



LAC-IEE-04-68

ENVIRONMENTAL THRESHOLD DECISION

Project Location: Jamaica

Project Title: Improved Health Status among Vulnerable Groups

Project Number: 532-011

Funding: US\$21,500,000

Life of Project: FY 2005- 2009

IEE Prepared by: Stephanie Smith, 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 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 activities involving the handling and disposal of medical and sanitary waste within project areas. 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 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 : Stephanie Smith, USAID/Jamaica
- Copy to : Margaret Sancho, 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 532-0184

Project Location: Jamaica

Project Title: Improved Health Status among Vulnerable Groups

Project Number: 532-011

Funding: US\$21,500,000

Life of Project: FY 2005- 2009

IEE Prepared by: Stephanie Smith, USAID/Jamaica

Clearance: Margaret Sancho, Director, Office of General Development
(Health and Education)

Recommended
Threshold Decision: Categorical Exclusion/Negative Determination with
conditions

CONCURRENCE

Howard Batson
Mission Environment Officer
USAID/Jamaica

MISSION DIRECTOR'S
DECISION

Approved: _____
Karen Turner

Date: _____

LAC BUREAU
ENVIRONMENTAL
OFFICER'S DECISION

Approved: _____
George Thompson

Date: _____

Background

The Government of Jamaica (GOJ) established the National HIV/AIDS/STI Program in the late 1980s and Parish AIDS Committees have been formed in all 14 parishes. Although the National Strategic Plan has indicated the need for a multisectoral approach, the response remains mainly in the health sector. The National AIDS Program is implementing the 2002-2006 strategic plan funded by the World Bank and USAID. Resources are reasonably well balanced between prevention, care and support, and capacity building, but most of the prevention resources go to broad-based programming rather than being targeted on high-risk sub-groups.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) is developing a new “Healthy Lifestyles” strategy that emphasizes early intervention to encourage young people to adopt healthy behaviors in five areas: physical activity, eating behavior, smoking and other substance abuse, violence and injury, and sexual behavior. A cross-cutting theme in the MOH strategy is the need to strengthen self-esteem, resiliency and life skills.

USAID’s current health program focuses on adolescent reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. The new health strategic objective for the period 2005-2009 - *Improved health status among youth and most vulnerable groups* – will continue to address reproductive health and the HIV/AIDS challenge, while expanding the focus to include substance abuse and violence. The target groups continue to be youth, those sub-groups that are especially at risk for HIV infection – commercial sex workers (CSW) and men who have sex with men (MSM) – and people living with HIV/AIDS.

Program Description

Key activities proposed under the new health strategic objective include promoting healthy behaviors among youth. In addition to focusing on reproductive health, the healthy lifestyles component will address drug abuse and violence among teens, since prior program evaluations have indicated the need a holistic approach to adolescent health to truly improve their overall well-being. In addition, the program will seek to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS among youth and other high risk sub populations through support to the government’s National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS, building the capacity of the NGO sector and encouraging multi-sectoral involvement in HIV/AIDS efforts through the creation of public/private partnerships.

IR 1: Healthy Behaviors among Youth Increased

Program interventions to address healthy behaviors among youth include strengthening the capacity of the MOH to reduce high-risk sexual behavior among the adolescent populace and to build on the efforts to provide quality services and interventions related to healthy lifestyles. This will also include the provision of "youth friendly" services and subsequently assessing their impact. The program will also seek to enhance the capacity of NGOs to be self-sustaining in delivery of healthy lifestyle activities. Programming will aim to develop and disseminate relevant educational information/messages to youth (by youth themselves), as well as increasing the involvement of the community and focusing

on its inherent responsibility for promoting healthy lifestyles among adolescents. Program activities will support the implementation of policies related to reproductive health rights within the ambit of healthy lifestyles.

IR 2: Impact of HIV/AIDS mitigated among most at-risk and sub-populations

Programming under the HIV/AIDS component will focus on a number of areas. Efforts to enhance the availability of information and data for addressing risk behaviors and needs of vulnerable people will be increased. To further this aspect of the strategy, technical assistance will be provided to train key MOH staff and implementing partner staff in using data for decision making to improve prevention and care, and support service delivery. Community mobilization will also be an integral part of identifying priority interventions and behavior change needs. Access to Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) *plus* and PMTCT (Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission) *plus* services will be expanded in order to insure a secure “entrance point” into the care and support system for those in need.

Technical assistance will support a package of staff training, linked to supervision and performance appraisal to address client-focused services, including the reduction of stigmatization by clinic staff and respect for human rights of PLWHA. Steps will also be taken to encourage the recognition of the different needs of clients representing both genders at different ages. Activities will promote free and open discussion about HIV/AIDS among Jamaica’s senior-most political, religious and other civil society leaders. Private sector agencies with a desire to become more involved in HIV/AIDS will be given direction and support to aid in development of public/private partnerships. These activities are aimed at increasing the number of involved organizations outside the health sector, including education, national security, finance and labor.

Program Implementation

The Health strategic objective will have three major implementation mechanisms. A contract will be solicited for the Healthy Lifestyles activity, and will serve as a follow-on to the Youth.now project. The Ministry of Health’s National HIV/STI prevention program will be the primary grantee for implementation of HIV/AIDS activities. In addition, field support will be utilized to carry out work with NGOs under the new HIV/AIDS strategy.

Environmental Impact and Mitigation Measures

Most components of this program are essentially training, counseling, media campaigns and technical assistance, having no negative impact on the physical environment or posing any significant risk on the welfare of the surrounding community as well as non-target organisms. Nevertheless, 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.

USAID/ J-CAR recognizes the capacity of past implementing partners (Futures Group Int. and International HIV/AIDS Alliance) as well as the Ministry of Health to implement BMPs and to mitigate potential environmental consequences resulting from activities that produce medical waste and its subsequent disposal. The applicability of the Environmental Guidelines to such activities will be evaluated prior to initiating activities by the Director of the Office of General Development USAID/J-CAR and the Environmental Officer. The evaluation shall include an assessment of the implementing partner's capacity to adhere to the guidelines with effective mechanisms for monitoring and mitigating potential environmental impacts. All partners will be required to adopt a proactive approach to responsible environmental management.

Recommendations for Threshold Decision

A **Categorical Exclusion** is recommended to those proposed activities 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 recommended for on-the-ground activities involving the handling and disposal of medical and sanitary waste within project areas. All best management practices (BMPs), mitigation measures, and guidelines recommended by the “2002 Environmental Guidelines” will be implemented.