

# Biophysical Journal

## Supporting Material

### MD Simulations and FRET Reveal an Environment-Sensitive Conformational Plasticity of Importin- $\beta$

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## Supplementary Materials and Methods

**Buffers and chemicals:** The 4-Azido-L-phenylalanine (AzF, product code: 06162) was purchased from Chem-Impex Inter. Inc. The dibenzocyclooctyne conjugated fluorophore dye (DBCO-FI-545, product code: CLK-A110-2, currently discontinued from manufacturer) was purchased from Jena Bioscience. The mouse monoclonal anti-His antibody (product code: 27-7410-01), enhanced chemiluminescence (ECL) Prime (product code: RPN2236) and the chemiluminescence Hyperfilm (product code: 28906837) were purchased from GE Healthcare, while the HRP-conjugated anti-Mouse IgG (product code: A4416) was acquired from Sigma Aldrich. The polyethylene glycol (PEG) of different chain lengths (200, 1,500, 3,000, 4,000 and 8,000) were purchased from either Applichem GmbH and/or Sigma Aldrich. The methanol used for titrations is HPLC grade and purchased from VWR Chemicals. Proteinase K (product code: 1092766) was purchased from Boehringer Mannheim GmbH. Vivaspin 500 (product code: Z629367) and Amicon Ultra-15 (product code: UFC903024) centrifugal concentrators were procured from Sigma Aldrich and MerckMillipore, respectively. The D-Tube Dialyzer Midi (product code: 71507-3) and Immobilon-P PVDF Transfer Membrane (product code: IPVH00010) were purchased from MerckMillipore. HisPur Ni-NTA Resin (product code: 88222) was purchased from Thermo Scientific. Other common chemicals and reagents for buffer preparation were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich, Carl Roth GmbH or Applichem. All products were stored, dissolved/ diluted, and used as per manufacturer's protocol.

**Plasmids:** The human Importin- $\beta$  (National Center for Biotechnology Information Protein Accession Code : NP\_002256.2) and superfolder green fluorescent protein (AGT98536.1) sequences were used to construct the *hsImp* $\beta$ -sfGFP-His<sub>6</sub>, *hsImp* $\beta$ <sup>Q220TAG</sup>-sfGFP-His<sub>6</sub> and *hsImp* $\beta$ <sup>Y255TAG</sup>-sfGFP-His<sub>6</sub> in the pCDFDuet1 (MerckMillipore) plasmid backbone using the

standard cloning, PCR amplification, restriction enzyme digestion and ligation protocols. The T4 DNA Ligase and Phusion DNA Polymerase were obtained from Thermo Scientific, while the restriction enzymes were obtained from New England Biolabs and Thermo Scientific. The primers for cloning, site directed mutagenesis or sequencing were purchased from Sigma Aldrich as ‘purified by desalting’. The plasmids were amplified in *Escherichia coli* DH10B strain in LB medium (10 g Tryptone, 5 g Yeast extract, and 5 g NaCl, in deionized water upto 1 L, pH 7.0) supplemented with Spectinomycin (50 µg/mL final) and purified by peqGOLD Plasmid Miniprep Kit (PeqLab Biotechnologie GmbH). The plasmid integrity was verified by restriction enzyme digestion and DNA sequencing. The complete plasmid sequences of the *hsImpβ* constructs are given below.

### **Protein Expression and Purification:**

***hsImpβ-sfGFP***: *Escherichia coli* BL21(DE3) (Merck) chemical competent cells were heat-shock transformed with plasmid pCDFDuet1\_*hsImpβ*-sfGFP-His<sub>6</sub> and grown overnight in 100 mL of 2YT media (10 g Tryptone, 16 g Yeast extract, and 5 g NaCl, in deionized water upto 1 L, pH 7.0) with Spectinomycin (50 µg/mL) with shaking at 220 rpm at 37°C. Next morning, 1 L 2YT media with Spectinomycin (50 µg/mL) was inoculated at OD<sub>600</sub> ~0.1 and grown till OD<sub>600</sub> reached 0.2 – 0.3, when protein expression was induced by adding isopropyl β-D-1-thiogalactopyranoside (IPTG, 500 µM, final) and let grow for another 5 h. The cells were harvested by centrifugation at 4,800 rotations per minute (rpm), snap frozen in liquid nitrogen and stored at -80°C.

The cell pellet was resuspended in ice-cold buffer A (50 mM Tris-Cl, pH 8.0, 200 mM NaCl, 25 mM Imidazole, 1 mM phenylmethanesulfonyl-fluoride and 500 µL of ALP protease inhibitor cocktail) and disrupted by pneumatic cell disintegration using a Microfluidizer 110S (Microfluidics, USA). The cell lysate was cleared by centrifugation at 20,000 rpm, 20 min,

4°C, syringe filtered through 0.2 µm and loaded on a 5 mL Ni<sup>2+</sup> sepharose HisTrap FF column (GE lifesciences) attached to an Äkta Prime Plus liquid chromatography system (GE lifesciences). The *hsImpβ*-sfGFP was then eluted with buffer B (50 mM Tris-Cl, pH 8.0, 100 mM NaCl, and 200 mM Imidazole) and further purified on a 5 mL HiTrap Q HP column (GE lifesciences), washed with 20 mM Tris-Cl, pH 7.5, 50 mM NaCl and eluted with gradient addition of 20 mM Tris-Cl, pH 7.5, 1 M NaCl. The eluted protein was concentrated using an Amicon Ultra-15 centrifugal filter (30,000 Da cutoff, MerckMillipore).

***hsImpβ*-sfGFP Q220AzF and *hsImpβ*-sfGFP Y255AzF:** *Escherichia coli* BL21(DE3) chemical competent cells were heat-shock transformed with the plasmids pDULE\_CNPhRS (1) and pCDFDuet1\_*hsImpβ*<sup>Q220TAG</sup>-sfGFP-His<sub>6</sub> or pCDFDuet1\_*hsImpβ*<sup>Y255TAG</sup>-sfGFP-His<sub>6</sub> and grown overnight in 100 mL of 2YT media with Spectinomycin (25 µg/mL) and Tetracyclin (12.5 µg/mL) with shaking at 220 rpm at 37°C. Next morning, 1 L 2YT media with Spectinomycin (25 µg/mL) and Tetracyclin (12.5 µg/mL) were inoculated at OD<sub>600</sub> ~0.1 and grown till OD<sub>600</sub> reached 0.2 – 0.3, when the unnatural amino acid AzF (1 mM, final) was added and the protein expression was induced by adding IPTG (500 µM, final) and let grow for another 5 h. The cells were harvested by centrifugation at 4,800 rotations per minute (rpm), snap frozen in liquid Nitrogen and stored at -80°C. The purification from the cell pellets is essentially the same as described above for *hsImpβ*-sfGFP.

**Protein labeling:** The purified *hsImpβ*-sfGFP Q220AzF was incubated on rocker at 4°C for 2 h with 200 µL bed volume of HisPur Ni-NTA beads (Thermo Fischer). The beads were washed twice with 1×PBS, pH 7.5 and 5 µL of freshly prepared 10 mg/mL of DBCO-FI-545 was added. The mixture was incubated for another 2 h on rocker at 4°C, covered in aluminum foil. The beads were extensively washed with 1×PBS, pH 7.5 and finally eluted with 1×PBS,

pH 7.5 supplemented with 200 mM Imidazole. The labeled protein was directly loaded onto a Native-PAGE gel and scanned on Typhoon 9400 Variable Mode Imager. The region of the scanned image showing both sfGFP and Fl-545 emission was used as background to 'cut' the corresponding region from the Native-PAGE gel. The gel pieces were transferred to a D-Tube Dialyzer Midi (MerckMillipore) tube followed by electroelution in 25 mM Tris-Cl, pH 8.0, 100 mM NaCl and 1 mM ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid, on a horizontal gel electrophoresis system. The electroeluted protein was concentrated on a Vivaspin 500 centrifugal concentrator, glycerol (5% final) added, aliquoted in 10  $\mu$ L volumes, snap frozen in liquid nitrogen and stored at -80°C.

**Western blotting:** The protein samples (10 or 20  $\mu$ L) were run on a 8% Tris-Cl-SDS polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (PAGE) gel, followed by transfer on Immobilon-P PVDF membrane for 50 min at 50 V. The membrane was blocked with 3% Bovine serum albumin prepared in 1  $\times$ PBS, pH 7.5, for 30 min on rocker at 4°C followed by addition of mouse monoclonal anti-His antibody (1:10,000 dilution) in the above buffer, and incubating for additional 1 h. The membrane was washed three times with 30 mL of 1  $\times$ PBS, pH 7.5, 0.02% Tween-20 for 10 minutes each and transferred in 5% skimmed milk in 1  $\times$ PBS, pH 7.5. The HRP-conjugated anti-Mouse IgG (1:5,000 dilution) was added and incubated for 1 h at 4°C. The membrane was washed two times with 30 mL of 1  $\times$ PBS, pH 7.5, 0.02% Tween-20 for 10 minutes each and once with 1  $\times$ PBS, pH 7.5, 0.05% Tween-20 for 10 minutes. The ECL Prime solution was prepared as per manufacturer's protocol and spread on the membrane, and developed on a chemiluminescence Hyperfilm.

**In-gel fluorescence:** The Typhoon 9400 Variable Mode Imager (GE Lifesciences) was used for all the in-gel fluorescence scans. The settings for detecting sfGFP (excitation with 488 nm

blue laser, emission filter 520 nm, band pass 40 nm) and FI-545 (excitation with 532 nm green laser, emission filter 580 nm, band pass 30 nm) was used. Additionally, different PMT gains (200 – 400 V) were used in conjunction with 100 or 200  $\mu\text{m}$  resolution. The scanned images were processed with FluorSep 2.2 and/ or ImageQuant 5.2 (Molecular Dynamics) for visualization and preparing the ‘merge’ image (Figures 4, S5 and S7).

**Nuclear import in permeabilized cells:** For import of recombinant Imp $\beta$ , 80.000 HeLa P4 cells (2) were grown on poly-L-lysine-coated cover slips, washed with cold transport buffer (TB, 20 mM HEPES pH 7.3, 110 mM KOAc, 2 mM Mg(OAc)<sub>2</sub>, 1 mM EGTA, 1  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$  aprotinin, 1  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$  leupeptin, 1  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$  pepstatin, 2 mM DTT), and permeabilized on ice with 0.007% digitonin in TB. After three washing steps with TB, cells were incubated with Imp $\beta$ -GFP proteins (diluted 1:20 from stock) at room temperature for 30 min in the presence of an energy-regenerating system (1 mM ATP, 5 mM creatine phosphate, 20 U/mL creatine phosphokinase) and 1 mg/mL BSA. After import, the cells were washed with TB and nuclei were stained with 2  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$  Hoechst 33258 (Sigma) in PBS for 2 min. The cover slips were dried and mounted with Dako Fluorescent Mounting Medium. Images were acquired with an LSM 510 META Laser Scanning Microscope (Carl Zeiss) and processed using the LSM image browser and Fiji.

**Fluorescence Lifetime Measurements:** Fluorescence lifetime measurements were performed on a MicroTime 200 confocal microscope system (PicoQuant, Berlin, Germany). The system is based on an inverse epi-fluorescence microscope (IX-71, Olympus Europa) with a water immersion objective (UPLSAPO 60 x W, 1.2 N.A., Olympus Hamburg, Germany). For fluorescence excitation and lifetime measurements, we used pulsed diode lasers (LDH-P-C-470, 470 nm, PicoQuant) with linear polarization, pulse duration of 50 psec (FWHM), 40

MHz repetition rate. Fluorescence excitation and detection is done through the same objective (epi-fluorescence configuration). Collected fluorescence light is passed through a dichroic mirror (490 dcxr, Chroma Technology, Rockingham, VT, USA), and then focused by a tube lens through a 150  $\mu\text{m}$  diameter confocal pinhole. After the pinhole, the light is re-collimated, split by a 50/50 beam splitter, and focused onto two single photon avalanche diodes (tau-SPAD, PicoQuant, Berlin, Germany). Emission band-pass filters (HC520/35, Semrock, USA) are positioned in front of each detector to discriminate fluorescence against scattered light. Time-correlated single-photon counting electronics (HydraHarp 400, PicoQuant GmbH) record the detected photons of all detectors independently with an absolute temporal resolution of 32 psec on a common time frame. Data for all measurements were acquired for 15 min to achieve sufficiently good photon statistics.

The routines for fluorescence lifetime calculation and analysis were implemented in MATLAB (MathWorks, Inc.). A simple biexponential model was employed for fitting only the tail ( $> 1$  ns after laser pulse) of the fluorescence decay curve. This analysis gives all information required for calculating FRET efficiencies by means of fluorescence life time change. The tail-fitting approach avoids all the complications associated with a full deconvolution of the fluorescence decay curve with an a priori measured instrumental response function, without reducing in any way the desired information about FRET efficiencies. FRET efficiencies were calculated from the difference between the mean lifetime value of the FRET sample and that of the donor-only control in the same buffer.

**MD Simulations:** All bonds were constrained using the LINCS algorithm (3). An integration time step of 2 fs was used. Lennard-Jones interactions were calculated with a cut-off of 10  $\text{\AA}$ . Electrostatic interactions were calculated explicitly at a distance smaller than 10  $\text{\AA}$ ; long-range electrostatic interactions were calculated by particle-mesh Ewald summation with a grid spacing of 0.12 nm and fourth order B-spline interpolation. The temperature was kept at  $T =$

300 K, using Berendsen coupling with a coupling time of  $\tau_T = 0.1$  ps (4). Structures were recorded every 1 ps for subsequent analysis. Simulations in water and in methanol were performed in the NPT ensemble. The pressure was coupled to a Berendsen barostat with  $\tau_p = 1.0$  ps and an isotropic compressibility of  $4.5 \times 10^{-5}$  bar<sup>-1</sup> in the x, y, and z directions (4).

All systems were energy minimized, followed by relaxation for 500 ps at 300 K, with positional restraints on the protein heavy atoms by using a force constant of  $k = 1000$  kJ mol<sup>-1</sup> nm<sup>-2</sup>. All simulations were performed using periodic boundary conditions.

Radii of gyration were calculated with the GROMACS tool *g\_gyrate*. The statistical uncertainty of the averaged radii of gyration was estimated as follows:

For each of the  $i$  trajectories, the average radius of gyration,  $R_g^i$  and its standard deviation  $s_i$  were calculated. From these values, the standard errors of the mean ( $\sigma_i$ ) were calculated as

$$\sigma_i = \frac{s_i}{\sqrt{t/\tau_i}},$$

where  $t_i$  is the length of the simulation and  $\tau_i$  the autocorrelation time of the fluctuations of the radius of gyration. From the individual values of  $\sigma_i$ , an average error was calculated as

$$\sigma_A = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \sigma_i^2},$$

where  $n$  is the number of individual trajectories.  $\sigma_A$  describes the error due to the fluctuations of  $R_g$  within each trajectory.

As a second source of statistical uncertainty, the error corresponding to the standard deviation  $s$  of the  $R_g^i$  values was calculated as

$$\sigma_B = \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}.$$

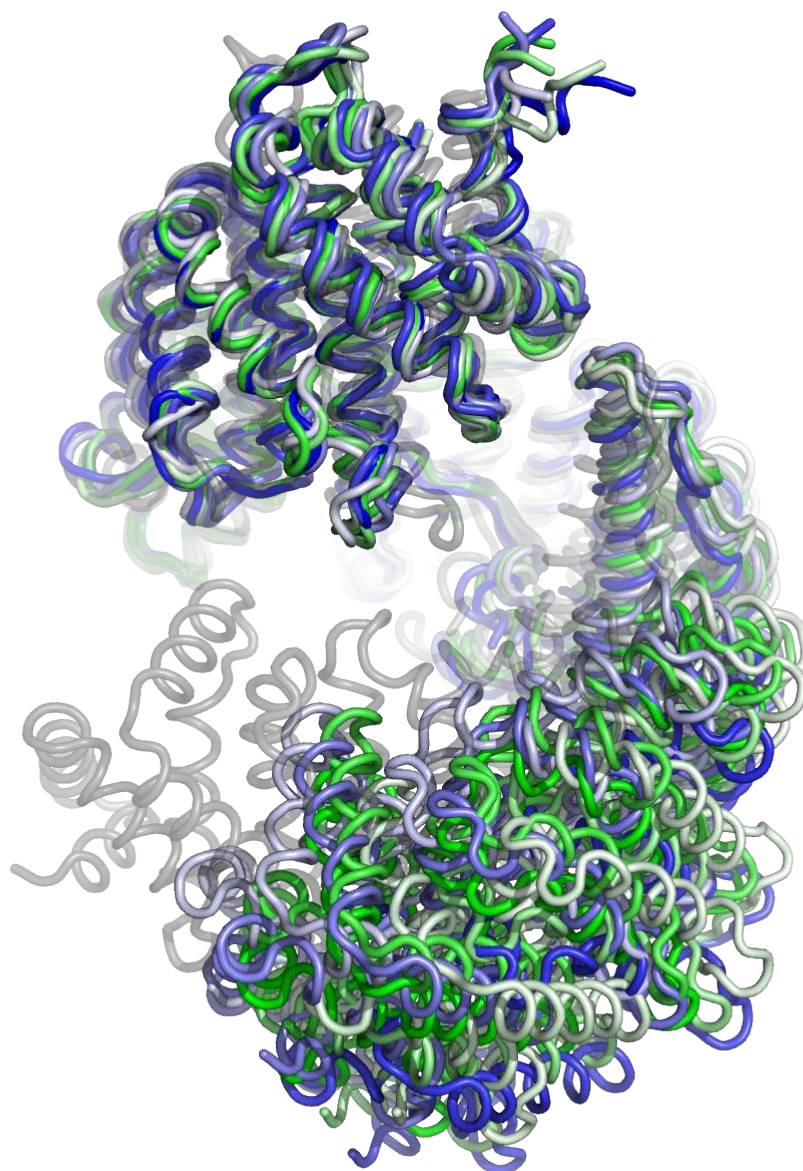


For a conservative estimate of the overall statistical uncertainty we therefore assume

$$\sigma_A = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \sigma_i^2} .$$

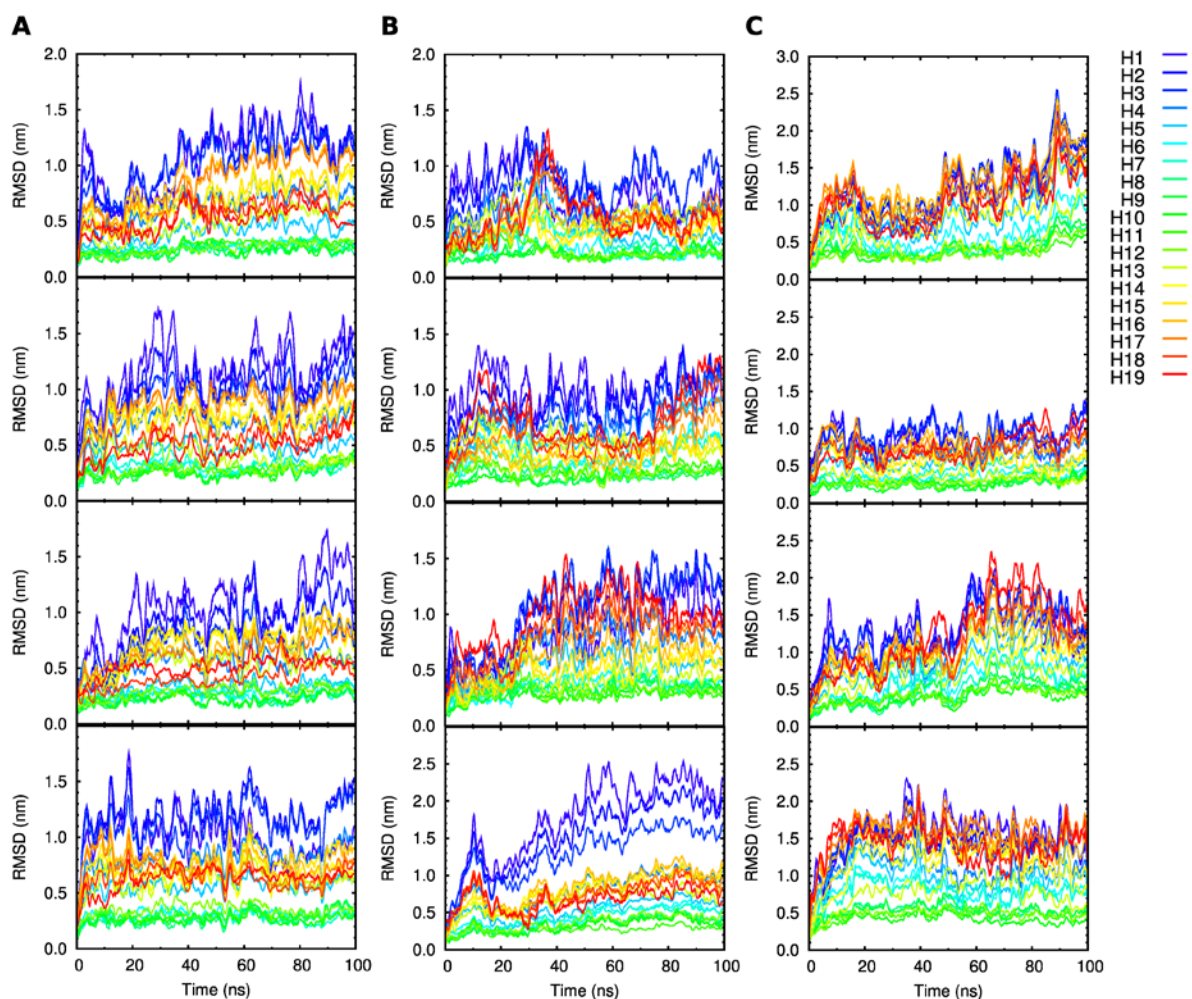
Running averages were calculated with a Gaussian kernel of 1 ns width.

**Supplementary Figure 1: Importin- $\beta$  in aqueous solution.**



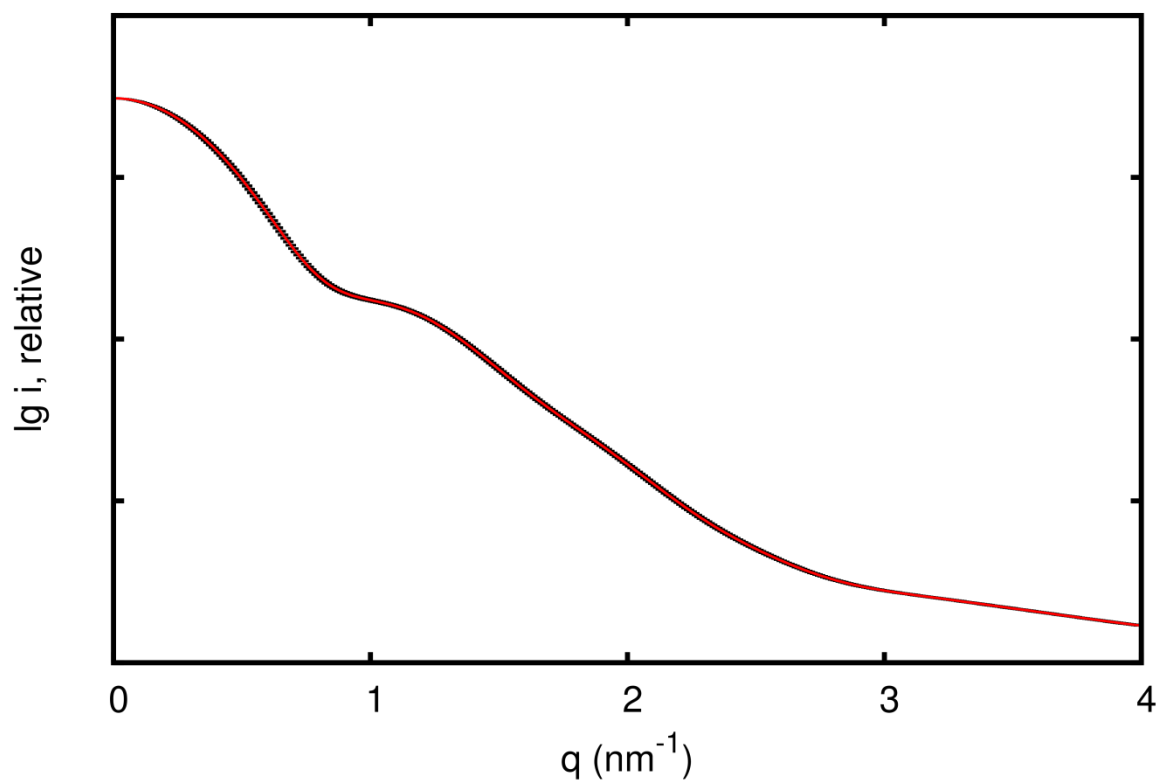
The most representative structures from a cluster analysis of Importin- $\beta$ :sIBB (from the most populated cluster in green to the least populated one in blue) are aligned to the crystal structure (in grey) on the C-terminal arch.

## Supplementary Figure 2: MD simulations in water.



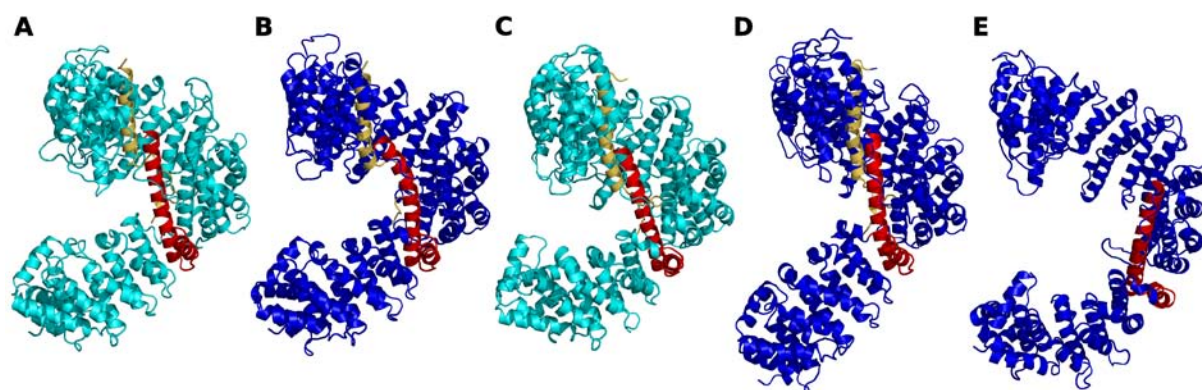
**Change in root-mean-square deviation (RMSD) by HEAT repeats during simulation in water.** (A) Importin- $\beta$ :sIBB complex (B) Importin- $\beta$ : $\alpha$ IBB complex (C) Free Importin- $\beta$  (after removal of the sIBB domain). Four independent simulations each are shown. The structures were first aligned to the closed crystal structure using all backbone atoms, and, subsequently, the RMSD was calculated for each HEAT repeat separately.

**Supplementary Figure 3: Simulated SAXS profile of free Importin- $\beta$  in water.**

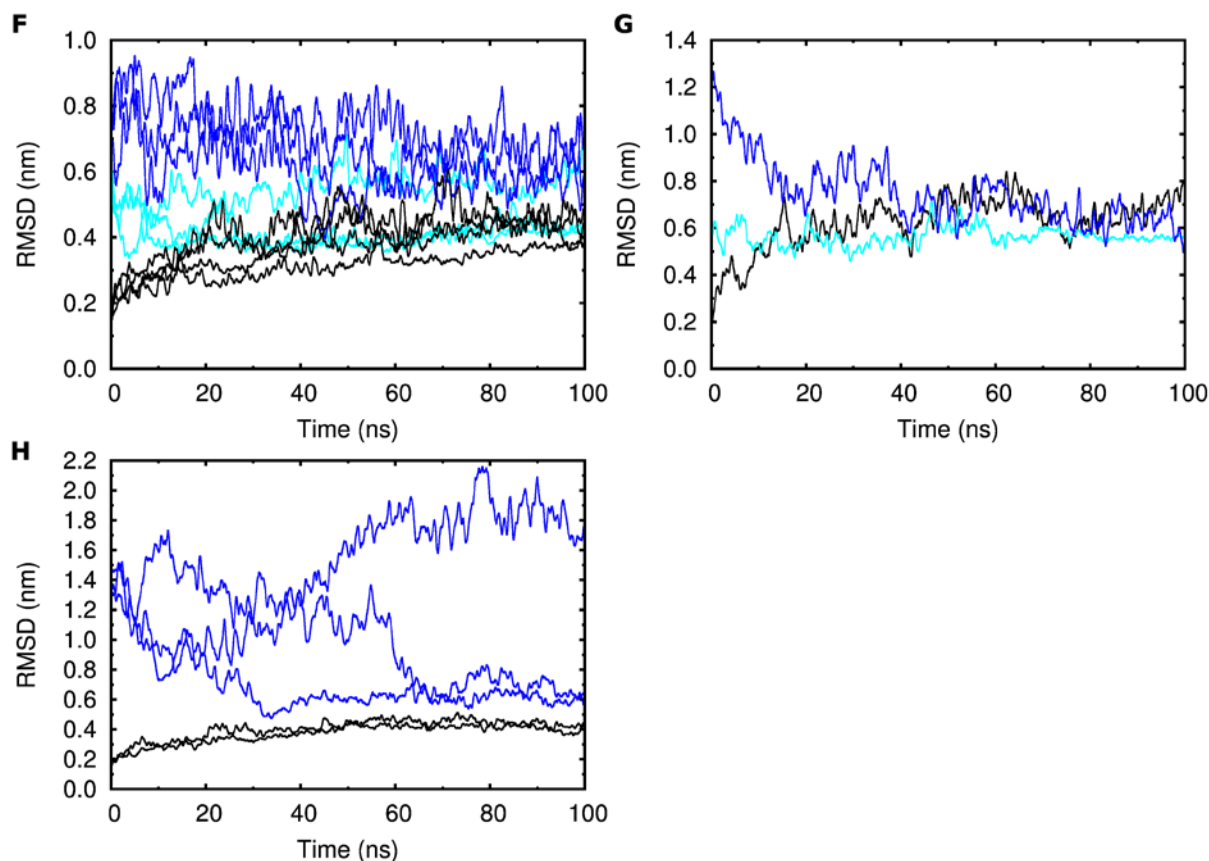


Scattering profiles were calculated on a total of 200 snapshots from the last 50 ns of the four independent trajectories and subsequently averaged. The errors were estimated by bootstrapping.

#### Supplementary Figure 4: MD simulations in methanol.

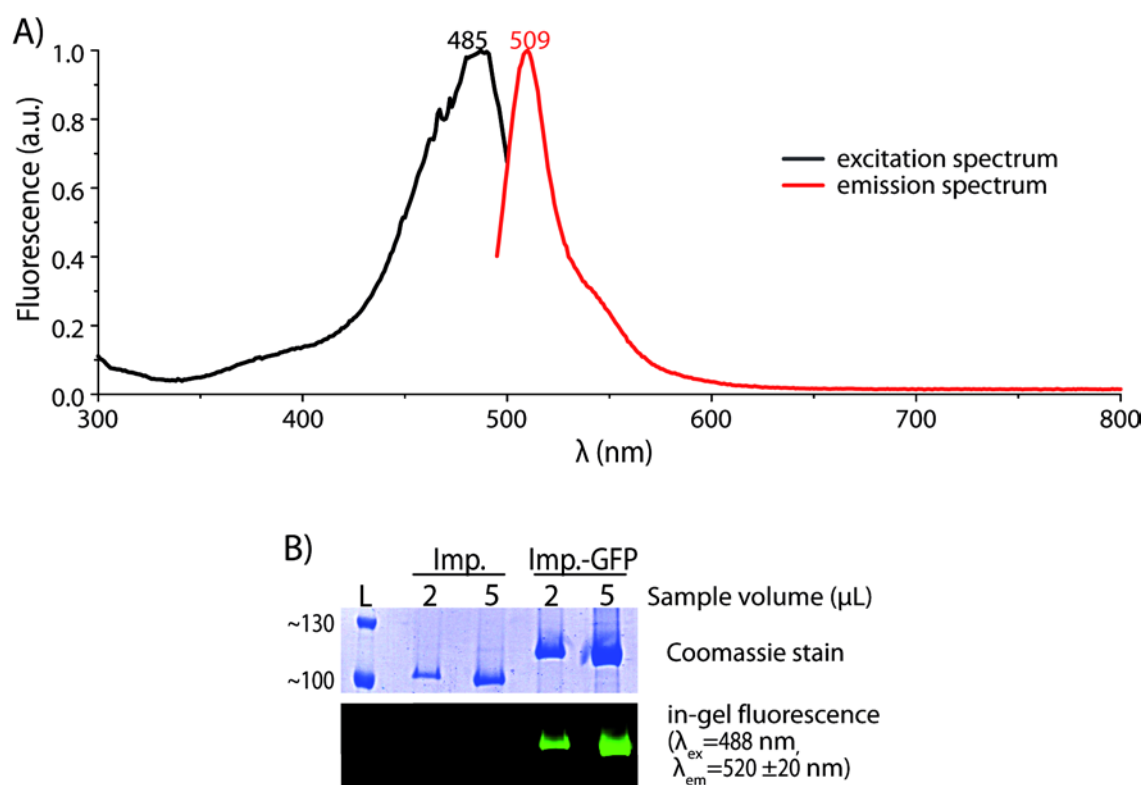


**Starting conformations.** (A, B) Importin- $\beta$ :sIBB complex with undistorted (A) and distorted (B) HEAT repeats. (C, D) Importin- $\beta$ : $\alpha$ IBB complex as half open (C) and completely open (D) structure. (E) Free Importin- $\beta$ . H7 is shown in red, the IBB domains are shown in yellow.



**Changes in root-mean-square deviation (RMSD) during the simulations.** RMSD with respect to the corresponding closed crystal structure for Importin- $\beta$ :sIBB (F), Importin- $\beta$ : $\alpha$ IBB (G), and free Importin- $\beta$  (H). Simulations started from open (blue), undistorted half open (cyan) and closed (black) conformations.

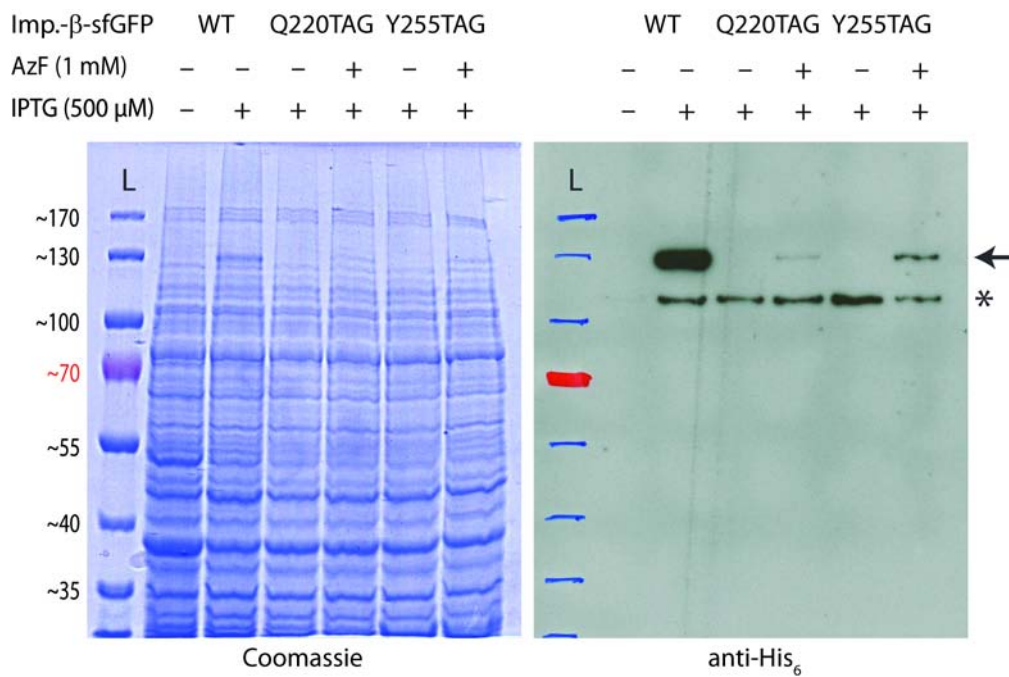
Supplementary Figure 5: Spectral properties of *hsImportin-β-sfGFP*.



A) Excitation and emission spectra of *hsImportin-β-GFP*. B) In-gel fluorescence spectrum of *hsImportin-β-sfGFP*. L: Prestained Protein Ladder.

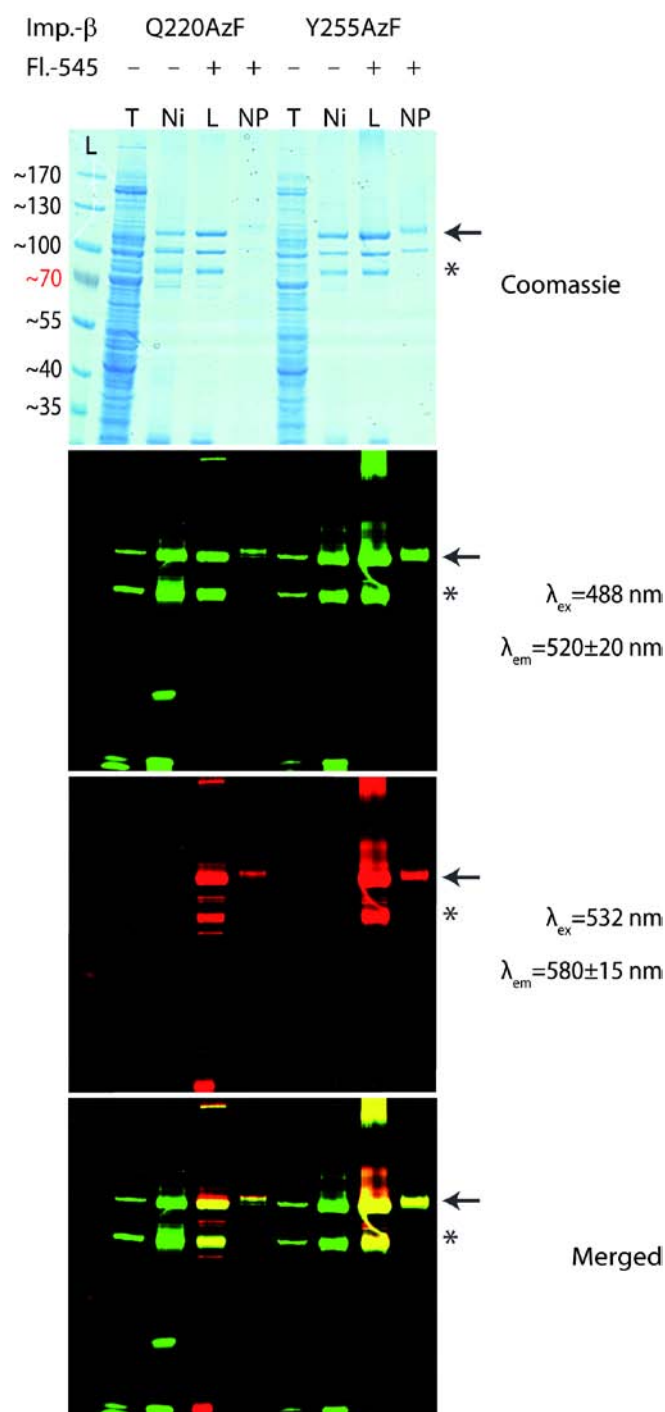


**Supplementary Figure 6: Incorporation of AzF in hsImportin- $\beta$ .**



BL21 DE3 cells were transformed with plasmids encoding *hsImportin- $\beta$*  with amber codons replacing codons Q220 or Y255 and pDULE CNPheRS. Cells were grown in the presence or absence of IPTG and AzF as indicated and analyzed by SDS-PAGE and Western blot. Arrow indicates the position of *hsImportin- $\beta$* , an unspecific anti-His<sub>6</sub> antibody cross-reactive band is indicated by an asterisk.

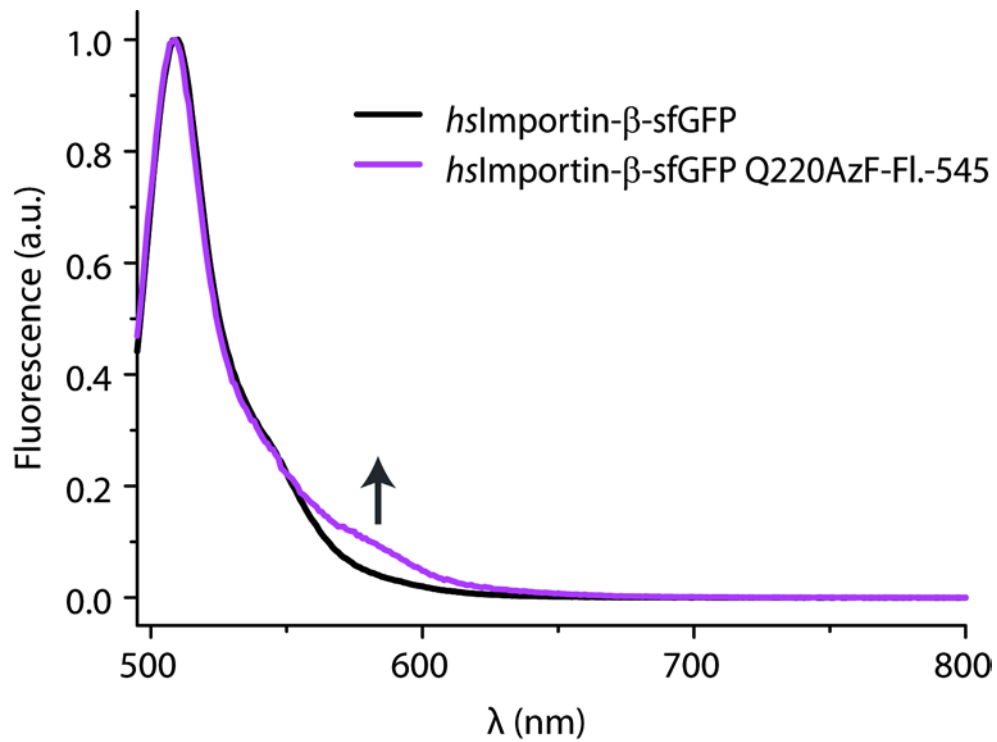
**Supplementary Figure 7: Purification and labeling of *hsImportin-β*-sfGFP.**



*hsImportin-β*-GFP proteins were extracted (T), purified by Ni<sup>2+</sup>-affinity chromatography (Ni), labeled with Fl.-545-DBCO (L) and purified by native-PAGE (NP). Samples from all stages were analyzed by SDS-PAGE and in-gel fluorescence measured on a Typhoon phosphoimager. Arrow indicates the position of full-length *hsImportin-β*, a proteolytic fragment of *hsImportin-β* is indicated by an asterisk.

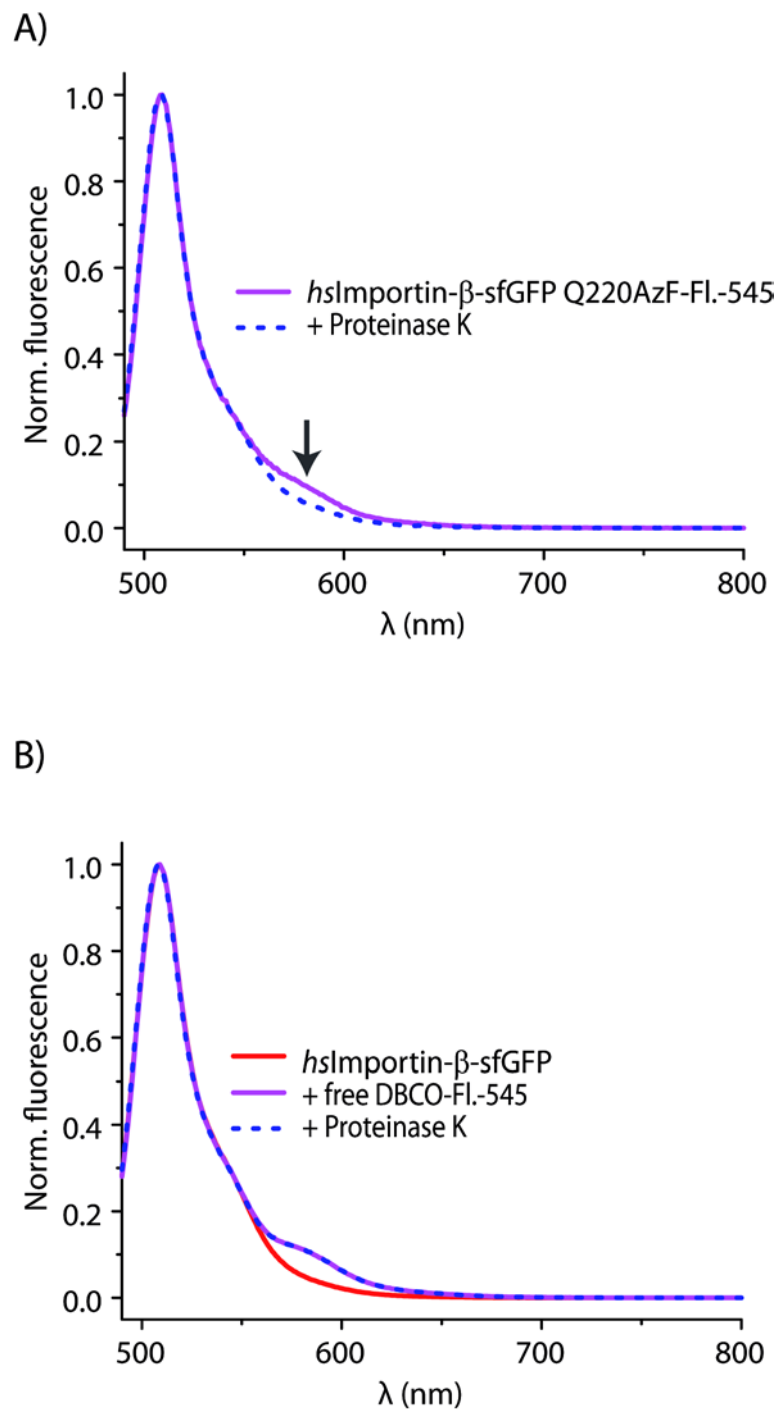


**Supplementary Figure 8: Fluorescence emission spectra of *hsImportin-β*-sfGFP and *hsImportin-β*-GFP Q220AzF-Fl.-545.**



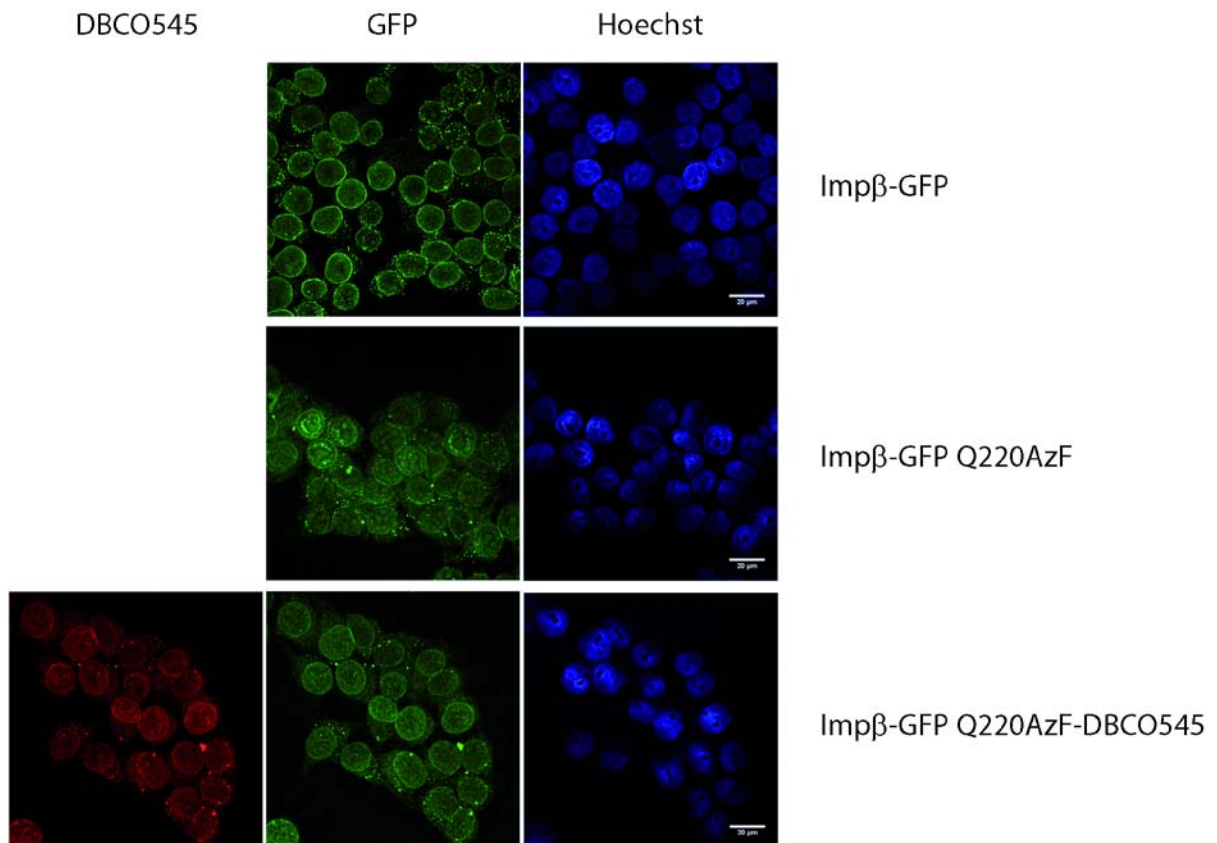
Fluorescence emission spectra of *hsImportin-β*-sfGFP and *hsImportin-β*-GFP Q220AzF-Fl.-545 were acquired using  $\lambda_{\text{ex.}}=470$  nm. Coupling of the fluorophore leads to an increased emission at 575 nm.

**Supplementary Figure 9: FRET in *hsImportin-β*-sfGFP Q220AzF-Fl.-545 is Proteinase K sensitive.**



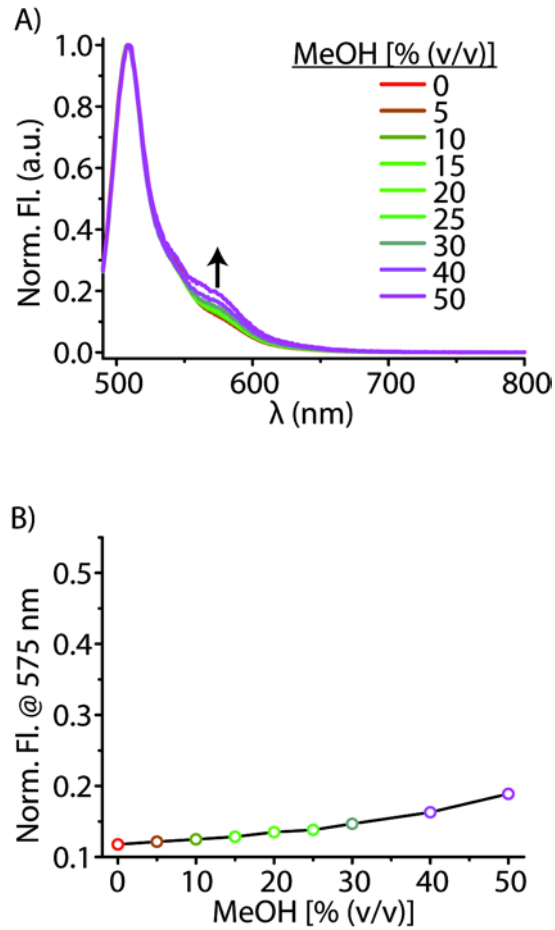
A) Fluorescence emission scans of *hsImportin-β*-sfGFP Q220AzF-Fl.-545 were taken before and after treatment with Proteinase K. B) Fluorescence emission scans of *hsImportin-β*-sfGFP were taken before and after the addition of free DBCO-Fl.-545 dye and after subsequent treatment with Proteinase K.

**Supplementary Figure 10: Localization of *hsImportin-β*-sfGFP Q220AzF-Fl.-545 in permeabilized HeLa cells.**



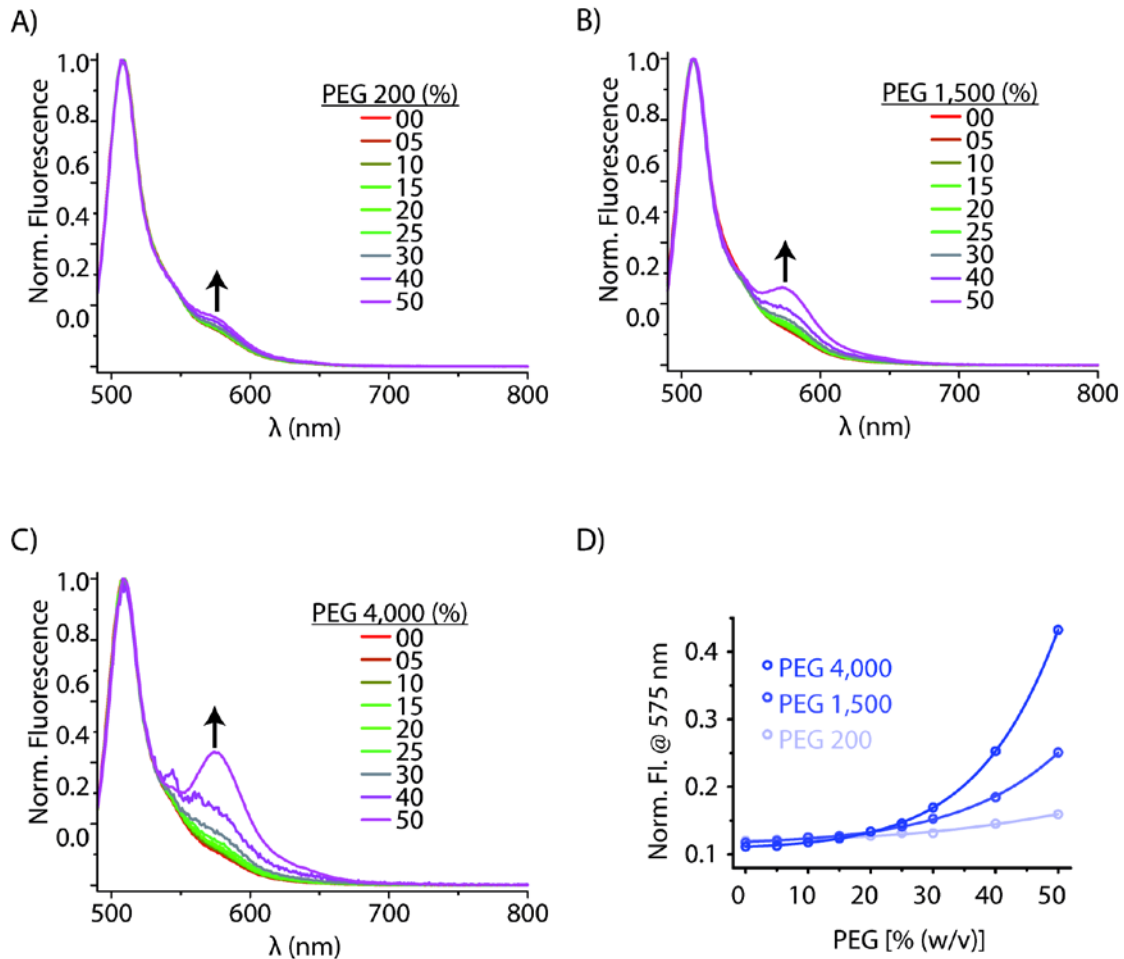
Permeabilized HeLa cells were incubated with indicated purified proteins, stained with Hoechst dye and imaged by fluorescence microscopy.

**Supplementary Figure 11: Titration of methanol induces FRET in *hsImportin-β*-sfGFP Q220AzF-Fl.-545.**



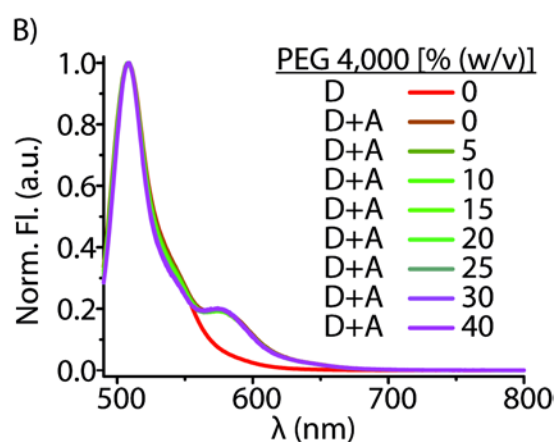
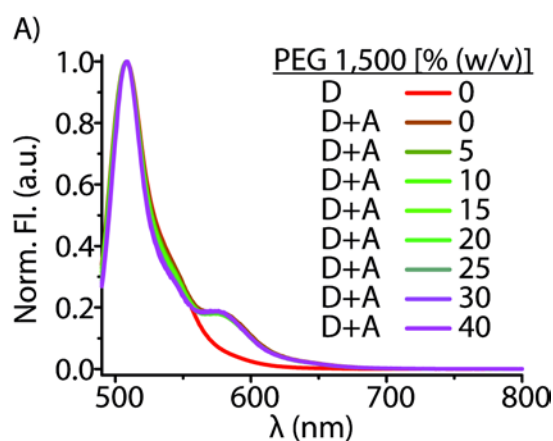
A-B) Increasing concentrations of methanol were added to *hsImportin-β*-sfGFP Q220AzF-Fl.-545. Between each addition fluorescence emission scans were acquired. Fluorescence was normalized for each spectrum setting the highest peak to 1.0.

**Supplementary Figure 12: Addition of PEG induces increased FRET in *hsImportin-β-sfGFP Q220AzF-Fl.-545*.**



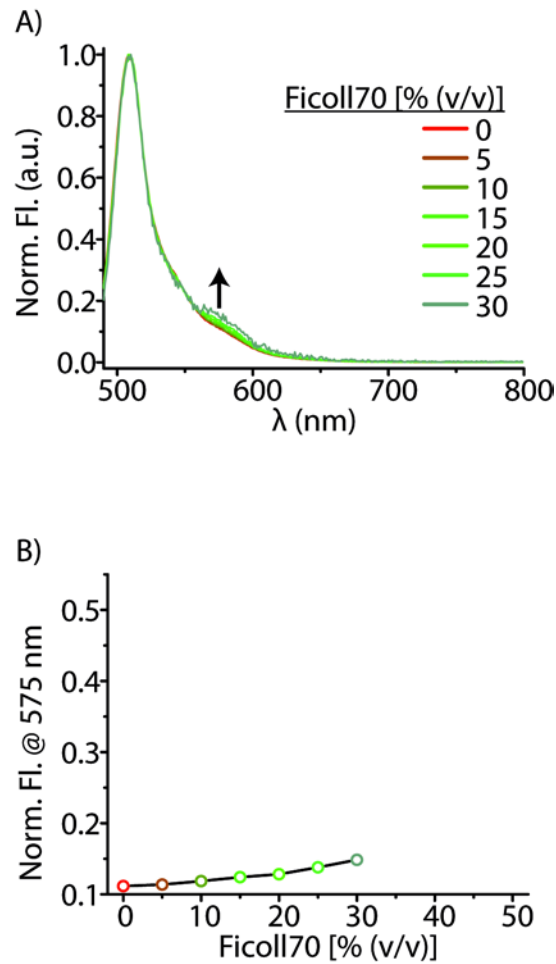
A-C) Increasing amounts of PEG of the indicated molecular weight were added to *hsImportin-β-sfGFP Q220AzF-Fl.-545*. Between each addition fluorescence emission scans were acquired. Fluorescence was normalized for each spectrum setting the highest peak to 1.0. D) Emission intensities at 575 nm of panels A-C were plotted against PEG concentration.

**Supplementary Figure 13: Increasing PEG concentrations do not affect individual fluorophore properties.**



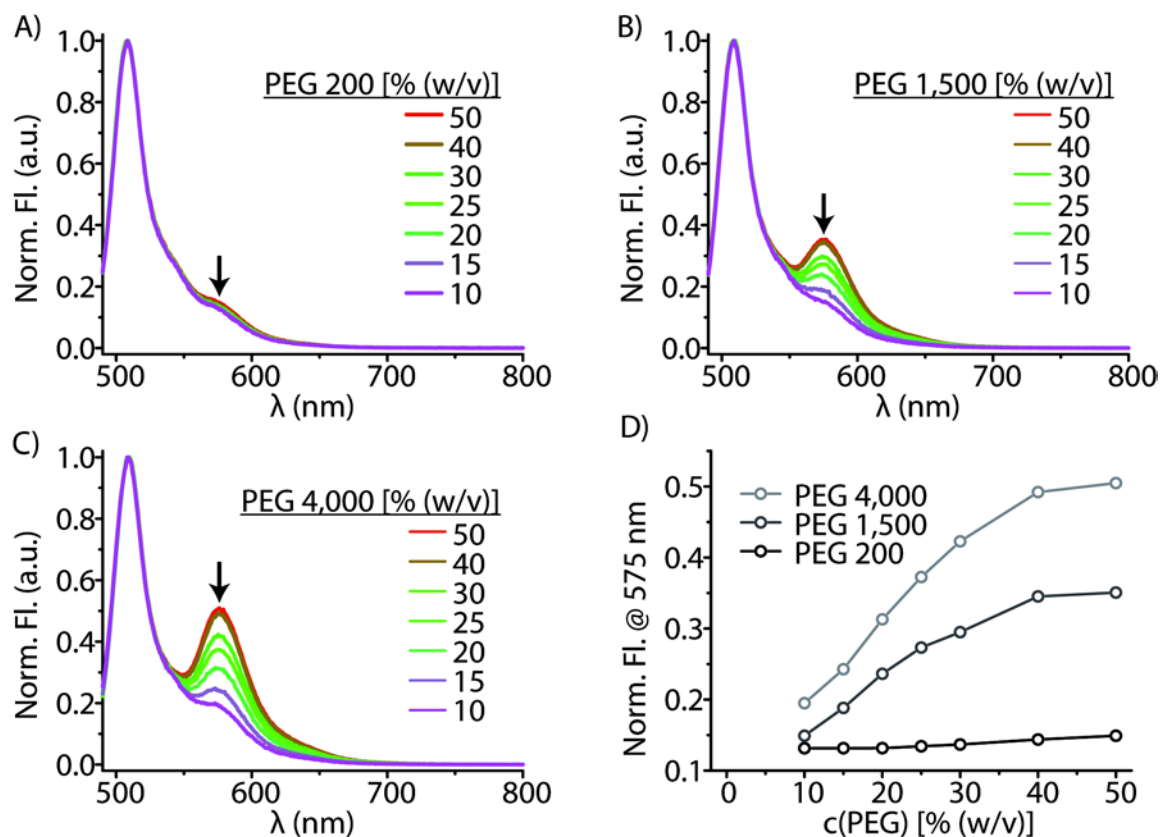
Increasing PEG concentrations do not affect the individual fluorescence properties of donor (D, *hsImportin- $\beta$ -sfGFP*) and acceptor (A, DBCO-Fl.-545) dyes. A-B) *hsImportin- $\beta$ -sfGFP* and DBCO-Fl.-545 were mixed in buffer and increasing concentrations of PEG of the indicated molecular weight were added stepwise. Between each addition fluorescence emission spectra were acquired ( $\lambda_{\text{ex.}}=470$  nm).

**Supplementary Figure 14: Titration of Ficoll-70 does not induce significantly increased FRET in *hsImportin-β-sfGFP Q220AzF-Fl.-545*.**



A) Increasing amounts of Ficoll-70 was added to *hsImportin-β-sfGFP Q220AzF-Fl.-545*. Between each addition fluorescence emission scans were acquired. Fluorescence was normalized for each spectrum setting the highest peak to 1.0. B) Emission intensities at 575 nm of panel A was plotted against Ficoll-70 concentration. For technical reasons a concentration above 30% could not be reached.

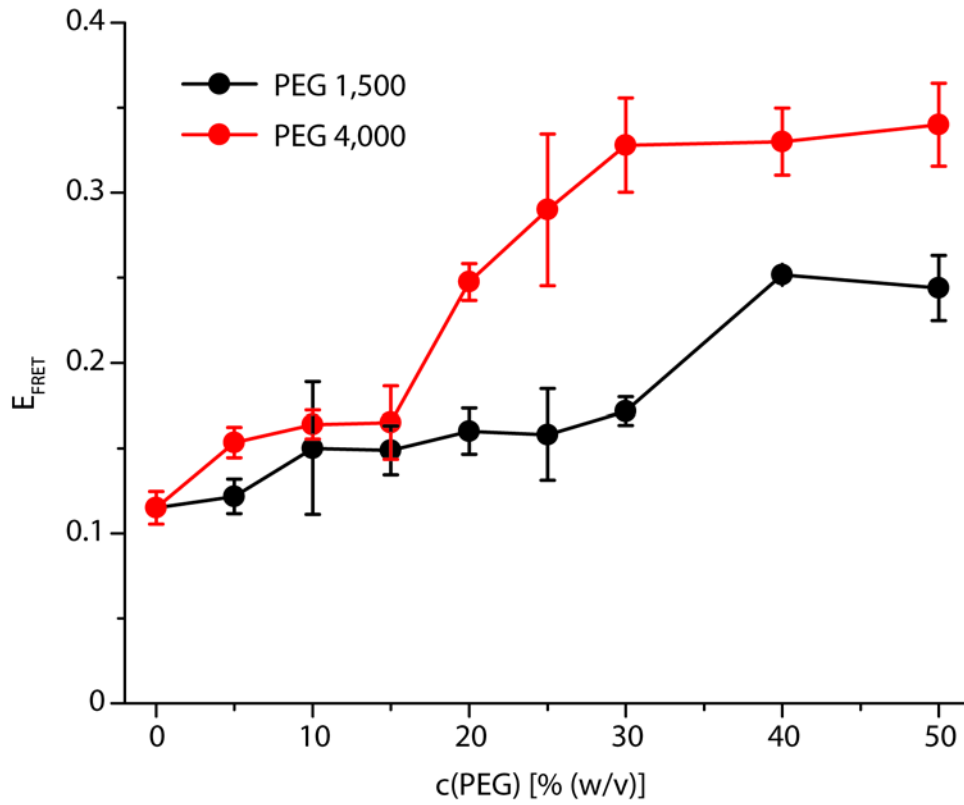
**Supplementary Figure 15: Reversibility of PEG induced FRET increase in *hsImportin- $\beta$ -sfGFP Q220AzF-Fl.-545*.**



A-C) Starting from a *hsImportin- $\beta$ -sfGFP Q220AzF-Fl.-545* solution containing a concentration of 50% PEG of the indicated molecular weight buffer is added stepwise. Between each addition fluorescence emission scans were acquired. Fluorescence was normalized for each spectrum setting the highest peak to 1.0. D) Emission intensities at 575 nm of panels A-C were plotted against PEG concentration.



**Supplementary Figure 16: Donor fluorescence lifetime measurements.**



Addition of PEG 1,500 or PEG 4,000 increases relative FRET efficiency in *hsImp $\beta$ -sfGFP Q220AzF-Fl.-545* determined by donor fluorescence lifetime measurements. Error bars represent standard error of the mean.

### Supplementary Table S1

Importin- $\beta$ in complex with	Simulations in water	Simulations in methanol
sIBB	4 x 100 ns (PDBid 2P8Q)	4 x 100 ns (PDBid 2P8Q) 3 x 100 ns (snapshot from simulations in water, $R_g=3.4$ nm, undistorted) 3 x 100 ns (snapshot from simulations in water, $R_g=3.5$ nm, distorted)
$\alpha$ IBB	4 x 100 ns (PDBid 2QGK)	1 x 100 ns (PDBid 2QGK) 1 x 100 ns (snapshot from simulations in water, $R_g=3.4$ nm) 1 x 100 ns (snapshot from simulations in water, $R_g=3.7$ nm)
---	3 x 100 ns (PDBid 2P8Q, after removal of sIBB) 1 x 100 ns (PDBid 2QGK, after removal of $\alpha$ IBB)	2 x 100 ns (PDBid 2P8Q, after removal of sIBB) 3 x 100 ns (snapshot from simulations in water, $R_g=3.9$ nm)

**Table S1:** Summary of simulations with their corresponding initial conformations (in parentheses).

### Supplementary Table S2

PDBid	Importin- $\beta$ in complex with	Crystallization condition Mother liquor	Cryo condition in addition to mother liquor	Conformation
1QGK (5)	$\alpha$ IBB	18-22% PEG 8000, 50 mM potassium acetate (pH 5.8), 10 mM $\beta$ -mercaptoethanol	prolonged dehydration (1-7 days) 25% PEG 400	closed
1QGR (5)	$\alpha$ IBB	16-20% PEG 8000, 50 mM potassium phosphate (pH 3.9), 10 mM $\beta$ -mercaptoethanol, 5 mM NaI	prolonged dehydration 25% PEG 400	closed

1UKL (6)	SREBP-2	5-6% PEG 8000, 10% glycerol, 50 mM MES buffer (pH 6.6), 30 mM SrCl <sub>2</sub>	25% glycerol	open
2BKU (7)	RanGTP	14-16% PEG 3350, 100 mM MES buffer (pH 6.2), 1-2 mM MnCl	25% (w/v) glycerol	open
2BPT (8)	Nup1p	13% (w/v) PEG 8000, 5 mM Tris (pH 7.4), 50 mM sodium cacodylate (pH 6.5), 90 mM (NH <sub>4</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>4</sub>	10% (w/v) glycerol	closed
2P8Q (9)	sIBB	20% PEG 8000, 50 mM NaCl (pH 6.0)	prolonged dehydration 38% PEG 8000	closed
2Q5D (9)	sIBB	20% PEG 8000, 50 mM NaCl (pH 6.0)	prolonged dehydration 38% PEG 8000	closed/ open
3ND2 (10)		20% PEG 4000, 12% MPD, 0.1 M MES (pH 6.5), 20 mM MgCl <sub>2</sub> , 125 mM NaCl		closed
2QNA (11)	sIBB	0.92 M (NH <sub>4</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>4</sub> , 2.5% ethanol	quick soak (seconds) 20% glycerol to mother liquor	open

**Table S2:** Comparison of crystallization conditions and Importin- $\beta$  conformation.

**Plasmid Sequence of pCDFDuet1<sub>hsImpβ</sub>-sfGFP-His<sub>6</sub>, pCDFDuet1<sub>hsImpβ</sub><sup>Q220TAG</sup>-sfGFP-His<sub>6</sub> and pCDFDuet1<sub>hsImpβ</sub><sup>Y255TAG</sup>-sfGFP-His<sub>6</sub>:** The ORF (nucleotide 71 – 3,451) is shown in lowercase and the TAG mutation sites for amino acid Q220 and Y255 is highlighted in yellow and green, respectively:

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1  GGGGAATTGTGAGCGGATAACAATTCCCCTGTAGAAATAATTTTGTTTAACTTTAATAAG 60
61  GAGATATAccatggagctgatcaccattctcgagaagaccgtgtctcccgatcggctgga 120
121 gctggaagcggcgcagaagttcctggagcgtgcccgtggagaacctgccactttcct 180
181 tgtggaactgtccagagtgctggcaaatccaggaaacagtcagggtgccagagttgcagc 240
241 tggctacaaatcaagaactctttgacatctaagatccagatatcaaggcacaatatca 300
301 gcagaggtggcttgcattgatgctaattgctcgacgagaagtcaagaactatgttttgca 360
361 gacattgggtacagaaacttacccggcctagttctgcctcacagtggtggctggatttgc 420
421 ttgtgcagagatcccagtaaaccagtgggccagaactcattcctcagctgggtggccaatgt 480
481 cacaacccccaacagcacagagcacatgaaggagtcgacattggaagccatcggttata 540
541 ttgccaaagatatagaccagagcagctacaagataaatccaatgagattctgactgccat 600
601 aatccaggggtagaggaagaagagccttagtaataatgtgaagctagctgctacgaatgc 660
661 actcctgaactcattggagttcaccaaagcaactttgataaagagctgaaaggcactt 720
721 tattatgcagggtggctgtggaagccacacagtgctccagatacgagggtagcagtgctgc 780
781 tttacagaatctgggtgaagataatgtccttatattatcagtacatggagacatattatggg 840
841 tcttgcctttttgcaatcacaatcgaagcaatgaaaagtgacattgatgaggtggcttt 900
901 acaagggatagaattctgggtccaatgtctgtgatgaggaaatggatttggccattgaagc 960
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1081 tgatgacgatgactggaacccctgcaaagcagcaggggtgtgcctcatgcttctggccac 1140
1141 ctgctgtgaagatgacattgtcccacatgtcctccccttcattaaagaacacatcaagaa 1200
1201 cccagattggcggtagccgggatgcagcagtgatggcttttgggtgtatcttgggaaggacc 1260
1261 agagcccagtcagctcaaaccactagttatacaggctatgccaccctaataagaat 1320
1321 gaaagaccccagtgtagttggttcgagatacagctgcatggactgtaggcagaat 1380
1381 gctgcttctcgaagctgccatcaatgatgtctacttggctcccctgctacagtgctctgat 1440
1441 tgagggctcctcagtgctgaaccagagtggttcaaatgtgtgctgggctttctccagctct 1500
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1561 ctgcttatcttcttcat 1620
1621 ttgaactcatagttcagaagctccttagagactacagacagacc 1680
1681 tggacaccagaacaacctgaggagttctgcatatgaatcctctgatggaaat 1740
1741 tggatgcaacaggttcttcagatggagtcacatccagagcacatccgatagaatccagtt 1800
1801 caatgaccttcagtccttactctgtgcaactcttcagaatgttcttcggaaagtgcaaca 1860
1861 tcaagatgctttgcagatctctgatgtggttatggcctccctgttaaggatgttccaaaag 1920
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3001 cattagcttcaagatgatggcacctataaaaccgctgcccgaagttaaat 3060

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3061 taccctggtgaaccgcattgaactgaaaggtattgatttttaagaagatggcaacattct 3120  
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3181 gaaaaatggcatcaaagcgaactttaaaatccgtcacaacgtggaagatggtagcgtgca 3240  
3241 gctggcggatcattatcagcagaataccccgattggtgatggccccggtgctgctgccgga 3300  
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3361 tatggtgctgctggaatttgttaccgcccgcgggcattaccacggtatggatgaactgta 3420  
3421 taaaggcagccaccatcatcatcaccattaaGACGTCGGTACCCTCGAGTCTGGTAAAGA 3480  
3481 AACCGCTGCTGCGAAATTTGAACGCCAGCACATGGACTCGTCTACTAGCGCAGCTTAATT 3540  
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3601 GGTCTTGAGGGTTTTTTTGGCTGAAACCTCAGGCATTTGAGAAGCACACGGTCCACATGCT 3660  
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4381 GATCAAAGCTCGCCGCGTTGTTTCATCAAGCCTTACGGTCACCGTAACCAGCAAATCAAT 4440  
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6781 GGCGCTATCATGCCATACCGCGAAAGGTTTTGCGCCATTCGATGGTGTCCGGGATCTCGA 6840  
6841 CGCTCTCCCTTATGCGACTCCTGCATTAGGAAATTAATACGACTCACTATA 6891

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