U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Non-Precedent Decision of the Administrative Appeals Office

In Re: 43238772

Date: JUNE 24, 2026

Appeal of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Decision

Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Workers (Extraordinary Ability)

The Petitioner, a financial executive, seeks classification as an alien of extraordinary ability in business. *See* Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act) section 203(b)(1)(A), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(1)(A). This first preference classification makes immigrant visas available to those who can demonstrate their extraordinary ability through sustained national or international acclaim and whose achievements have been recognized in their field through extensive documentation.

USCIS denied the petition, concluding the Petitioner did not establish that he satisfied at least three of the initial evidentiary criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3). USCIS also determined that the record did not demonstrate he has achieved sustained national or international acclaim and is among that small percentage of individuals at the very top of his field. The matter is now before us on appeal pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 103.3.

The Petitioner bears the burden of proof to demonstrate eligibility by a preponderance of the evidence. *Matter of Chawathe*, 25 I&N Dec. 369, 375-76 (AAO 2010). We review the questions in this matter de novo. *Matter of Christo's, Inc.*, 26 I&N Dec. 537, 537 n.2 (AAO 2015). Upon de novo review, we will dismiss the appeal.

I. LAW

Section 203(b)(1)(A) of the Act makes visas available to immigrants with extraordinary ability if:

(i) the alien has extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics which has been demonstrated by sustained national or international acclaim and whose achievements have been recognized in the field through extensive documentation;

(ii) the alien seeks to enter the United States to continue work in the area of extraordinary ability; and

(iii) the alien's entry will substantially benefit prospectively the United States.

The term "extraordinary ability" refers only to those individuals in "that small percentage who have risen to the very top of the field of endeavor." 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2). The implementing regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3) sets forth a multi-part analysis. First, a petitioner can demonstrate sustained acclaim and the recognition of achievements in the field through a one-time achievement (that is, a major, internationally recognized award) or qualifying documentation that meets at least three of the ten categories listed at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3)(i) – (x) (including items such as awards, published material in certain media, and scholarly articles).

Where a petitioner meets these initial evidence requirements, we then consider the totality of the material provided in a final merits determination and assess whether the record shows sustained national or international acclaim and demonstrates that the individual is among the small percentage at the very top of the field of endeavor. *See Kazarian v. USCIS*, 596 F.3d 1115 (9th Cir. 2010) (discussing a two-part review where the documentation is first counted and then, if fulfilling the required number of criteria, considered in the context of a final merits determination); *see also Amin v. Mayorkas*, 24 F.4th 383 (5th Cir. 2022); *Visinscaia v. Beers*, 4 F. Supp. 3d 126, 131-32 (D.D.C. 2013); *Rijal v. USCIS*, 772 F. Supp. 2d 1339 (W.D. Wash. 2011).

II. ANALYSIS

A. Evidentiary Criteria

Because the Petitioner has not claimed or established receipt of a major, internationally recognized award, he must satisfy at least three of the alternate regulatory criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3)(i)-(x). The Petitioner asserted that he satisfied nine of these criteria and USCIS determined he met two, relating to judging the work of others and leading or critical role.[1] *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3)(iv) and (viii). On appeal, the Petitioner maintains that he meets the criteria relating to awards, membership, published material, original contributions, scholarly articles, and high salary. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3)(i) – (iii), (v), (vi), and (ix).

Upon review of the record, we agree with the Petitioner that he also satisfies the scholarly articles criterion at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3)(vi).[2] The Petitioner has therefore met the initial evidence requirement through his fulfillment of three regulatory criteria. Because the Petitioner has fulfilled three of the criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3), we will proceed to a final merits determination.

B. Final Merits Determination

Given the structure of the regulations and the two-step analysis described in *Kazarian*, the satisfaction of three evidentiary criteria alone does not automatically or presumptively establish eligibility. In a final merits determination, we evaluate whether a petitioner has demonstrated, by a preponderance of the evidence, their sustained national or international acclaim,[3] that they are among the small

[1] USCIS concluded that the Petitioner did not satisfy the criteria relating to awards, membership, published material, original contributions, authorship, display, and high salary. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3)(i) – (iii) and (v) – (vii), and (ix).
[2] The record indicates that the Petitioner has authored scholarly articles in his field in professional publications.
[3] *See generally* 6 *USCIS Policy Manual* F.2(A)(1), https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual (stating that the definition of "sustain" is "to support or maintain, especially over a long period of time . . . To persist in making (an effort) over a long period of time").

percentage at the very top of their field of endeavor, and that their achievements have been recognized in the field through extensive documentation. Therefore, we analyze an individual's accomplishments and weigh the totality of the evidence to determine if their successes are sufficient to demonstrate extraordinary ability in the field of endeavor. *See* section 203(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Act; 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2), (3); *see also Kazarian*, 596 F.3d at 1119-20.[4]

On appeal, the Petitioner contends that he "has built a consistent trajectory of professional recognition, leadership, and measurable impact within the field of management analysis and financial strategy." He also argues that "the totality of the evidence establishes that he has risen to the top of his field and achieved sustained recognition." The Petitioner further claims that USCIS did not properly analyze his awards, membership in the Brazilian Institute of Finance Executives (BIFE), media coverage, service as a reviewer and evaluator, authorship, contributions and role for [redacted] and salary. Below, we will evaluate the totality of the evidence, based on the documentation presented to USCIS, in the context of the final merits determination.

The record indicates that the Petitioner received a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from [redacted] in 2005. He also earned Master of Business Administration degrees in both Financial Management (2014) and Strategic and Economic Business Management (2021) from [redacted] In addition, the Petitioner worked as a Financial Manager for [redacted] from 1995 until 2010. Since 2010, the Petitioner has served as Chief Financial Officer and a board member with [redacted] a Brazilian law firm. He asserts that he has "sustained national and international claim as a C-level financial executive, author, and business transformation leader."

As discussed further below, the Petitioner has not demonstrated that his achievements to date reflect a "career of acclaimed work in the field" as contemplated by Congress at H.R. Rep. No. 101-723, 59 (Sept. 19, 1990). Nor has he shown that he has risen to that small percentage at the very top of the field of endeavor. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2). The commentary for the proposed regulations implementing section 203(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Act provides that the "intent of Congress that a very high standard be set for aliens of extraordinary ability is reflected in this regulation by requiring the petitioner to present more extensive documentation than that required" for lesser classifications. 56 Fed. Reg. 30703, 30704 (July 5, 1991). Here the Petitioner has not established that he meets these very high standards. *See Amin v. Mayorkas*, 24 F.4th at 386-87 (stating that the narrow definition reflects the stringency of the extraordinary ability standard).

Regarding his awards, the Petitioner presented a certificate from the [redacted] stating that he received its [redacted] Award (2025). A letter accompanying his certificate stated:

> Your nomination and subsequent approval among the Top 100 Outstanding Professionals of the Year were validated by our multidisciplinary panel, composed of entrepreneurs, performance specialists, and representatives from the institutional

[4] *See generally* 6 *USCIS Policy Manual supra*, at F.2(B)(2) (stating that USCIS officers should evaluate the evidence together when considering the petition in its entirety to determine if a petitioner has established by a preponderance of the evidence, the required high level of expertise required for this immigrant classification).

> sector. You have unequivocally distinguished yourself through your uncommon ability to integrate finance, technology, and executive leadership, promoting real transformation in large-scale organizations through structuring and high-impact strategic initiatives.

The Petitioner also provided information about the [redacted] Award from the [redacted][5] and what he contends are three 2025 articles in *Terra*, *Valor Economico*, and *O Globo* indicating:

> With 100 honorees each year, the [redacted] Award has brought together professionals who have contributed to advances in the fields of business, health, education and technology since 2019. The selection process is conducted by representatives from institutions such as the [redacted] and partner companies from various regions of the country.
>
> The process is carried out exclusively by nomination. On average, 700 professionals are evaluated annually based on criteria such as social impact. innovation, job creation, measurable results and contribution to economic development. Only the 100 best-rated professionals are recognized per edition.

These three articles share an author [redacted], contain the same paragraphs, and conclude with "Website: [redacted]" None of these articles specifically identify the Petitioner or discuss his achievements in "finance, technology, and executive leadership." *See Donskoy v. United States Citizenship & Immigr. Servs.*, No. 21-CV-04757-CRB, 2021 WL 5240224, at *5 (N.D. Cal. Nov. 11, 2021) (finding that what matters for the purpose of the visa classification is whether the award brought the petitioner individual acclaim). Furthermore, the information from the [redacted] indicates that 100 honorees each year receive [redacted] Awards. *See Denisov v. Wiemann*, No. 3:04-CV-0529-N, 2006 WL 8437057, at *2 (N.D. Tex. Aug. 15, 2006) (finding petitioner's receipt of a first-degree certificate in which there were 104 other recipients "diminishes the prestige of the petitioner's prize"). Here, the Petitioner has not shown that he has received media coverage or other attention relating to his [redacted] Award that rises to the level of demonstrating his national or international acclaim in the field. *See* section 203(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Act and 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3). Nor has the Petitioner demonstrated that the award places him among that small percentage at the very top of the field of endeavor. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2).

In addition, the Petitioner submitted a certificate from [redacted] indicating that he received a [redacted] in "Executive Leadership, Financial Innovation, and Organizational Transformation" (2025). The Petitioner, however, has not demonstrated the

[5] The material from the [redacted] states: [redacted] maintains, in a public and permanent manner, the [redacted] Hall of Fame - a prestigious institutional showcase dedicated to professionals whose careers represent a legacy of transformation, excellence, and real impact in the country. More than an extension of the [redacted] Award, the Hall of Fame is a space of superior recognition, reserved for leaders whose work transcends their organizations and generates value for Brazil on a broad scale. Not all award winners are automatically included in the Hall - the choice is made based on criteria of notorious distinction, historical legacy, or proven national/international influence." The Petitioner, however, has not shown that he was included among the numerous "superior" honorees listed in the [redacted] Hall of Fame.

significance of this award in his field beyond the presenting organization or that he has received attention relating to the award that rises to the level of demonstrating his national or international acclaim in the field. *See* section 203(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Act and 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3). Nor has he contextualized how his [redacted] shows that he "is one of that small percentage who [has] risen to the very top of the field of endeavor." *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2). Further, the Petitioner has not demonstrated that his two awards from 2025 reflect a "career of acclaimed work in the field" as contemplated by Congress. H.R. Rep. No. 101-723 at 59.

With respect to his membership with the BIFE, the Petitioner provided information about the organization, but he did not offer evidence that membership in BIFE requires outstanding achievements, is exclusive, or otherwise indicative of sustained national or international acclaim in his field. *See Hamal v. U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec.*, No. CV 19-2534 (RC), 2021 WL 2338316, at *4 (D.D.C. June 8, 2021), *aff'd sub nom. Hamal v. United States Dep't of Homeland Sec.*, No. 21-5160, 2023 WL 1156801 (D.C. Cir. Jan. 31, 2023) (upholding plaintiff did not contextualize his membership to demonstrate sustained national or international acclaim). The supporting documents relating to the BIFE are not sufficient to show that his membership renders him nationally acclaimed or places him among that small percentage who have risen to the very top of the field of endeavor. *See* section 203(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Act and 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2). *See also Donskoy v. United States Citizenship & Immigr. Servs.*, No. 21-CV-04757-CRB, 2021 WL 5240224, at *5 (N.D. Cal. Nov. 11, 2021) (upholding the petitioner's membership did not demonstrate the requisite level of achievement or sustained acclaim to establish extraordinary ability).

Regarding the submitted media coverage, the Petitioner presented articles in *Agencia News* (2025), *Brasil Agora* (2025), *Mercurios* (2025), *O Mundo Hoje* (2025), *Rede Alcateia* (2025), and *Migalhas* (2022). These brief articles identify the Petitioner, but they are about topics such as digitalization and business intelligence, financial planning, digital transformation, and Shared Service Centers and are not mainly about the Petitioner. *See Kinuthia v. Rosenberg*, No. CV 17-10255-LTS, 2018 WL 1243955, at *5 (D. Mass. Mar. 8, 2018), *aff'd sub nom., Kinuthia v. Velarde*, No. 18-1244, 2019 WL 11671989 (1st Cir. July 3, 2019), *cert. denied*, 140 S. Ct. 2643, 206 L. Ed. 2d 714 (2020) (finding it is not enough that the material merely relates to the applicant's work). *See also Gadhave v. Thompson*, No. 3:21-CV-2938-D, 2023 WL 6931334, at *3-4 (N.D. Tex. Oct. 19, 2023) (upholding published material must be specifically about the applicant and focus on his personal work in the relevant field, not merely relate to the applicant's work, mention his name, or include his photo).

The Petitioner also provided "Digital Performance & Media Reach Report(s)" from www.ajasolucoesdigitais.com.br for "March – May 2025" listing "Active Users" for *Agencia News* (296,000), *Brasil Agora* (222,000), *Mercurios* (203,000), *O Mundo Hoje* (202,000), and *Rede Alcateia* (550,000).[6] The Petitioner, however, did not establish the significance of these www.ajasolucoesdigitais.com.br statistics, showing that the publications in which he appeared represent major media or that their news coverage otherwise demonstrates his national or international acclaim.[7] *See Branski v. Seng*, No. 24-CV-360, 2024 WL 4678939, at *5 (E.D. Wis. Nov. 4, 2024)

[6] No data from www.ajasolucoesdigitais.com.br was offered for *Migalhas*.

[7] *See* 6 *USCIS Policy Manual*, *supra*, at F.2(B)(1) (indicating that evidence of published material for major trade publications and other major media should establish their "relative circulation, readership, or viewership."

(indicating that the failure to provide context to circulation figures makes it difficult to assess their significance).

The Petitioner has not demonstrated that the limited amount of media coverage he has received throughout his career (one article in 2022 and five articles in 2025) is consistent with the sustained national or international acclaim necessary for this highly restrictive visa classification. *See* section 203(b)(1)(A) of the Act. Further, he has not shown how his overall press coverage is indicative of a level of success consistent with being among that small percentage who has risen to the very top of the field of endeavor. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2). In addition, Petitioner has not established that the volume, duration, and type of media reporting on him and his activities in the field are reflective of a "career of acclaimed work in the field" as contemplated by Congress. H.R. Rep. No. 101-723 at 59. *See also Bodhankar v. United States Citizenship & Immigr. Servs.*, No. 119CV706MADCFH, 2020 WL 777211, at *5 (N.D.N.Y. Feb. 18, 2020) (finding the lack of press about the plaintiff was not consistent with national or international acclaim).

With regard to the Petitioner's service as a judge of the work of others in his field, an evaluation of the significance of his experience is appropriate to determine if such evidence is indicative of the extraordinary ability required for this highly restrictive classification. *See Kazarian*, 596 F. 3d at 1121-22.[8] Participation as a reviewer or an evaluator alone does not automatically demonstrate that an individual has sustained national or international acclaim. Here, the Petitioner provided documentation showing that he was listed as "a member of the Scientific Committee in the First Congress of Law organized by the [redacted] (held online in [redacted] 2025 with the central theme of [redacted], but he did not present evidence of the specific work he judged. In addition, the Petitioner was invited to participate as an evaluator of student work on the "Final Course Project (TCC) panels for the Business Administration course at [redacted] (2023) and as a member of the Examination Board evaluating student theses for the Final Course Project for the Bachelor's Degree in Law at the [redacted] (2025), but he did not offer evidence showing his actual participation and the specific work he judged.

The Petitioner also provided letters confirming that he participated "as a member of the Examination Board for the Final Projects of the International Business Coaching Training Program at [redacted] in evaluation sessions held in the first semester of 2025"; as a member of "the defense panel for the Course Completion Work (TCC) of the Business Administration course of the student: R-P-S-, under the title: [redacted] (2023) at [redacted] and "as a reviewer on a philanthropic basis" for [redacted] (2025). The Petitioner, however, has not offered evidence demonstrating that the level and frequency of his participation as a reviewer or student evaluator are indicative of sustained national or international acclaim in the field of financial management. Further, the Petitioner did not demonstrate how his judging experience differentiates him from others in the field, show the significance of his student evaluations and journal review work, or otherwise provide context regarding his service as a judge. *See Hamal v. United States Dep't of Homeland Sec.*, No. 21-5160,

[8] *See also generally* 6 *USCIS Policy Manual*, *supra*, at F.2(B)(1) (providing that the second step requires USCIS to evaluate the person's judging participation to determine whether it was indicative of the person being of that small percentage who has risen to the very top of the field of endeavor and enjoying sustained national or international acclaim).

2023 WL 1156801, at *2 (D.C. Cir. Jan. 31, 2023) (finding the petitioner did not provide needed context for his judging experience and the response to his work).

The context of the Petitioner's judging experience is relevant, as performing reviews for a journal or an academic institution that selects their evaluators based on subject matter expertise would not alone provide strong support for the petition. Possessing expertise in a field is a considerably lower threshold than having sustained acclaim at the very top of the field. At issue here is the extent to which the Petitioner's review activities have required, reflected, or resulted in his national or international acclaim. The Petitioner, however, has not shown that student evaluations and journal review of the type he performed contributes to establishing his sustained national or international acclaim or places him among that small percentage at the very top of the field of endeavor. *See* section 203(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Act and 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2).

Likewise, authorship and publication of one's work alone do not automatically show sustained national or international acclaim and place an individual at the very top of their field. The Petitioner provided documents indicating that he authored two articles in *Consultor Juridico* (2021 and 2025) and one in *Revista Central de Inteligência Acadêmica* (2025). Depending on a journal's level of recognition, as demonstrated by evidence in the record, there may be an elevated level of prestige or acclaim associated with publication in a particularly highly ranked journal.[9] The Petitioner, however, did not provide sufficient support (such as comparative journal rankings) for his claim that publication in the aforementioned journals elevates him to that small percentage at the very top of his field. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2). In addition, the Petitioner wrote a book, entitled [redacted] (2025), but he did not provide, evidence of its high sales volume, for example, or other documentation showing its acclaim in the field. Nor has the Petitioner shown that his publication record (three articles and one book from 2021 to 2025) is consistent with sustained national or international acclaim in the field. *See* section 203(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Act.

Furthermore, the citation history or other evidence of the influence of an individual's authored work can be an indicator to determine the recognition they have received in the field and whether such recognition has been sustained. Such an analysis at the final merits determination stage is appropriate pursuant to *Kazarian,* 596 F. 3d at 1122.[10] The Petitioner, however, has not offered statistical evidence or other objective metrics indicating that the number of citations received by either his scholarly articles or his book sets him apart from others in his field or otherwise demonstrates his sustained national or international acclaim in the financial management field. *See* section 203(b)(1)(A) of the Act. Nor has the Petitioner shown that his published work has received recognition at a level consistent with being among that small percentage at the very top of his field. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2).

Additionally, the Petitioner has not demonstrated that his presented work has garnered him national or international acclaim. *See* section 203(b)(1)(A) of the Act. While he offered evidence showing that he presented a topic at the [redacted] on Open Innovation Cases (2025) and gave a lecture to law students at [redacted] (2023), the Petitioner did not demonstrate

[9] *See generally* 6 *USCIS Policy Manual*, *supra*, at F.2(B)(2).

[10] *See also generally* 6 *USCIS Policy Manual*, *supra*, at F.2(B)(1) (indicating that the second step requires USCIS to evaluate the person's publications to determine whether they are indicative of being one of that small percentage who has risen to the very top of the field of endeavor and enjoying sustained national or international acclaim).

the significance of his specific presentations, their level of prestige or recognition, or how they have impacted his field consistent with him being among that small percentage at the very top of the field. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2).

The Petitioner also submitted an "Industrial Property" case document indicating that [redacted] filed for a trademark for [redacted] in [redacted] 2025. This case document lists the status of the trademark as "Pending Substantive Examination" with the Brazilian Patent Office, but the Petitioner's name is not listed on the document. Regardless, while a patent or trademark recognizes the originality of an idea, it does not by itself demonstrate that the inventor has made a business contribution that renders him nationally or internationally acclaimed. Rather, the significance of the innovation must be determined on a case-by-case basis. Here, the Petitioner has not shown in what ways his original work has affected the field or garnered attention at a level rendering him nationally or internationally acclaimed in his field. *See* section 203(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Act and 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3). Nor has he established that [redacted] trademark application places him at the very top of the field. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2).

In addition, the Petitioner asserts that he has performed in leading or critical roles as CFO and a board member with [redacted] The Petitioner, however, has not provided evidence showing that these roles have garnered him sustained national or international acclaim or placed him among that small percentage at the very top of the field of endeavor. *See* section 203(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Act and 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2). While the Petitioner provided letters of support and some media coverage mentioning his work for the firm, he has not offered supporting evidence demonstrating how his specific roles are indicative of his high standing in the field or otherwise reflect that he has sustained national or international acclaim or recognition for his achievements. *See Agrawal v. Miller*, No. 4:24CV3143, 2025 2879217, at *23 (D. Neb. Sept. 12, 2025) (upholding that plaintiff's roles do not place her at the top of the field or demonstrate sustained national or international acclaim).

Regarding the Petitioner's salary at [redacted] he provided several years of income tax statements as well as a letter from his firm indicating that he received a yearly salary of R$ 325,000 (or R$ 27,083 monthly) in 2025. He also presented earnings data from Salario.com.br stating that a "Financial Manager" earns an average salary of R$ 8,581 per month and a maximum salary of R$ 22,607. The Petitioner, however, has not demonstrated that the salary information he provided for a "Financial Manager" offers a relevant basis for comparison for his position as Chief Financial Officer or a "C-level financial executive." *See Matter of Price*, 20 I&N Dec. 953, 954 (Assoc. Comm'r 1994) (considering a professional golfer's earnings versus other PGA Tour golfers); *see also Skokos v. U.S. Dept. of Homeland Sec.*, 420 F. Apex 712, 713-14 (9th Cir. 2011) (finding salary information for those performing lesser duties is not a comparison to others in the field); *Grimson v. INS*, 934 F. Supp. 965, 968 (N.D. Ill. 1996) (considering NHL enforcer's salary versus other NHL enforcers); *Muni v. INS*, 891 F. Supp. 440, 444-45 (N. D. Ill. 1995) (comparing salary of NHL defensive player to salary of other NHL defensemen). Here, the Petitioner has not shown that his earnings place him among that small percentage who have risen to the very top of the field. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2).

Finally, we acknowledge that the Petitioner provided letters of recommendation from others in support of the petition.[11] Letters of this kind are helpful to explain the nature and impact of the Petitioner's contributions to the field. However, while not without weight in the final merits determination, reference letters should explain in specific terms why the authors believe the Petitioner qualifies as a person with extraordinary ability, and should be supported with sufficient corroborating documentary evidence to establish that the Petitioner is recognized as being among that small percentage at the very top of the field of endeavor and that he has garnered the required sustained national and international acclaim for his achievements. *See generally* 6 *USCIS Policy Manual*, *supra* at F.2(B)(3) (discussing the evidentiary value of letters of support at the final merits determination stage).

For example, with respect to the Petitioner's work for [redacted] Dr. M-L-S-, [redacted] stated:

> When [the Petitioner] took on the mission of restructuring the firm's finance department, the scenario was challenging. Rapid business expansion had created a decentralized structure that was inefficient and vulnerable to significant financial losses. It was in this context that he stood out as a true organizational architect, redesigning flows, implementing strategic controls, and centralizing operations in a Shared Services Center that quickly became a benchmark in the industry. His ability to align strategic vision with technical execution is, quite frankly, rare to see.

Dr. M-L-S- asserted that the Petitioner's Shared Services Center "quickly became a benchmark in the industry," but she did not offer specific examples of companies or firms influenced by the Petitioner's work. Nor has the Petitioner presented evidence that his specific restructuring project has affected the industry in a significant way or has otherwise garnered him national or international acclaim in the field of financial management.

Furthermore, S-Q-, CEO and publisher of [redacted] wrote:

> [The Petitioner] has built his reputation as a solutions architect focused on improving financial performance and extending the longevity of complex business operations. His most significant original contribution to the sector was the conception and implementation of a Shared Services Center (SSC), together with the deployment of a proprietary Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system at the core of the firm's financial and administrative operations. This initiative established a national benchmark in the restructuring of administrative departments, enabling [redacted] to achieve levels of operational efficiency and cost reduction that distinguish it from its peers.

While S-Q- further indicated that the Petitioner spearheaded his firm's "digitalization of processes through a sophisticated integration of strategic planning and corporate governance," she did not provide specific examples of his system's influence on institutional practice beyond his employer at a level signifying his national or international acclaim in the field. This letter and the other letters the Petitioner submitted summarize aspects of his work at [redacted] and praise his skills and

[11] While we discuss a sampling of these letters, we have reviewed and considered each one.

contributions as a business strategist and organizational architect, but they do not demonstrate that his achievements have been widely recognized in his field or otherwise show that he has garnered sustained acclaim at the very top of his field. Overall, while the recommendation letters attest to the Petitioner's managerial skills and accomplishments, they do not establish his extraordinary ability when considered in the totality of the evidence. The letters do not demonstrate that the Petitioner has achieved national or international acclaim from the field or attracted a level of attention placing him at the very top of his field. *See Jafarov v. USCIS*, No. 23 CIV. 3372 (PAE), 2024 WL 69056, at *9 (finding testimonial letters were insufficient to establish his relative status in the field and do not compare him to others).

Further, the letters' authors did not provide sufficient information and explanation to show that the Petitioner is viewed by the overall field, rather than by a solicited few, to be among the upper echelon or that he has garnered recognition on a national or international scale, consistent with being among the small percentage at the very top of the field of endeavor. *Mishra v. Richardson*, No. 1:20-cv-991 (LMB/TCB), 2021 WL 1566071, at *3 (E.D. Va. Apr. 20, 2021) (finding that none of the plaintiff's letters point to evidence of extensive documentation of his accomplishments to show sustained national or international acclaim). Although the letters highlight the Petitioner's work, they do not reflect a career of acclaimed work in the field, garnering the required sustained national or international acclaim. *See Bodhankar v. USCIS*, No. 1:19-CV-706 (MAD/CFH), 2020 WL 777211, at *5 (N.D.N.Y. Feb. 18, 2020) (finding the submitted letters failed to establish the plaintiff's contributions resulted in significant acclaim).

The record as a whole, including the evidence discussed above, does not establish the Petitioner's eligibility for the benefit sought.[12] Here, the Petitioner seeks a highly restrictive visa classification, intended for individuals already at the top of their respective fields, rather than those progressing toward the top. *Matter of Price*, 20 I&N Dec. at 954 (concluding that even major league level athletes do not automatically meet the statutory standards for classification as an individual of "extraordinary ability"); *Amin v. Mayorkas*, 24 F.4th at 394 (stating that extraordinary ability is such an elite level of accomplishment); *Lapteva v. Schuurmans*, No. 8:24CV83, 2025 WL 815087, at *1 (D. Neb. Mar. 10, 2025) (stating that EB-1 visa are intended to be available to only an exceedingly small amount of individuals with extraordinary ability).

In this case, the Petitioner has not shown the significance of his work is indicative of the required sustained national or international acclaim or it is consistent with a career of acclaimed work in the field. *See* section 203(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Act. The evidence related to his awards, memberships, media coverage, judging, original contributions, authorship of scholarly articles, presented work, roles, and salary reflects that he has received some recognition for his contributions and expertise in his field but falls short of establishing that he satisfied the requirements for this classification at the time of filing. While the Petitioner need not establish that there is no one more accomplished to qualify for the classification sought, the record is insufficient to demonstrate that he is among the small percentage at the top of his field. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2).

[12] *See generally* 6 *USCIS Policy Manual*, *supra*, at F.2(B)(2) (providing that some evidence weighs more favorably on its own, while other evidence is more persuasive when viewed with other evidence).

III. CONCLUSION

For the reasons discussed above, the Petitioner has not established his eligibility as an alien of extraordinary ability.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.

NOTICE: This constitutes the final decision in this matter. The filing of a motion will not postpone the effect of the decision. 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(iv). Aliens who are not lawfully present, or who are otherwise inadmissible or deportable, may be subject to the commencement of removal proceedings under section 240 of the Act through the issuance of a Form I-862, Notice to Appear. Those proceedings may result in their removal from the United States and possible ineligibility for future visas or other immigration benefits.