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env_key in Codex: how it reads your key from an environment variable

Codex CLI

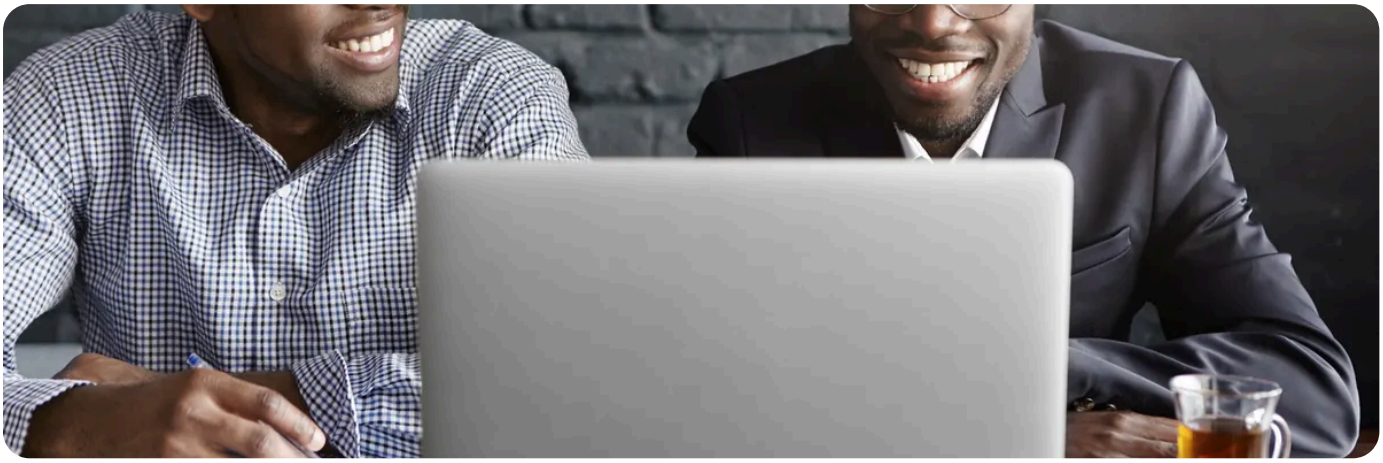
CODE	VERSION	COUNTRY · LANGUAGE
RLX-MZ-KB-3138	v2026.11.28	Mozambique · English

Interweb Mozambique
RLX Holdings, S.A. · Group RLX Holdings
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https://www.meu.interweb.co.mz/knowledgebase/3138

env_key in Codex: how it reads your key from an environment variable

Codex CLI Created on **November 28, 2026** 2 min read



In the Interweb provider, the `env_key` line does not hold the key: it holds the name of the variable where the key is. Codex reads that variable at start and sends the key in the `Authorization: Bearer` header. That way, the key is never written in `config.toml`.

How it looks in the file

```
model = "moonshotai/kimi-k2.7-code"
model_provider = "api"

[model_providers.api]
name = "Interweb"
base_url = "https://api.interweb.co.mz/v1"
env_key = "INTERWEB_API_KEY"
wire_api = "responses"
```

Note: `env_key = "INTERWEB_API_KEY"`, not `env_key = "prod_..."`. If you put the key where the name goes, Codex looks for a variable with that name, does not find it and the request fails.

Keep the key in the variable

On Windows, open Command Prompt or PowerShell and type (with your key in quotes):

```
setx INTERWEB_API_KEY "prod_..."
```

`setx` saves the variable for the windows you open **afterwards**. Close the terminal and the tool, then open them again.

On Linux and macOS, type in the terminal:

```
export INTERWEB_API_KEY="prod_..."
```

To have the variable in every new terminal, add the same line at the end of `~/.bashrc` or `~/.zshrc`.

If the variable does not exist

Codex only reads the variable when it starts. If you set it later, or in another terminal, Codex does not see it and has no key to send. If the request reaches the API, the answer is `401 unauthorized`. Close Codex, open a new terminal and start Codex again.

To check that the variable exists, without showing it on screen. On Linux and macOS:

```
test -n "$INTERWEB_API_KEY" && echo OK || echo missing
```

In Windows PowerShell:

```
if ($env:INTERWEB_API_KEY) { "OK" } else { "missing" }
```

The other ways, and why we do not use them

Field	What the Codex documentation says
`env_key`	The environment variable that holds the provider key. It is the one we use.
`env_key_instructions`	Optional text with instructions to get the key. You can write, for example, where the key is created.
`experimental_bearer_token`	The key written in the file itself. The documentation advises against it and says to use `env_key`.

The same variable works for the MCP server in Codex, in the `bearer_token_env_var` field. See **the All in One AI MCP server**.

RECOMMENDED

Want to code with AI in Codex? Visit the Coding with AI page.

See Coding with AI →

SEE ALSO

- **Codex CLI with All in One AI: creating config.toml, the key and the model** →
- **Codex on Windows: saving the key with setx and opening a new terminal** →

- **An API key or token has leaked: what to do, in the right order**
- **Errors when setting up a tool with All in One AI: 401, model not found, no credits, /v1 and rejected config files**
- **Coding with AI in All in One AI**

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