



Project Information Document/ Integrated Safeguards Data Sheet (PID/ISDS)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 20-Dec-2018 | Report No: PIDISDSC25466

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Project Data**

Country West Bank and Gaza	Project ID P168739	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Water Security Development Program (WSDP) (P168739)
Region MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date Feb 21, 2019	Estimated Board Date Feb 11, 2019	Practice Area (Lead) Water
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Palestine Liberation Organization for the Benefit of the Palestinian Authority	Implementing Agency Palestinian Water Authority	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The proposed development objectives of the Water Security Development Project (WSDP) are to improve quality of water supply services in the project areas; and strengthen the capacity of selected institutions.

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)**SUMMARY**

Total Project Cost	110.00
Total Financing	90.00
of which IBRD/IDA	0.00
Financing Gap	20.00

DETAILS**Non-World Bank Group Financing**

Counterpart Funding	60.00
National Government	60.00
Trust Funds	30.00
Partnership for Infrastructure Development MDTF	15.00
Special Financing	15.00



Environmental Assessment Category

A - Full Assessment

Concept Review Decision

Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. **The complex and unresolved political context undermines efficient public service delivery.** After the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 1994, West Bank and Gaza experienced economic volatility as a result of violence and political uncertainty. Since the Fatah-Hamas conflict in 2007/08, Gaza growth has been driven mainly by high levels of donor financing, which however dropped sharply from 29 percent of GDP in 2008 to 6 percent in 2015. Despite sizeable postwar reconstruction spending during 2015-17, the Gaza economy shrank by 0.3 percent in 2017 compared with a 2.5 percent increase in the West Bank. Growth is expected to hover around 1-2 percent in Gaza in 2018. This has resulted in a liquidity squeeze that is leading to a rapid collapse in humanitarian conditions, including access to medical treatment, electricity, and clean water. The welfare gap between Gaza and the West Bank has widened over the years. Real GDP growth of the Palestinian economy is projected to decline from 2.7 percent in 2017¹ to 2.5 percent in 2018. Inflows of donor aid have been a major source of financing for the deficit, but aid has significantly declined in recent years (from 32% of GDP in 2008 to an estimated 5.2% of GDP in 2016) and has been insufficient to cover the overall financing need. To close the ensuing financing gap, the PA has accumulated arrears, including to the pension fund, estimated at 20 percent of GDP by the end of 2015.

2. **The economic fragility has a direct human impact.** Living standards in Gaza are quickly deteriorating to the verge of a humanitarian crisis. The most recent Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey for 2017 conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) shows that more than half the population in Gaza were poor, translating into a poverty rate of 53 percent —four times the rate for the West Bank and affecting about 900,000 people. In terms of poverty, Gaza and the West Bank are effectively two different worlds. Moreover, 34% of individuals in the Gaza Strip were in deep poverty compared with 29 percent in the West Bank and Gaza combined, up from 26 percent in 2011. Unemployment in the Palestinian Territories is at 27 percent. Only 41 percent of those aged 15 to 29 are active in the labor market and unemployment in this age group reached a staggering 60 percent in Gaza.

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/westbankandgaza/publication/economic-outlook-april-2018>



B. Sectoral and Institutional Context

3. **To address the systemic challenges to water security in West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) developed two complementary key policy instruments to pave the way for transformational and sustainable shift in the sector.** These framework documents were the Water Law (of 2014) and a medium term Strategic Development Plan (SDP) (2017-2022). The Water Law clarified sector roles and responsibilities. Specifically, at a national level, (i) the PWA is responsible for management of water resources, sector planning and development; (ii) the independent Water Sector Regulatory Council (WSRC) established 2014, regulates and monitors operation of water service providers (SPs); while a National Water Company (NWC) would be established as the bulk water provider for both West Bank and Gaza. Service delivery at the local level is through Regional Water Utilities (RWU) which are to be formed through the aggregation of existing small SPs (water departments at the Local Government Units, LGUs). In the long-term, the LGU water departments would all be aggregated under a limited number of RWUs. The SDP has five main objectives: (1) Enhancing the integrated management and sustainable development of water sector resources; (2) Improving the quality, continuity and reliability of water supply services as well as ensuring equitable water distribution; (3) Improving the wastewater services and structure (collection, treatment and reuse); (4) Developing water sector institutions in a way that reinforces good governance within an integrated legal and institutional framework; and (5) Improving the financial sustainability of the water utilities and water SPs. The World Bank supported these reforms under the recently Water Sector Capacity Building Program (WSCBP).

4. **However, lack of capacity and political realities have limited full implementation of the Water Law and the SDP.** The effectiveness of the PWA has been constrained by the establishment of a parallel structure in Gaza while the WSRC still lacks its full statutory authorities, including the ability to license service providers and collect the fees essential to financial sustainability. In March 2017, the PWA drafted a road map for establishing the NWC from the existing West Bank Water Department, but no decision has been taken toward implementation. In the absence of a fully empowered PWA or WSRC, most SPs are still governed under the 1997 Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) Law. LGUs are reluctant to cede water-related revenue streams but provide uneven oversight of the SPs.

5. **Water resource development is constrained by the political and economic context of West Bank and Gaza.** Development of water resources in the Palestinian territories is bound by Article 40 of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on The West Bank and The Gaza Strip (Oslo Accord)². Article 40 (1995) is framed with assumptions including that interim water development will be managed through a coordinated Palestinian-Israeli process and that water issues would be further delineated under the Permanent Status Negotiations. However, the lack of an ongoing political dialogue or agreed and effective mechanisms for cooperation, together with on-going restrictions on Movement and Access³, has limited Palestinian ability to develop new water resources even as the population grows and the quality of existing water resources declines. Given current sector inefficiencies including water losses, PWA is increasingly dependent on bulk water purchases from Mekorot⁴. PWA purchases may soon reach some 130 MCM annually. Unable to pay for this full amount, every bulk water purchase from Mekorot puts PWA in further arrears to Israel, an amount which Israel deducts from the taxes it collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority. In 2016, Israel deducted \$94 million for unpaid Mekorot water bills

² <https://www.nad.ps/en/publication-resources/agreements/israeli-palestinian-interim-agreement-west-bank-and-gaza-strip>

³ http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IsraelOPT_AgreedDocumentsOnMovementAccessGaza2005.pdf

⁴ The Israeli bulk water provider



(net lending) and for sewage treatment. Gaza's purchases from Mekorot are now about 10 MCM/year and expected to double.

6. **Tap water in Gaza is now undrinkable and almost everyone relies on water from small-scale desalination as a coping mechanism.** The key source of water supply available for the people in Gaza is groundwater from the coastal aquifer. The aquifer systems rely on rainfall for recharge. In the last five years, the total average annual rainfall decreased by 20 to 30 % resulted in significant drop in the water table. The average recharge volume from rainfall has dropped by 10 to 20 %. Coupled with increased demand and out-of-control abstraction, seawater intrusion into the Coastal aquifer became an ecological catastrophe and a main climate change vulnerability. With three times more water being extracted than the sustainable yield, the water is no longer fit to drink. As a result, and although 95 percent of the population is connected to the piped network, access to improved drinking water is just one percent. Access 20 years ago was almost universal, but the situation has deteriorated rapidly. Most of the 260 municipal wells have salt and nitrate levels above set standards by the World Health Organization (WHO). The result is that 97 percent of the drinking water consumed in Gaza is supplied, mainly via tanker, by small-scale private providers or NGOs, which employ reverse osmosis technology but are not systematically regulated in terms of abstraction, quality and cost - often seven times the cost of public water supply.⁵ To address the issue of chronic poor ground water quality in Gaza, PWA with support from the World Bank other donors designed a comprehensive solution, which includes investments in both infrastructure development and institutional strengthening to address the Gaza water and sanitation crisis. Core elements include building a Gaza Central Desalination Plant (GCDP) along with the required Associated Works network infrastructure; increasing water imports from Israel; constructing a minimum of three Short Term Low Volume (STLV) seawater desalination plants; reducing Non-Revenue Water (NRW); developing waste water treatment and reuse schemes; establishing a National Water Company; and Strengthening the Gaza Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) as the sole utility for water and sanitation service delivery in Gaza. The Bank's Gaza Sustainable Water Supply Program (that recently closed) completed the design and bidding document of the Associated Works.

7. **New water sources in Gaza are being made available for the South and Middle governorates.** Currently, all water supplied for domestic uses in Gaza—a total of 95 MCM per year in 2015—is originating from Gaza's coastal aquifer, domestic desalination plants, and imports from Israel. Some 90 percent of this water is supplied at high saline levels from the almost-depleted coastal aquifer. With domestic demand projected to reach around 145 MCM by 2030, PWA has the objective to meet the future water demand by increasing supply from sea water desalination and decreasing reliance on the coastal aquifer. 33.2 MCM of freshwater will come from Israel and local Short Term Low Volume (STLV) desalination plants by 2020. New water from Israel comes as a result of the Red Sea Dead Sea regional 2013 MOU that triggered new fresh water to Gaza and the West Bank.

8. **The proposed program builds off prior Bank support to the sector.** The project incorporates lessons from the four recently-closed World Bank water and sanitation projects in West Bank and Gaza as of 2018. Overarching lessons learnt from the projects include: (i) despite fragility, projects can be implemented, and results achieved when readiness of both Bank and client teams is high; (ii) close coordination with other donor partners from project inception is key to success; (iii) while precautions relating to a fragile situation can be projected, wars are hard to plan for. The Water Sector Capacity Building Project has put the basis for sector reform and paved the way to continue the reform process. The Water Supply and Sewage Systems Improvement Project assisted in restoration of basic water supply and wastewater services after the 2014 war through the Coastal Municipal Water Utility (CMWU). The Bank will continue supporting this effort

⁵ West Bank and Gaza WASH Poverty Diagnostic, 2017



with the long-term objective of restoring the CMWU as the single utility provider for the entire strip. The Northern Gaza Emergency Sewage Treatment (NGEST) mitigated the immediate health and environmental safety threats and provided a satisfactory long-term solution to the treatment of wastewater for the northern government in Gaza. Finally, this proposed program is informed by the results of the West Bank and Gaza WASH Poverty Diagnostic.

9. **Funding for the Associated Works is being lined up.** The PWA, in partnership with international institutions including the European Commission, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the Islamic Development Bank and World Bank, have been engaged in preparation of the Gaza Central Desalination Plant and Associated Works. A Donor Pledging Conference was held on March 20, 2018 and several pledges have been registered. PWA has confirmed the US\$60 million commitment of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and the funds have been deposited in PWA accounts to be all used to fund the Associated Works. Other pledges include 8 million Euro from Netherlands, 10 million Euro from France, 10 million Euro from Italy, and others. PWA is encouraging donors to channel their contribution to the Associated Works through a World Bank trust fund.

C. Relationship to CPF

10. **The proposed Program (WSDP) would contribute to achieving the Bank's twin goals to eradicate poverty and promote shared prosperity through improvement of water services.** Providing access to safe and sufficient water is essential for improving the health, well-being, and productivity of the beneficiaries. The project will contribute to income generation by helping secure short-term employment to people and catalyzing economic growth. It will also contribute to an improved and transparent policy and planning decision-making process at national and local levels. All of that will participate in improving the people quality of life, develop business and therefore help in eradicating poverty.

11. **The World Bank Group (WBG) Assistance Strategy for the West Bank and Gaza FY18-21 calls for a sharpened focus on stimulating an environment for dynamic and inclusive private sector growth,** recognizing that this will be achieved through sectoral reforms and institutional strengthening and by helping to mitigate the risks faced by investors in an uncertain and fragile environment. Past efforts of the WBG and international community in their support of the West Bank and Gaza have helped build institutional capacity from a low base and improve basic service delivery at the local level, but the new Strategy will deepen efforts to build an enabling environment for private sector development. The Strategy identifies that imperfect institutional frameworks and inadequate financial discipline are major obstacles to service delivery and discourage private sector participation and that, equally, inadequate water and power supply hold back economic development. The new Strategy prioritizes support to reforms essential to the emergence of private sector activity (Pillar 1), as well as to the mitigation of risks essential to their realization (Pillar 2) and the strengthening of institutions for improved citizen-centered service delivery (Pillar 3). The strategy covers Gaza and the West Bank, but calls for programming in Gaza, where the PA currently has limited reach, to target and protect the vulnerable, including through delivery of basic services. The WBG Assistance Strategy is aligned with the 2017-22 Palestinian National Policy Agenda



(NPA): Putting Citizens First which sets out a strategy to invest in human capital while building a sustainable platform for private sector development as a key to economic growth.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

12. The proposed development objectives of the Water Security Development Project (WSDP) is to improve quality of water supply services in the project areas; and strengthen the capacity of selected institutions.

Key Results (From PCN)

13. The above objectives will be achieved through the following results:
- i. People provided with access to improved quality of water supply [defined quality i.e. meets WHO potable water salinity standards]
 - ii. Volume of bulk water availability
 - iii. Reduced NRW [to be defined during project preparation]
 - iv. Approval of bylaws and organizational structure for the future National Water Company
 - v. Preparation of a national performance improvement platform for improving operation performance of service providers.
 - vi. Master plan for the West Bank water supply developed and endorsed.
 - vii. A beneficiary feedback indicator [to be defined during project preparation]
 - viii. Gender focused indicator [to be defined during project preparation]

D. Concept Description

14. Currently, the population in the Gaza Strip relies almost totally on groundwater which is brackish and not fit for human consumption. Ninety seven percent of water wells in Gaza do not comply with WHO drinking standards due to high chloride and nitrate concentrations. This exposes the people to unacceptable high health risk.

15. To address the critical human needs of potable water in Gaza Strip – with focus on the southern and middle governorates and Gaza City – the proposed Project will utilize available 20MCM (10MCM already available plus additional 10MCM) of fresh water coming from Israel and another 13.2MCM (4.4MCM already available plus additional 5.1MCM) from three “short term low volume” (STLV) desalination plants. The table below shows water supply availability from various sources.



Region	Population	Water Source (MCM per year)			Total Volume of blended water of WHO potable water standard (MCM)
		Purchase from Mekorot	STLVs	Sustainable abstraction from groundwater	
Southern Governorates	600,000	5.4	7.3	12.8	25.5
Middle Governorates	200,000	4.6	2.2	8.0	14.8
Gaza City	600,000	10.0	3.7	14.0	27.7
Totals	1,400,000	20.0	13.2	34.8	68.0

16. The project will support investments in infrastructure to address urgent water quantity and quality needs in the Project Area by blending in fresh water from Mekorot and the STLVs with brackish ground water to achieve WHO standard for potable water which will be subsequently supplied through the water distribution network.

17. At the same time, the project will enhance the ability of PWA, WSRC, and CMWU to fulfill their roles as laid out in the Water Law – ensuring an enabling environment of sector policy, planning, monitoring, and regulation. Sustainable service delivery will be strengthened through improving the capacity of the CMWU, setting the foundation for the NWC, and designing of a new platform and process for the systematic improvement of the operational and financial performance of SPs. In support of water security for the West Bank a new Master Plan for water supply will be developed.

Component 1: Improved Supply of Water in Gaza

18. To address the immediate needs for improved quality of water supply in the Project Area this component will fund a system of infrastructure investments that will allow bulk water supplied from various sources (brackish ground water, desalinated water and water purchased from Israel) to be blended to acceptable standards and subsequently conveyed to a system of distribution reservoirs and then on into the retail water distribution network. Effectively creating a bulk water system capable of managing the quality and quantity of water conveyed to various parts separate from a distribution system. Blended water which complies with WHO drinking standards will then be conveyed through a conveyance system and a series of distribution reservoirs for subsequent distribution to the consumers equitably and sustainably. The possible details of the investment packages are as follows:

- Mekorot Improvement Works for Middle and Khan Younis Governorates Package
- Southern Carrier Package
- Water Distribution Network Reconfiguration Southern Area Package
- Mekorot Improvement Works for Gaza City Package
- Water Distribution Reconfiguration for Gaza City



- Solar Power generation for blending and conveyance

Component 2: Capacity Building and Performance Improvements of Selected Institutions

19. This component is designed primarily to address the urgent needs to improve water supply quality and quantity in Gaza by providing involved institutions with the necessary capacity to ensure sustainability of their operations and assets. The level of capacity building effort is kept simple and limited to what can be achieved in a short time horizon (4 years). This is one of the lessons learned from previous operations. The component will support the planning, policy, monitoring and fiduciary functions of PWA by hiring necessary consultants. In addition, it will also support consultants to help study the optimal way to establish the National Water Company as mandated by the Water Law of 2014 to operate and manage the bulk water assets in the West Bank and Gaza. In the interim and until the NWC is established a small unit will be established within the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) to operate and maintain the bulk water assets implemented under this project. This unit will eventually be the nucleus of the future NWC in Gaza. In specific, this component will possibly include:

- Support the planning, policy, monitoring and fiduciary functions of PWA
- Strengthening WSRC
- CMWU Performance Improvements
- Designing a National Performance Improvement Platform

Component 3: Project Management and Implementation Support (Estimated cost US\$4 million)

20. The PWA will establish a Project Coordination and Technical Assistance Unit (PCU) to support and coordinate the project implementation and reporting. The PCU will employ, and the project will fund, skilled staff (management, procurement, financial, environment, social and technical expertise) with experience in World Bank operations and/or the sector. The component will finance PWA/PCU operating costs specific to the project.

SAFEGUARDS

A. Project location and salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis (if known)

The construction activities are expected to take place in governmental lands and existing right-of-way in the middle and southern governorates in Gaza Strip, namely the middle governorate, Khanyounis governorate, and Rafah governorate. Some stretches of the main water carrier will be aligned along the main regional road in Gaza, namely Salaheden Road. The Mekorot connections in the middle and south will cross the security fence between Israel and Gaza. The 2 Short-term-low-volume desalination plants (STLVs) are located close to the coast line with intakes from shore wells and brine outlets with diffusers extending 100 meters offshore. The packages also include reconfiguration of the networks in the middle and south governorates and construction of mixing reservoirs in those governorates. Given the dense population of Gaza, construction activities are expected to have impacts on community safety, traffic flow, and other municipal services. The project is expected to improve service provision, impacts during operation are related to increased demand on energy, wastewater facilities, and increased costs of the service provision.



B. Borrower’s Institutional Capacity for Safeguard Policies

PWA has good capacity for management of water and sanitation projects, including social and environmental management. PWA has accumulated good knowledge of the Bank safeguards policies via implementation of similar projects by the Bank and other donors. The performance of PWA on safeguards during the implementation of the North Gaza Emergency Sanitation Project, Gaza Sustainable Water Supply Project, and Hebron Regional Wastewater Treatment Project was overall satisfactory. PWA had qualified environmental/social staff on board. The ES specialist has departed PWA a few months ago. PWA is in the process of selecting proper replacement to oversee the safeguards of PWA projects in Gaza. This replacement is expected before project appraisal.

C. Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialists on the Team

Helen Z. Shahriari, Social Specialist
Zeyad Abu-Hassanein, Environmental Specialist

D. Policies that might apply

Safeguard Policies	Triggered?	Explanation (Optional)
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	Yes	The construction activities are expected to take place in governmental lands and existing right-of-way, however, given the dense population of Gaza, construction activities are expected to have impacts on community safety and interruption to traffic, and other municipal services. The impacts are localized to construction sites, short term, and can be minimized with careful planning and construction management and coordination with local authorities. Yet, the activities are spanning a good portion of Gaza Strip in the middle and southern governorates. The project is expected to improve service provision, impacts during operation are related to increased demand on energy, wastewater facilities, and increased costs of the service provision. The expected increase in tariff is moderate due to the fact the desalination water will be mixed with cheaper water from groundwater wells before pumping in the networks. Detailed analysis of tariff restructuring will be conducted by PWA during project implementation. The above impacts and others have been studied via an ESIA conducted by PWA in 2017, approved by the Bank in June 2017, consulted and disclosed by PWA. Other impacts of the project assessed by the ESIA include impacts on small desalination vendors, land issues, and impacts on encroachers and/or squatters in some locations of the ROW. The ESIA covered the entire Water Supply



System in Gaza Strip, including the portion in the middle and south governorates that are included in the components and scope of this project. The environmental and social impact assessments of the desalination plants in Deir Elbalah and Khanyounis which will be connected to the networks (already constructed and operated by the water utility, financed by USAID and UNICEF) have been reviewed and will be disclosed along with the ESIA of the associated works before appraisal. The ESIA of the associated works was carried based on the detailed design packages of the Sustainable Water Supply Program, a TA financed by the bank and concluded in FY18, covering bulk water supply needs for the entire Gaza Strip, including the investments under the scope of this project. It is envisaged that no additional instruments are needed with respect to OP4.01, however, further assessment is being conducted to examine the issues of OP 4.12, a RAP is being prepared including land issues and livelihood impacts for all the packages of the project, in addition to an audit of the existing STLVs . Given the contextual and multidimensional environmental and social risks of the project, and the activities spanning large portions of the densely populated Gaza Strip, the project is assigned a environmental category "A".

Performance Standards for Private Sector Activities OP/BP 4.03	No	N/A
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04	No	none identified by the ESIA
Forests OP/BP 4.36	No	none identified by the ESIA
Pest Management OP 4.09	No	N/A
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11	No	No significant physical cultural resources identified by the ESIA on the project site. A chance find procedure will be enforced to cater for any findings during the earthworks
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10	No	N/A
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	Yes	Component one includes a number of water supply infrastructures to address the immediate needs for improved quality of water supply in south and middle Gaza. Types of infrastructure include a number of small reservoirs/storages, Southern Carrier that will be the backbone for future bulk conveyance, and water distribution network reconfiguration. The construction activities are expected to take place in governmental lands and existing right-of-way, however, given the



dense population of Gaza, construction activities are expected to have impacts on livelihoods that could be disturbed during the construction or have an impact on the those who are using the land. There is a TOR for the preparation of the RAP under the ESIA, that was approved and cleared by the RSA. The RAP will be launched during the project preparation and completed by appraisal. The RAP will confirm status of all land acquisition and proof of land ownership and adequate compensation for all parcels used under the project. A GRM will be developed and implemented for the project.

Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37	No	N/A
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50	No	N/A
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60	No	N/A

E. Safeguard Preparation Plan

Tentative target date for preparing the Appraisal Stage PID/ISDS

Feb 28, 2019

Time frame for launching and completing the safeguard-related studies that may be needed. The specific studies and their timing should be specified in the Appraisal Stage PID/ISDS

The instrument for OP 4.01, a full-fledge ESIA was prepared by PWA in 2017, and approved by the Bank in June 2017. The ESIA along with 2 ESIA's of the STLVs will be disclosed by PWA before project appraisal. A RAP is currently being prepared, similarly will be cleared by the Bank and disclosed before appraisal.

CONTACT POINT

World Bank

Suhail J. S. Jme'An, Adnan Farouq Saad Aldin Ghosheh
Lead Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist

Borrower/Client/Recipient

Palestine Liberation Organization for the Benefit of the Palestinian Authority
Shukry Bishara
Minister of Finance
minister@pmof.ps



Implementing Agencies

Palestinian Water Authority
Mazen Ghunaim
Head (Minister) of Palestinian Water Authority
mghunaim@pwa.ps

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20433
Telephone: (202) 473-1000
Web: <http://www.worldbank.org/projects>

APPROVAL

Task Team Leader(s):	Suhail J. S. Jme'An, Adnan Farouq Saad Aldin Ghosheh
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Approved By

Safeguards Advisor:	Nina Chee	08-Jan-2019
Practice Manager/Manager:	Carmen Nonay	08-Jan-2019
Country Director:	Ranjana Mukherjee	24-Jan-2019