

Data Sheet

USAID Mission:	Central Asian Republics Regional
Program Title:	Democratic Culture and Institutions
Pillar:	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Strategic Objective:	176-0211
Proposed FY 2004 Obligation:	\$207,000 FSA
Prior Year Unobligated:	\$721,000 FSA
Proposed FY 2005 Obligation:	\$150,000 FSA
Year of Initial Obligation:	2001
Year of Final Obligation:	FY 2006

Summary: Regional funds augment USAID's democracy efforts throughout Central Asia. Specifically, regional funds are utilized to bring together individuals and organizations working to create stronger and more sustainable civic organizations as a way of strengthening democratic culture among citizens and target institutions.

Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

FY 2004 Program:

Civic Organizations (\$207,000 FSA, \$120,602 FSA carryover). Regional funds will support institutional grants for leading Central Asian NGOs. The institutional grant fund will provide direct assistance to more mature Central Asian NGOs. USAID's implementing partners, along with the NGO resource center networks in each of the five Central Asian countries, will establish and manage a grant fund that will award grants up to \$25,000. Grant funds cover basic operational costs of leading NGOs. Grantees will be selected by a review panel comprised of NGO experts from each of the five Central Asian countries.

These institutional grants address two main shortcomings in donor-funded civil society programs. By providing institutional support, rather than support for a concrete project, the grant fund will alleviate the often frantic "grant-chasing" that Central Asian NGOs are forced to engage in to survive. Additionally, by creating and empowering an international (five-country) committee of local NGO experts to review grant proposals, this approach will break new ground in terms of its participatory nature and transparency. It is expected that these grants will be accompanied by a package of targeted technical assistance from USAID's civil society implementers. Grantees may be required to work, as a part of their program, with smaller organizations, to ensure that their expertise is shared with the less advanced part of the sector. Principal grantees: International Research and Exchanges Board (prime), the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (sub), and Partners for Democratic Change (sub).

Political Processes and Institutions (\$600,000 FSA prior year recoveries). Regional funds will support activities surrounding elections that will take place throughout the region. Given the political sensitivity of elections, the actual activities to be undertaken will depend largely upon the political will in each country for the establishment of competitive elections. Activities may include grants to NGOs and independent media outlets for activities related to voter education, the promotion of public discussions concerning socio-economic issues within the framework of elections, the production of candidate debates, and the establishment of transparent elections through watchdogs and election monitors. Depending upon the political will within each country's government, funds may also support activities related to the election commissions' administration of elections.

FY 2005 Program:

Civic Organizations (\$150,000 FSA). USAID will use FY 2005 funds to continue supporting the institutional grant program for Central Asian NGOs. These institutional grants will be awarded on a quarterly basis. It is anticipated that each quarter will focus on a set of themes, which may include: gender, environment, students and youth, and civil society advocacy. In awarding these grants, the

review panel will evaluate the overall mandate and mission of the applying organizations, and their likely ability to serve in a leading advocacy role in their community. Additionally, applicants will need to demonstrate that the organization is committed to developing a civil society. Principal grantees: the International Research and Exchange Board (prime), the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (sub), and Partners for Democratic Change (sub).

Performance and Results: Programs supported with regional funds complemented USAID's country-specific activities. Specifically, regional funds supported a Women's Organizational and Leadership Training Program to enhance the knowledge, competence, and skills of Central Asian women. Through this program, approximately 25 women from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan participated in a training exchange program in Haifa, Israel. Many of the participants were selected with the help of USAID implementing partners throughout the region or work directly with partner organizations. For example, one of the Tajik participants is the director of the Dushanbe Civil Society Support Center, which is a recipient of USAID grant funds. Participants received training on effective communication and organization, NGO management, leadership skills, strategic planning, and mobilization of community support. Additionally, program participants visited many Israeli non-governmental organizations and government agencies. By program's end, there will be stronger and more sustainable civic organizations.

In 2003, our regional media initiative facilitated a news exchange between television stations throughout the region, resulting in a weekly program, which independent stations were allowed to broadcast free of charge. The project had the dual purpose of providing technical support and programming to independent television stations in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. A production staff funded by USAID assisted stations in developing and producing their best stories, which were then edited into a news magazine format, covering all of Central Asia. The end product was sent back to each station for broadcast. A recent assessment of USAID media projects in the region found that both independent stations and viewers thought this project was very valuable since it provided one of the only sources of news on all of Central Asia. With access only to local news and news re-broadcast from Russia, most Central Asians have little idea of events taking place in neighboring countries.