



Additional Financing Appraisal Environmental and
Social Review Summary
Appraisal Stage
(AF ESRS Appraisal Stage)

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BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country	Region	Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency(ies)
Serbia	EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	Republic of Serbia	Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development
Project ID	Project Name		
P174542	Serbia Accelerating Innovation and Growth Entrepreneurship Additional Financing		
Parent Project ID (if any)	Parent Project Name		
P170185	Serbia Accelerating Innovation and Growth Entrepreneurship		
Practice Area (Lead)	Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date
Finance, Competitiveness and Innovation	Investment Project Financing	10/5/2020	11/17/2020

Proposed Development Objective

The project’s development objective is to improve (i) the relevance and excellence of scientific research, and (ii) innovative entrepreneurship and access to finance for enterprise growth, as a way of contributing to Serbia’s growth and competitiveness.

Relevance of research refers to the potential of research results to be commercialized on the market, thus contributing to the economy, while excellence refers to international recognition of the quality of the research.

Financing (in USD Million)	Amount
Current Financing	0.00
Proposed Additional Financing	0.00
Total Proposed Financing	0.00

B. Is the project being prepared in a Situation of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints, as per Bank IPF Policy, para. 12?

Public Disclosure



No

C. Summary Description of Proposed Project [including overview of Country, Sectoral & Institutional Contexts and Relationship to CPF]

The original SAIGE Project (the Project) was approved by the Board on December 13, 2019, and became effective on May 18, 2020. The EU made a favorable decision in mid-December to support Serbia through the IPA 19 Program with an additional EUR 41.5 million, to be managed by the World Bank to complement the Project loan, just after the Project loan was submitted to the Board for approval. The Additional Financing (AF) will allow the client to scale-up activities and enhance development impact.

The AF solely consists in the amounts to be disbursed and the respective results targets, and would not change the Project Development Objective, components or activities. Further, the AF would be disbursed through the same programs described in Components 1 and 2 under the Project. Thus, with the AF, the programs described would be financed by a combination of IBRD loan proceeds and EU IPA 19 proceeds, through the Project. All implementation arrangements would remain the same.

The Project will support reforms of the research sector, through establishment and operation of the Serbia Science Fund, reform of selected group of individual RDIs, and specific interventions promoting researchers skills. The Project will also allow for the large Serbian diaspora to be engaged through a Diaspora Facility, aimed at strengthening the Serbian innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem by providing scientific excellence, financial networks, knowledge, and new market opportunities. Finally, the Project will also provide needed support to innovative SMEs through an enterprise acceleration program that will extend co-investment grants and technical assistance to enterprises.

The Project consists of 3 components.

Component 1 will support Research Sector Reforms. Sub-component 1.1 will finance the operationalization of the Serbia Science Fund (SF), established in 2018, reporting formally to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD). Project support includes TA for strengthening of the fund's organizational architecture (i.e., governance, operational structure, M&E, etc.); and financing for grants - both basic science grants and applied research grants aimed at improved academia-private sector linkages, collaboration with diaspora researchers, EU researchers, and others. A Serbian diaspora program (see Sub-component 1.3) will be closely connected to the Science Fund. The TA will also support the MoESTD and the SF in the prioritization and development of SF's programs. This component will be an addition to Government budget resources allocated for this purpose. Sub-component 1.2 will support institutional reform of select Research and Development Institutions (RDIs), through improvements in governance systems, strategic planning, HR development, accounting, monitoring, marketing, upgrading laboratory infrastructure and facilities, and more. Project activities targeted at RDIs will take place in cities where such institutions are concentrated. This sub-component will support reforms of the public R&D Institutes (RDIs) system by providing appropriate incentives for undertaking institutional reforms by RDIs on a voluntary (opt-in) basis. Sub-component 1.3 will support a Serbian Diaspora Facility (SDF) within Science Fund to leverage the strengths and desire of Serbian diaspora community and benefit from this immense potential in the development of research, innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Serbia.

Component 2 will support development of Enterprise Acceleration program, building on existing programs of the Innovation Fund (IF). The component will involve a co-financing investment grant program and training and mentorship program for innovative early- and growth-stage firms aimed at facilitating their growth. The training and mentorship program will cover project and people management practices, strategy development and execution,



market research, marketing and sales, product development, partnership development, fundraising, and so on. The majority of participating firms are expected to be businesses based on digital technologies, in specialized sectors, such as food and agriculture, health, biotech, education and gaming, etc. Firm grants will be managed through a co-financing facility within the Innovation Fund (IF) and companies will receive investments in the range of \$150,000 to \$500,000 per firm.

Component 3 will finance activities related to project implementation and monitoring including operations of a Project Implementation Unit (PIU). This will include operational and fiduciary (procurement, environmental and social safeguards), M&E, project audits, studies, policy/program design and capacity building support to the MOESTD and related agencies..

The Project is fully congruent with the World Bank Group's Country Partnership Frameworks (CPF) for FY 16-20, Focus Area 1, Economic Governance and the Role of the State' and Focus Area 2, Private Sector Growth and Economic Inclusion. Both focus areas are aligned with 'Research for Innovation -- Strategy on Scientific and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016 – 2020.' An important intervention under this objective is continued support to building Serbia's innovation and technology transfer system based on promising results yielded from earlier efforts in these two areas and a need to scale them up to create a broader impact on employment generation. All three components of the Project directly and jointly contribute to the Research for Innovation Strategy, with activities of the Science Fund supporting primarily public research and development, activities of the Innovation Fund supporting primarily innovation in enterprises, and the diaspora-related activities supporting innovation generated by both public and private entities.

D. Environmental and Social Overview

D.1. Detailed project location(s) and salient physical characteristics relevant to the E&S assessment [geographic, environmental, social]

Similarly with the original SAIGE Project (the Project), the Additional Financing (AF) has the same E&S baseline and country-wide coverage. Exact geographical locations of applicant firms will be known after their selection for participation in grant scheme. Tentative focus areas include: ICT (including software and hardware), Food production technology, Agriculture technology (e.g. innovative seeds or planting methods), Clean and efficient technologies in energy and transport, Bio-based industries (renewable natural resources), Transportation technology, Medical equipment and Innovative medicine (including, e.g. vaccines, medicines and treatments). Given the focus areas, it is safe to assume that most firms in targeted sectors will be located in urban areas with Food production and Agricultural technology and Bio-based industries being the exception and could be located in peri-urban and rural areas.

The project will target its support to public and private R&D institutions, researchers and private sector enterprises and investors with the aim of enhancing innovation and enterprise growth through applicable and competitive scientific research and early stage business support. The beneficiaries of the Project will be State owned Serbia Science Fund, several Research Development Institutions, Serbia Diaspora Fund and businesses based on digital technologies in specialized sectors, such as food and agriculture, health, biotech, education and gaming, etc. The entrepreneurship support organizations are clustered in urban centers such as Belgrade, Vrsac, Zrenjanin, Valjevo, Majdanpeku, etc.



The social profile and sector background significant from a social risk management perspective: i) target group (researchers and owners/managers of innovation companies) are high capacity individuals and tend not to belong to disadvantaged/vulnerable groups in the society; ii) Serbia has high level of gender equality in science and research participation (in 2016, women represented 48.4 percent of researchers (UNESCO, Women in Science, 2018); iii) women are underrepresented in innovation business leadership (17 percent of companies have at least one woman founder (Digital Serbia Initiative, 2018) and face multiple constraints with access to finance.

The main activities that could have social and environmental impacts are the research and firm grant programs described under sub component 1.1 (Science Fund grants), sub component 1.2 (RDI reforms) and component 2 (enterprise acceleration). Such impacts are related to investments and/or products that are expected to be small, not requiring major civil works and developed using new and energy efficient technologies. Any activities that may have substantial or high environmental and social risks and impacts will be deemed ineligible through the Project's Environmental and Social Screening Procedure to be used for defining grant eligibility. Any minor impacts are identified by the ESMF and will be addressed in activity-specific ESMPs. There is very limited risk of the project having negative impacts on vulnerable groups. Project beneficiaries are new and established scientists and owners of innovation firms.

D. 2. Borrower's Institutional Capacity

As with the parent SAIGE Project (the Project), Additional Financing (AF) implementation will be led and coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development (MoESTD), through the Science Fund (SF) and the Innovation Fund (IF). MoESTD is the implementing agency of an ongoing World Bank-financed research and innovation ASA and the US\$30 million innovation component of the Competitiveness and Jobs Project (approved in 2015), which has mainly satisfactory safeguards performance through implementation. The ongoing investment project involves continued financial support for enterprise innovation and facilitates technology transfer and commercialization and supports design of public research sector reforms. The ongoing project did not trigger OP 4.12 Involuntary Resettlement, but it did trigger OP 4.01 Environmental Assessment. Under this project, MoESTD has been overseeing the grant selection of mini and matching grants, which have been screened in line with ESMF specific procedures and prepared ESMPs where necessary. The MoESTD has engaged outside expertise for managing and monitoring environmental risks. Under the Project, an Environmental and Social (E&S) Expert is in process of being selected to assess and oversee the Environmental and Social screening process and risk management at sub-project level. The same E&S Expert will be responsible for sub-project environmental and social risk management under the AF. Given the expanded scope of the ESF, specifically targeted capacity-building measures for MoESTD staff will be necessary to ensure readiness for the implementation of the new project. As part of the Project's environmental and social due diligence, the Project has developed Environmental and Social Screening Criteria (included in the ESMF) and will develop other durable environmental and social management procedures in the early stages of implementation (e.g., Environmental, Health and Safety Guidelines; grant application evaluation procedures), systems and capacity within MoESTD to encourage responsible management of environmental and social risks of financially supported research activities and innovative enterprises.

II. SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL (ES) RISKS AND IMPACTS

A. Environmental and Social Risk Classification (ESRC)

Moderate



Environmental Risk Rating

Moderate

The AF has the same PDO, components and institutional arrangements as the parent project. Thus, the environmental risks have been assessed to be the same for both. The project will not support any major physical works. All activities may be grouped into general support/technical assistance and institutional capacity building measures (strategy, policies, human resources, monitoring and evaluation, budget, accounting etc. processes), and the technology innovations to be supported through the grant schemes for specific investments that will be screened and adhere to guidelines aligned with the ESF. The focus will be on businesses based on digital technologies in specialized sectors, such as food and agriculture, health, biotech, education and gaming, etc. The geographical locations of applicant firms will be known after their selection for participation in the grant program. It is safe to assume that the majority of firms in targeted sectors will be located in urban areas with food and agricultural firms being the exception and could be located in rural areas. Under the Component 1 there may be limited investment into the upgrading of laboratory infrastructure and existing facilities, that could potentially include some office space renovation. No new construction is envisaged to be carried out within the project's scope. The environmental risks will be very specific and directly related to particular investments and/or products to be developed using the innovation and technology transfer systems based on promising results yielded from pilot efforts based on digital technologies in specialized sectors, such as food and agriculture, health, biotech, education, etc. The ESMF identifies the following potential sub project environmental impacts: impacts on ground and surface water, soil and air contamination and improper waste management. The environmental risk is assessed as moderate, and it can be assumed that all activities which will be performed under SAIGE Components 1, 2 and 3 will have no significant environmental and social impact since these will be undertaken in highly controlled environment while working on development of new, energy and material efficient products.

The project addresses environmental risks through a Project-specific Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) which includes Environmental and Social Screening Procedure to be used for defining grant eligibility, and guidance on the development of specific ESMPs, as needed. The ESMF has been updated prior to AF appraisal to reflect the scale-up of existing grant programs under the parent project via the Science Fund, the Innovation Fund, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD). The ESMF and the Grant Operation Manual include, among others, an explicit list of activities ineligible for grant financing, tool for environmental screening and guidance on preparation of activity-specific ESMPs and subsequent ESMP monitoring and reporting. As recommended in the ESMF, site-specific ESMPs will be prepared during the matching grant application process.

Social Risk Rating

Moderate

The AF has the same PDO, components and institutional arrangements as the parent project. Thus, the social risks have been assessed to be the same for both. The project will enhance the capability of research organizations in Serbia to effectively target, select and monitor research activities and create a stronger linkage between research and firm innovation. These activities are generally anticipated to have positive impact on the research community and beneficiary private sector firms. The technology innovations to be supported through the firm grant scheme will be screened and adhere to guidelines aligned with the ESF. The project may finance research involving human beings/tissue/embryos and animals if done in accordance with EU directives and procedures (Horizon 2020) and relevant national laws and regulations on ethical research. To mitigate the risk of public resistance and misconception about this type of research, the Project will conduct public awareness raising about research ethics and procedures applied in Serbia. No other social impacts have been identified at this point. Minor upgrades within the existing footprint of RDI facilities is anticipated, but no land acquisition is anticipated and has been excluded from the list of eligible grant funding activities. The Project-specific ESMF specifies eligibility (including list of non-eligible activities)



and monitoring responsibilities. A social screening mechanism is embedded in the ESMF to ensure that the project does not finance activities that may involve significant social impacts. Evaluation procedures for grant schemes of both the Innovation Fund and the Science Fund will be based on transparent criteria, include a fair peer review process and the possibility of disputing the results. Given the low risk nature of the intervention, the absence of major social risks and impacts, the experience of the client in transparent grant management, and the presence of sensitive research areas, the project's social risk is considered to be moderate.

B. Environment and Social Standards (ESSs) that Apply to the Activities Being Considered

B.1. General Assessment

ESS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

Overview of the relevance of the Standard for the Project:

The original SAIGE Project (the Project) became effective only on May 18, 2020, and therefore, no practical developments were noticed so far. The proposed AF would provide additional funding to increase the size of the grant facilities that are being supported under the original project. The scope of eligible activities as well as the geographical coverage of the grant facilities remain the same. As the Project and the AF do not include any major civil works, the ESS1 assessment is focused on the grant scheme programs for researchers and firms under Component 1 and 2 respectively. For the former, the Project and the AF are expected to improve the transparency and targeting of evaluation procedures for research programs, which is expected to have a positive impact on research application, but also improve access to research funds on a merit basis through the introduction of a competitive process. For the latter, firm investments are expected to be in the range of \$150,000 to \$500,000 and will target innovations in software and IT, life sciences, health, biotech, and food and agriculture, among other spheres to be confirmed. This excludes large scale development or activities with substantial environmental and social impacts, such as major footprint changes. The environmental risks will be small in magnitude, of temporary nature and directly associated with the listed investments and TA activities under the Project. In few cases, the mitigation activities will need to be designed to deal with disposal of wastewater, communal, industrial or hazardous waste. However, majority of cases will by its nature, be environmentally friendly and include development of new products and practices using fewer/lesser amount of natural resources and energy.

The Project builds on the good governance and transparency built into the IF through previous World Bank engagements. It will pay special attention that the firm grant process is transparent and accessible to all, including people from different regions and ages. To this end, the IF already provides "open door days" once calls for their matching grant programs are launched, which provide potential applicants with the possibility of seeking information and guidance on all aspects of the application process. Both the IF and SF will proactively seek feedback on their programs and inputs for future programming through annual satisfactions surveys. Both funds will have grievance mechanisms to increase transparency and reduce the risk of unequal distribution of project benefits (IF grievance mechanism is already in place). Although the MoESTD has a track record in managing environmental and social risks for smaller scale grants through the ongoing WB projects on Jobs and Competitiveness by following the Bank's Operational Policies related to environmental safeguards, the Project has developed revised screening procedures for larger innovation grants in targeted sectors in line with the ESF as part of the ESMF. Internal capacity building and training for staff in order to carry out the project related activities in line with the ESF is also planned. During the project implementation a focus will be given on gradually building PIU capacity for environmental and social



screening, development of mitigation measures and monitoring, as opposite to current engagement of outside consultants.

Range of different tools will be used within the project cycle, among them the following: project level ESMF that has assessed the current level of implementing agencies capacities, gaps and responsibilities for application of ESF and mitigation measures. The ESMF covers both the parent project and AF activities. The ESMF includes a methodology for environmental and social risks and impact screening for research and firm grants. The ESMF also includes a list of non-eligible activities, including activities that may pose risks to community health and safety, that may pose ethical issues and that may induce involuntary land take. Where necessary, a product-specific or site-specific ESMPs will be developed and applied by the research institutions and grant beneficiaries/recipients. In terms of monitoring of ethical research issues during project implementation, the SF is in the process of developing an Ethics by-law which will outline the outline the procedures applicable to all RDIs in the country in line with EU Horizon 2020 guidelines. The by-law will be developed prior to disbursement of any grants by the Science Fund under the Project (requirement specified in the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan). In addition, the current Project Operations Manual and Grants Operations Manuals (GOMs) include procedures to ensure that the grant selection procedures are fair, transparent and merit based. All subsequent GOMs will include the same. The ESMF for the parent project has been updated to reflect the AF. The revised document has been redisclosed on September 4, 2020, but since no significant changes were made to the document substance, it has not been consulted again.

ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure

Direct beneficiaries are MoESTD, IF and SF staff which will build capacity on management of competitive research programs, staff of participating RDIs, researchers benefitting from the SF grants, owners and employees of companies, including women, who receive training and/or grants under the project, members of the Serbian diaspora, as well as potential investors and entrepreneurship support organizations who will be targeted in the enterprise acceleration component. Other interested parties are likely to include the Chamber of Commerce, Serbian Venture Network, Digital Serbian network, business associations, NGOs (environmental, animal rights) and the general public. The timing and methods of engagement with identified stakeholders has been outlined in a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) prepared by the Borrower. Stakeholder activities under the project will be implemented by the existing staff of the Innovation Fund and Science Fund with dedicated roles on public awareness, GM and survey work. The project E&S specialist to be hired by MoESTD will support implementation of SEP activities, including monitor and report on GMs managed by the two funds. The SEP prepared for the parent project has been updated to reflect the scale-up of activities under AF. Annually, the SF and IF will seek feedback from applicants about their programs with the aim of improving them. Survey results and implications for future programs will be made available to the stakeholders. Each fund has its own Grievance Mechanism (GM) enables continued feedback on the grant schemes and resolution of individual grievances during implementation. Both IF and FM GMs are already established and are operating.

B.2. Specific Risks and Impacts

A brief description of the potential environmental and social risks and impacts relevant to the Project.

ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions



Under the original SAIGE Project (the Project) and similarly for the AF, direct workers will be persons employed or engaged (or to be employed/engaged) directly by the MoESTD, MoF, Innovation Fund (IF) and Science Fund (SF) in relation to the project, including Government civil servants currently employed by the MoESTD. Additional direct workers are expected to be engaged within the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) established by MoESTD, CFU hosted by the MF and the Science and Innovation Funds respectively. Under this category only persons currently employed with MoOESTD qualify as civil servants. The category of contracted workers includes staff of service providers, such as companies providing Technical Assistance, ICT software/hardware, capacity building support, etc. Both categories of project workers are anticipated to have office jobs with minimal risks to health and safety of those workers. It is expected that the providers of aforementioned ICT services would be reputable companies that employ qualified and educated workers who do not belong the vulnerable groups of workers. The risk of such companies not complying with conditions of work (for example, that they are not paying their workers regularly, that they practice informal labor or child labor) are very small. MoESTD has prepared Labor Management Procedures (LMP) as part of the ESMF, which outline the Borrower's and responsibilities for enforcing ESS2 requirements. As specified in the LMP, workers' grievance mechanisms will be established for all categories of workers under the project. The LMP prepared for the parent project has been updated to reflect the scale-up of activities under AF.

ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management

ESMF and Grants Operation Manual will require all applicants to consider the least polluting and resource-efficient technologies and measures for their applied research. Arrangements for collection, recycle and re-use of commercial waste will be part of the screening criteria, and will be considered advantage while evaluating proposals. Application of relevant measures in line with the national legislation for dealing with hazardous materials and hazardous waste will be obligatory for all applicants.

The amounts of hazardous waste are expected to be small due to nature of activities - and will be mostly technical and motor oil, small quantities of electronic waste, and other miscellaneous waste created in the process of investigation and prototype testing. Site-specific or product-specific ESMPs will be designed and implemented to address issues related to wastewater, communal, industrial and hazardous waste, where relevant. Due to the nature of the project, significant use of natural resources is not expected within the project related activities as these will be limited to creation of new processes and technical prototypes. It is to be expected that some of the funds from the project will be earmarked to activities that will develop new or improve the existing technologies and processes, which will reduce use of energy and other natural resources. These issues will be covered in more detail in Project-specific ESMPs.

ESS4 Community Health and Safety

Under the original SAIGE Project (the Project) the MoESTD reviewed and adopted a set of Environmental, Health and Safety Guidelines materially consistent with ESS4. These guidelines will be used to define the evaluation procedures for research activities, and policy and advisory support provided by the project to establish the Serbia Science Fund and Serbia Diaspora Fund. Such guidelines will also be mainstreamed into the institutional reform programs provided to selected RDIs. Additionally, under component 2, co-investment grant applications will be screened for ineligible activities which will reduce the scope for actions that may pose risk to environment, community health and safety. The Project targets small and medium companies that typically do not use security personnel. As innovation firms for matching grant support are selected, the use of security personnel will be reassessed.



ESS5 Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement

The AF and the Project will not directly fund civil works and it is unlikely that impacts on private land, assets or involuntary resettlement will occur. Under component 1, the project may finance limited upgrading of existing laboratories. No new construction is envisaged. As part of the project’s enterprise acceleration support (component 2), particularly the co-investment grants, companies that grown may expand, including through acquisition of limited additional land conducted on a willing seller willing buyer basis. Any activities that involve involuntary impacts on land or assets will be explicitly deemed ineligible in the ESCP, ESMF and the Grants Operation Manual for firm co-investments. Based on this initial screening of risks and impacts associated ESS5, ESS5 is not considered applicable.

ESS6 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources

The AF and the Project related activities are not expected to affect biodiversity. In an unlikely case of grant funded applied research requiring experiments on living organisms - extraction and manipulation on rare, endangered, nationally or internationally protected flora or fauna will be prohibited by rules set in the Grant Operation Manual and Environmental Screening Procedures.

ESS7 Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities

Serbia does not have distinct social and cultural groups as covered by ESS7. Thus, this standard is not applicable.

ESS8 Cultural Heritage

The AF and the Project will not finance civil works and the acceleration support provided to early-stage and growth companies will be in form of strategic mentorship and co-investment grants. Although very little interaction with possible cultural heritage issues is expected, company co-investments grant applications will be screened for potential cultural heritage impacts – this may occur only in case of research facilities upgrade. Any identified cultural heritage impacts will be dealt with in line with national legal requirements that are fully consistent with UNESCO and good international practice.

ESS9 Financial Intermediaries

This standard is not relevant because the project does not envision involvement of financial intermediaries.

B.3 Other Relevant Project Risks

No other relevant risks are identified in this stage of the project preparation.

C. Legal Operational Policies that Apply

OP 7.50 Projects on International Waterways



OP 7.60 Projects in Disputed Areas

B.3. Reliance on Borrower’s policy, legal and institutional framework, relevant to the Project risks and impacts

Is this project being prepared for use of Borrower Framework? No

Areas where “Use of Borrower Framework” is being considered:

Implementation of the project will not rely on the Recipient’s framework. However, the Project Operation Manual and ESMF have identified the areas of potential alignment and gaps between the national legislation and ESF.

IV. CONTACT POINTS

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Borrower/Client/Recipient

Borrower: Republic of Serbia

Implementing Agency(ies)

Implementing Agency: Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development

V. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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VI. APPROVAL

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Public Disclosure



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Anne Olufunke Asaolu Cleared on 28-Sep-2020 at 15:36:50 GMT-04:00

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