We renamed this section to "Next steps for DGVM integration, and future directions and model improvements" (See lines 559-560).

L513 "The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the underlying drivers and patterns shaping global fire dynamics". The sentence does not explain the model shortcomings or recommendations. It seems better to put it in the Conclusion section. In addition, in this subsection, please explain about recommendations only, you can discuss recommendations on how to solve the limitations or shortcomings of the current model, or further studies from this research.

Response -L513: Good point. We removed this sentence and revised the subsection to focus solely on model limitations, including how to address current model limitations and potential directions for future research. (See lines 548-557)

L525 This first paragraph doesn't fit in the Conclusion section, it's more like an introduction, I suggest deleting this first paragraph.

Response -L525 (Conclusion Introductory Paragraph): Great suggestion. We removed the introductory paragraph as it does not fit the conclusion structure. (See lines 586-587).

L531 Make sure the Conclusion section explains the research objectives. The first two sentences have answered the first objective, but add how much the major predictors correlate with burnt area (B A).

Response -L531: We revised the conclusion to explicitly summarize research objectives and findings, including the correlation of major predictors with burned area (BA). (See lines 587-607).

<u>L534</u> Explain the performance of the model when predicting BA compared to the GFED5 observational data -> state the evaluation value index that you used for validating the model before predicting, how do you state the model is suitable to be used to predict BA.

Response -L534: The model's performance relative to GFED5 observational data was decsribed, including validation metrics. It reads "While our parsimonious model exhibited limitations in predicting the interannual variability of global fires, it demonstrated commendable accuracy in forecasting the spatial (NME = 0.72). The strength of similarity between observed and predicted seasonal cycles varied according to the GFED region with R^2 ranging between 0.06 to 0.99. Its standout performance laid in capturing the seasonal variability, especially in regions often characterized by distinct wet and dry seasons, notably southern Africa (R^2 = 0.72 to 0.99), Australia (R^2 68) and South America (R^2 = 0.75 to 0.90)". (See lines 594-602).

<u>L536</u> Before the phrase "We hope", explain the third objective, explain how the model performance, including spatio-temporal, interannual and seasonal cycle of BA compares with GFED5 observational data.

Response -L536 (Model Performance Summary): Great suggestion, we provided the NME that we used to evaluate our model and the corre;ation values indicating the strength of relationship between my observed and predicted seasonal cycles for outstanding GFED regions. We only provided over R² for the interannual variability due to the poor performance of our model for interannual variability in different GFED regions. (See lines 599-602).

List of additional supporting of references

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