



LAC-IEE-04-69

ENVIRONMENTAL THRESHOLD DECISION

Project Location: Caribbean Region

Project Title: HIV Transmission Reduced in Target Countries in Most-At-Risk Populations and Impact of HIV/AIDS Mitigated in the Region

Project Number: 538-010

Funding: US\$ 18,500,000

Life of SO: FY 2005-2009

IEE Prepared by: Joan Taffe, USAID/Jamaica

Recommended Threshold Decision: Categorical Exclusion/
Negative Determination with Conditions

Bureau Threshold Decision: Concur with Recommendation

Comments:

A **Categorical Exclusion** is issued to those proposed activities for activities described under IRs 2 and 3 in the attached IEE, involving education, technical assistance, training and others identified as activities that do “not have an effect on the natural or physical environment,” pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2 (c)(2)(i), (iii), (v), and (xiv).

A **Negative Determination, with conditions** is issued for on-the-ground IR1 activities involving handling and transport of clinical samples and disposal of medical wastes. All best management practices (BMPs), mitigation measures, and guidelines recommended by the “2002 Environmental Guidelines” will be implemented. The use of the Guidelines as well as USAID’s continual monitoring shall ensure that no significant negative impacts will occur.

At the end of each fiscal year, the implementing agent as part of its regular reporting requirement will include a section of its annual report which will provide the results of the use of the 2002 Environmental Guidelines. The Mission Environmental Officer and Regional Environmental

Advisor will conduct spot checks to verify that proper clinical sample and waste plans are in place under all implementing agreements to ensure that all activities are implemented in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner in full accordance with all salient Agency and USG policies and regulations.

CTOs are responsible for making sure environmental requirements are met. It is the responsibility of the SO Team to ensure that the SOAG and MAARDs for contracts and grants contain specific instructions to this effect.

Date
George R. Thompson, P.E.
Bureau Environmental Officer
Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

- Copy to : Karen Turner, Director, USAID/Jamaica
- Copy to : Howard Batson, MEO, USAID/Jamaica
- Copy to : Joan Taffe, USAID/Jamaica
- Copy to : Joan Atkinson, USAID/Jamaica
- Copy to : Mike Donald, REA
- Copy to : Dan Riley, LAC/CAR
- Copy to : IEE File

Attachment: IEE

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INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EXAMINATION

Project Number

Project Location: Caribbean Region
Project Title: Enhanced Response to the Caribbean HIV/AIDS Epidemic
Project Number: 538-010
Funding: US\$12,421,000
Life of SO: FY 2005-2009
IEE Prepared by: Joan Taffe, USAID/Jamaica
Clearance: Joan Atkinson, HIV Technical Specialist, CRP
Recommended Threshold Decision: Categorical Exclusion/
Negative Determination with Conditions

CONCURRENCE

Howard Batson
Mission Environmental Officer
USAID/Jamaica

MISSION DIRECTOR'S
DECISION

Approved: _____
Karen D. Turner

Date: _____

LAC BUREAU
ENVIRONMENTAL
OFFICER'S DECISION

Approved: _____
George Thompson

Date: _____

Background

AIDS is currently the leading cause of death in the 15-44 year old age group in the English-speaking Caribbean and is reversing the gains in life expectancy achieved in previous decades. As recently as November 2003, the Caribbean Epidemiology Center (CAREC) estimated that 109,395 people were living with HIV/AIDS in 21 Caribbean countries, excluding Haiti and the Dominican Republic. If Haiti and the Dominican Republic are added, this number swells to over 400,000. UNAIDS estimates that at the country level, regional HIV prevalence rates range between 2.0% to 2.4%. The Caribbean region is frequently cited as having the second highest seroprevalence rates in the world and the highest rates in the Americas.

The goal of this five-year, and approximately US\$12,421,000, regional HIV/AIDS strategy is to enhance the Caribbean Region's response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This will be accomplished by: (1) increasing access to HIV prevention and treatment services, (2) improving the availability and use of accurate and reliable information on HIV/AIDS, and (3) expanding access to prevention interventions to most-at-risk-populations (MARPs) by providing targeted technical assistance in the nine eastern Caribbean countries. Under the auspices of CARICOM, USAID will continue to work in partnership with regional organizations and forums such as CAREC and the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP) to implement this enhanced response to the Caribbean HIV/AIDS epidemic program throughout the life of the strategy from FY 2005-2009.

Program Description

The program will primarily address regional issues with some targeted country-level assistance to nine nations of the eastern Caribbean – St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname – to address individual country issues.

Intermediate Result 1: *Expanded access to prevention and treatment services*

Technical assistance will be provided to increase the number of HIV-specialty trained health care providers and public health professionals in the areas of voluntary counseling and testing, prevention of mother to child transmission, and delivery of care and treatment to those infected with HIV. As much as possible, training will be conducted through the Caribbean HIV/AIDS Regional Training Initiative (CHART). USAID will continue to work closely with CDC and local partners such as the University of the West Indies and Ministries of Health on the growth and expansion of CHART and, funding permitting, improved service delivery at the point of care. Crosscutting themes to be integrated into training include stigma and discrimination and improving monitoring and evaluation capacity to accurately measure and report on service delivery. Specific training will depend on the human capacity needs assessment that is currently underway. Through

these efforts, USAID hopes to achieve an increase in the percentage of people who voluntarily receive HIV testing and an increase in the percentage of people with advanced HIV infection who are receiving anti-retroviral therapy.

Intermediate Result 2: Improved availability and use of accurate and reliable information on HIV/AIDS.

Technical assistance will be primarily provided directly to the nine target countries, with some assistance to those regional organizations responsible for overall surveillance, monitoring and reporting on a regional level. Additional technical assistance will be provided for other data collection exercises to further enhance programming, such as ethnographic mapping of MARP, mapping of intra-regional mobility patterns, behavioral surveillance surveys with serosurveys, and health facility surveys to document the delivery of HIV prevention and treatment services. As a result of these activities, USAID hopes to improve the availability and accuracy of information on HIV/AIDS on both country and regional levels.

Intermediate Result 3: Expanded access to risk reduction behavior change interventions in targeted countries.

Building upon previous years of USAID-supported assistance to strengthen NGO capacity in the eastern Caribbean, technical assistance will be provided directly to the nine target countries, specifically to NGOs and informal networks to implement prevention and behavior change interventions to most-at-risk populations. Integrated within these activities will be referral mechanisms to prevention, care and treatment services within the country or the nearest country where services are available. The emphasis will be on achieving results in terms of behavior change and, ultimately, reductions in HIV infections.

Program Implementation

This RSO is managed within the Mission by a US Direct Hire who will be coordinating and supervising the work of implementing partners. Local implementing partners for HIV/AIDS training and service delivery will be determined by a competitive bid process and awarded through a Cooperative Agreement, and a U.S. identified implementing partner for HIV/AIDS information development will be funded through the field support mechanism and will work closely with Caribbean partners. Technical assistance will also be provided to NGOs and informal networks, through field support mechanisms administered out of the Global Health Bureau, in the nine target countries, to implement targeted prevention and behavior change interventions for most at-risk populations.

Environmental Impact and Mitigation Measures

Activities described under IRs 2 and 3 will primarily involve technical assistance for improving the availability and accuracy of information on HIV/AIDS at country and regional levels, as well technical assistance to NGOs and informal networks to help strengthen their capacity for prevention and behavior change interventions. These activities involve education, training,

information gathering and other capacity building technical assistance which will have no impact on the natural or physical environment, and therefore qualify for a Categorical Exclusion under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i),(iii),(v), and (xiv).

Activities described under IR1, for the *expanded access to prevention and treatment services*, will address training needs, and may be extended to service delivery issues. It is anticipated that this activity may therefore involve the preparation, handling and transportation of medical samples and the disposal of medical wastes, which could therefore have an impact on the environment if not properly handled. As such, all mitigation measures, guidelines and best management practices (BMPs) for medical waste handling and disposal, as outlined in the “2002 Environmental Guidelines for Development Activities in Latin America and the Caribbean (Task order no. 1627)” will be strictly implemented. These guidelines were prepared for USAID/LAC Bureau under the Environmental Policy and Institutional Strengthening Indefinite Quantity Contract (EPIQ), and approved by USAID.

The applicability of the 2002 Environmental Guidelines to RSO10 HIV/AIDS program activities will be closely evaluated by the operating unit as well as the Mission Environmental Officer, and the capacity of the implementing partner to adhere to the Guidelines with effective mechanisms for monitoring and mitigating potential environmental impacts will be carefully assessed prior to initiating any activity.

Recommendations for Threshold Decision

Categorical Exclusion:- Pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i), (iii), (v) and (xiv), a *Categorical Exclusion* is recommended for activities described under IRs 2 and 3 above, involving the provision of technical assistance, education, training, information gathering, and others as identified in the IEE as activities that do “not have an effect on the natural or physical environment”.

Negative Determination with Conditions – A *Negative Determination, with conditions* is recommended for IR1 activities which may involve the handling and transport of clinical samples and disposal of medical wastes. All best management practices, mitigation measures and guidelines recommended by the “2002 Environmental Guidelines” will be implemented.