



LAC-IEE-05-07

## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

**Activity Location:** LAC Regional

**Activity Title:** Support of Section 109a of the *Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996*

**Activity Number:** 509

**Life of Project Funding:** \$80 million

**Life of Project:** FY 1997 – FY 2008

**Reference IEEs;** LAC IEE-03-30, LAC IEE-00-09, LAC-IEE-98-3

**IEE Prepared by:** David Mutchler, USAID/LAC Cuba Program

**Recommended Threshold Decision:** Categorical Exclusion

**Bureau Threshold Decision:** Concur with Recommendation

**Comments:**

This is an amendment to LAC-IEE-03-30 (which in turn amended LAC-IEE-00-09 and LAC-IEE-98-03), expanding the Life of Project from FY 2005 to FY 2008, and LOP Funding from \$36 million to \$80 million. See attached activity description.

Pursuant to 22 CFR Section 216.2(c)(i) and (v), a Categorical Exclusion is granted to all proposed activities implemented in support of Section 109a of the *Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996* to the extent that they involve education, technical assistance or training programs, or the transfer of documents and information, and unless the proposed activities directly impact the environment (such as by the construction of facilities, etc.). For these activities potentially impacting the environment, a Supplemental Initial Environmental Examination must be submitted to the LAC Bureau Environmental Officer.

\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_

Victor Bullen  
Bureau Environmental Officer  
Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

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## **Program Description**

Throughout Latin America and the Caribbean--where all countries except Cuba have democratically elected governments--USAID is working with governments and civil society to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions. The overarching goal of U.S. policy toward Cuba is to promote the development of civil society and a peaceful transition to democracy on the island. To that end, U.S. policy interventions are proceeding on a multi faceted track:

- pressure on the regime for change through the comprehensive economic embargo and Libertad sanctions;
- outreach to the Cuban people;
- the promotion and protection of human rights;
- multilateral efforts to press for democracy; and
- migration accords to promote safe, orderly and legal migration.

In October 1995, President Clinton announced the first USAID grant aimed at promoting a democratic transition in Cuba. The grant supported Freedom House's program of dissemination of informational materials to people in Cuba, visits by external democratic activists to Cuba, publication and dissemination of materials written by democratic activists in Cuba, and modest humanitarian assistance to victims of repression.

The grant was authorized pursuant to the authority provided in the *Cuban Democracy Act* of 1992 (section 1705g), which allows the U.S. government (USG) to provide assistance "through appropriate nongovernmental organizations, for the support of individuals and organizations to promote nonviolent democratic change in Cuba."

The *Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act* of 1996 (section 109 (a)) further elaborates on the types of assistance and support the President is authorized to provide for individuals and independent nongovernmental organizations (NGO5) to support democracy-building efforts for Cuba, including:

- published and informational matter--such as books, videos, and cassettes--on transitions to democracy, human rights and market economies, to be made available to independent democratic groups in Cuba;
- humanitarian assistance to victims of political repression, as well as their families;
- support for democratic and human rights groups in Cuba; and
- support for visits and permanent deployment of independent international human rights monitors in Cuba.

*U.S. policy encourages U.S. NGOs and individuals to undertake humanitarian, informational and civil society building activities in Cuba with private funds, subject to applicable Treasury and Commerce Department regulations. Dozens of NGOs have been engaging in such activities over the last several years, with licensed humanitarian goods alone amounting to about \$150 million.*

In comparison, the level of planned TJS AID funding for section 109 activities in Cuba is quite limited (\$1.5 million in FY97 and \$2 m. in FY98) . These resources are not meant to be utilized as a marginal supplement for activities that are already being effectively undertaken through private initiative. Rather, *the intent of the USG is to support activities for which adequate private resources are not presently available* and which offer favorable prospects for serving a catalytic or leveraging role in promoting a peaceful transition.

To be considered for funding, a proposed activity must be consistent with overall U.S. policy toward Cuba and be deemed feasible in view of the present conditions of repression on the island. Factors to be considered in grant awards include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the extent to which the activity leverages additional assistance from non-USG sources;
- the ability of the NGO to adequately manage the activity and account for USAID grant funds;
- the extent to which the activity opens new avenues for promoting a peaceful democratic transition in Cuba; and
- the extent to which the activity builds capability/knowledge that will contribute to a peaceful transition once the process of political change has begun.

#### **Description of the Environmental Impact**

There is no potential of direct impact on the environment from anticipated program activities.

#### **Recommendation**

Pursuant to USAID environmental regulations expressed in 22 CFR Section 216.2(c) (2) (i) and (v), we request your approval for a Categorical Exclusion for activities under this program.

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION**

**Activity Location** : LAC Regional

**Activity Title** : Support of Section 109a of the *Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996*: Amendment 1

**Funding** : \$36 million

**Life of Project** : FY 97- 05

**IEE Prepared by** : Peter W. Amato, LAC/USAID Cuba Program

**Recommended Threshold Decision** : Categorical Exclusion

**Bureau Threshold Decision** : Concur with Recommendation

**Comments** :

This is an amendment to LAC-IEE-00-30, which in turn amended LAC-IEE-98-03.

Pursuant to 22 CFR Section 216.2(c)(i) and (v), a Categorical Exclusion is granted to all proposed activities implemented in support of Section 109a of the *Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996* to the extent that they involve education, technical assistance or training programs, or the transfer of documents and information, and unless the proposed activities directly impact the environment (such as by the construction of facilities, etc.). For these activities potentially impacting the environment, a Supplemental Initial Environmental Examination must be submitted to LAC CEO.

\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_

Paul des Rosiers  
Acting Bureau Environmental Officer  
Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

Copy to : David Mutchler, LAC/AA/Cuba

Copy to : Sue Hill, LAC/SPM

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**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION**

**Activity Location** : LAC Regional

**Activity Title** : Support of Section 109a of the *Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996*: Amendment 1

**Funding** : \$15.5 million

**Life of Project** : FY 97- 01

**IEE Prepared by** : Morris Israel, LAC/RSD/ENV

**Recommended Threshold Decision** : Categorical Exclusion

**Bureau Threshold Decision** : Concur with Recommendation

**Comments** :  
This is an amendment to LAC-IEE-98-03.

Pursuant to 22 CFR Section 216.2(c)(i) and (v), a Categorical Exclusion is granted to all proposed activities implemented in support of Section 109a of the *Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996* to the extent that they involve education, technical assistance or training programs, or the transfer of documents and information, and unless the proposed activities directly impact the environment (such as by the construction of facilities, etc.). For these activities potentially impacting the environment, a Supplemental Initial Environmental Examination must be submitted to LAC CEO.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Jeffrey J. Brokaw  
Bureau Environmental Officer  
Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

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**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION**

Project Location : LAC Regional

Program Title : Support of Section 109a of the *Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996*

Funding : \$3,500,000

Life of Project : FY 1997-1998

IEE Prepared by : David Mutchler, LAC/CAR

Recommended Threshold Decision: Categorical Exclusion

Bureau Threshold Decision : Concur with Recommendation

Comments

Pursuant to 22 CFR Section 216.2(c)(i) and (v), a Categorical Exclusion is granted to all proposed activities implemented in support of Section 109a of the *Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996* to the extent that they involve education, technical assistance or training programs, or the transfer of documents and information, and unless the proposed activities directly impact the environment (such as by the construction of facilities, etc.). For these activities potentially impacting the environment, a Supplemental Initial Environmental Examination must be submitted to LAC CEO.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief Environmental Officer  
 Bureau for Latin America  
 and the Caribbean

Jeffrey J. Brokaw

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