

Data Sheet

USAID Mission:	Panama
Program Title:	Ruling Justly
Pillar:	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Strategic Objective:	525-021
Proposed FY 2004 Obligation:	\$2,241,000 ESF
Prior Year Unobligated:	\$0
Proposed FY 2005 Obligation:	\$3,000,000 ESF
Year of Initial Obligation:	2004
Year of Final Obligation:	2008

Summary: USAID's new rule of law and governance program consolidates and continues the momentum gained in the current justice reform program. In addition to rule of law, the new program will incorporate a governance component to address transparency and accountability in both the judicial system and public management, which are critical to strengthening democracy and promoting economic growth in Panama. The goals of this program are to: 1) improve access to justice and alternative dispute resolution; 2) increase accountability and transparency in public management; and 3) strengthen administration of justice at the community level and in defense of the environment.

This strategic objective, which is part of the new Panama Country Plan under the Central America and Mexico Regional Strategy, is in the design phase. Completion and approval are expected in spring/summer 2004.

Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

FY 2004 Program:

Rule of law (\$1,241,000 ESF). USAID plans to focus technical assistance and training on: policy dialogue to promote legal and institutional reforms to improve operations of judicial institutions; promote use of oral proceedings and administrative reforms to speed up case processing; and increase the quantity and timeliness of cases resolved. USAID will provide technical assistance to improve investigation and prosecution of judicial corruption, assist the Public Ministry's Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office to present better cases for trial, and assist the Honor Tribunal (Disciplinary Committee) of the Panamanian Bar Association to investigate allegations of unethical conduct of practicing lawyers. USAID also intends to provide technical assistance and training to the Solicitor General's Office to strengthen administration of justice at municipal and lower, district council levels. To complement the Panama Canal Watershed and environmental management programs, USAID plans to address problems in administration of justice related to environmental law and regulations. This activity will respond to serious unaddressed problems of illegal logging, hunting, and waste disposal in both protected and unprotected areas of Panama. Contracts and grants will be competed.

Government transparency and accountability (\$1,000,000 ESF). USAID plans to fund technical assistance and training to strengthen civil society capacity to provide government oversight and advocate for reforms needed to improve judicial processes, governance, and respect for human rights. In addition, USAID is considering strengthening a nascent public employee inter-institutional anti-corruption network and training journalists and non-governmental organizations in investigation of and reporting on corruption. Contracts and grants will be competed.

FY 2005 Program:

Rule of law (\$2,000,000 ESF). USAID plans to continue the activities described above to strengthen the rule of law in Panama.

Government transparency and accountability (\$1,000,000 ESF). USAID plans to continue the activities described above to improve government oversight, advocate for reforms, and address corruption in Panama.

Performance and Results: Although this strategic objective will not begin until late FY 2004, elements of this strategy are a follow on to the previous strategy. USAID's administration of justice program has succeeded in making pre-trial detention a public issue. In FY 2003, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms gained ground as an efficient way to resolve disputes, the judicial registry increased timely access to court decisions, and the quality of administrative justice improved at the community level. The Supreme Court of Justice, the Public Defenders Institute, the Judicial School, and the Citizens Alliance for Justice developed institutional foundations for strategic planning and action. The stage is set for fundamental changes in the Panamanian justice system. By the end of FY 2004, USAID expects to have completed the following results: install a case tracking system in the civil and commercial Supreme Court chambers; publish operational actions plans for the Supreme Court's Judicial School and the Public Defender's Office; extend alternative dispute resolution to two new mediation centers; develop a code of ethics for judges; and prepare and implement an ethics training course for government officials.

By program completion, USAID expects that national and local-level government institutions and courts will be more accountable and managed more transparently; citizens and businesses will have better access to justice and alternative dispute resolution; and citizens will have more voice in determining public policy.

US Financing in Thousands of Dollars

Panama

525-021 Ruling Justly	ESF
Through September 30, 2002	
Obligations	0
Expenditures	0
Unliquidated	0
Fiscal Year 2003	
Obligations	0
Expenditures	0
Through September 30, 2003	
Obligations	0
Expenditures	0
Unliquidated	0
Prior Year Unobligated Funds	
Obligations	0
Planned Fiscal Year 2004 NOA	
Obligations	2,241
Total Planned Fiscal Year 2004	
Obligations	2,241
Proposed Fiscal Year 2005 NOA	
Obligations	3,000
Future Obligations	19,000
Est. Total Cost	24,241