



LAC-IEE-05-24

ENVIRONMENTAL THRESHOLD DECISION

Activity Location: Nicaragua

Activity Title: Ruling Justly: More Responsive, Transparent Governance

Activity Number: 524-021

Funding: \$39,500,000 DA for 6 years plus \$8,000,000 (ESF)

Life-of-Activity: FY 2003 – FY 2008

IEE prepared by: Maritza Rivera, MEO, USAID/Nicaragua

Recommended Threshold Decision: Categorical Exclusion

Bureau Threshold Decision: Concur with Recommendation

Comments:

Pursuant to the following sections of 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2),

(i) Education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.);

(xiv) Studies, projects or programs intended to develop the capability of recipient countries to engage in development planning, except to the extent designed to result in activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.);

A **Categorical Exclusion** is issued for expansion of the Ruling Justly: More Responsive, Transparent Governance activity that fall into the above categories

_____Date_____

Victor H. Bullen
Bureau Environmental Officer
Bureau for Latin America & the Caribbean

Copy to: Alex Dickie, Director, USAID/Nicaragua

Copy to: Maritza Rivera, USAID/Nicaragua MEO

Copy to: Cristina Olive, USAID/Nicaragua SMA

Copy to; Michael Donald, Regional Environmental
Advisor, USAID/Guatemala

Copy to: David Jessee, LAC/CAM

Copy to: IEE File

Attachment: IEE

File: P:\LAC.RSD.PUB\RSDPUB\EES\Reg 216\IEE\IEE05\IEE05-24.CE(NI – Amend Ruling
justly IEE03-51).doc

USAID/NICARAGUA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AMENDMENT # 2 TO INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EXAMINATION (LAC-IEE-03-51)

SO Location: Nicaragua

SO Title: Ruling Justly: More Responsive, Transparent Governance

SO Number: 524-021

LOP Funding: US\$39,500,000 DA for 6 years plus \$8,000,000 (ESF)

Life of Project: FY03-FY08

Amendment Prepared by: Maritza Rivera, MEO, USAID/Nicaragua

Recommended Threshold Decision: Categorical Exclusion

Date Prepared: April 22, 2005

Summary Activity Description for Amendment

Background

Within the approved Central America and Mexico (CAM) Regional Strategy and the Nicaragua Country Plan, the Mission established a democracy and governance strategic objective of "Ruling Justly: More Responsive, Transparent Governance." Under this SO, USAID/Nicaragua will concentrate its efforts on strengthened rule of law and greater transparency and accountability of government.

As part of the rule of law activities, the Mission stated that it would provide support for a free and fair Nicaraguan Presidential election in 2006, only if Economic Support Funds (ESF) were made available for those activities. The LAC Bureau has since approved the Mission's request to include election activities under this SO, with expected additional funding of \$ 8.0 Million in ESF.

Activity Description

The purpose of this activity is to strengthen Nicaraguan democracy as the campaign for the next national election in November 2006 gets underway. USAID Nicaragua envisions support in the following main areas: election assessment, citizen participation/voter education/public awareness to enable minor parties and civil society to act as a check on the two-party duopoly, domestic and international election observation; support to strengthen elections administration, and post-election analysis.

Illustrative activities:

- Training workshops for CSO/NGO community on accessing and effectively utilizing information available under the law
- Workshops for journalists on accessing and effectively utilizing information available under the law
- Mobilizing civil society oversight for effective monitoring of electoral processes
- Coordinating the activities of domestic and international observers
- Enhancing party building skills of young political activists
- Poll watcher training
- Technical assistance to departmental and municipal authorities on the preparation of voter rolls and delivery of identification documents
- Voter registration
- Technical assistance to the CSE
- Support for domestic and international election observation
- Implementation of a "quick count"
- Training of party and civil society groups in election oversight
- Voter education/public awareness campaign
- Support to strengthen elections administration

Recommended Threshold Decision:

USAID/Nicaragua recommends a *Categorical Exclusion* for these training and technical assistance activities that are proposed under this amendment because they will not have a negative impact on the environment, in accordance with 22 CFR 216, paragraph 216.2(c)(2)(i).

Mission Director

Concurrence:

Date:;

CLEARANCE SHEET

**AMENDMENT # 2 TO INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EXAMINATION
(LAC-IEE-03-51)**

Drafter: TAO: MRivera: 20/07/2005

Clearances:

TAO:SOlive:	In draft	Date:	7/20/05
A/ODI:TLGeiger:	In draft	Date:	7/21/05
SMA:COlive:	In draft	Date:	7/21/05
REA Clearance			
REAIG-CAP:MDonald	in draft	Date:	4/22/05

*Original page with signatures not attached.



LAC-IEE-03-51

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Activity Location : Nicaragua

Activity Title : Ruling Justly: More responsive, transparent governance

Activity Number : 524-021

Funding : \$39,500,000 (life of Strategic Objective)

Life of Activity : FY03 – FY06

IEE Prepared by : Steve Olive, MEO, USAID/Nicaragua

Recommended Threshold Decision : Categorical Exclusion

Bureau Threshold Decision : Concur with Recommendation

Comments:

This Strategic Objective will use technical assistance and training for the Government of Nicaragua to improve the judicial system and increase the government's accountability and transparency. It also seeks to strengthen public and private institutions in ethics, accountability, procurement transparency and disclosure.

Pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i) and (xiv), a **Categorical Exclusion** is granted to this Strategic Objective, whose activities involve education, technical assistance and training, and support to develop the capability of the recipient country in development planning, as described in the IEE, that will not have an impact on the natural or physical environment.

_____ Date _____

J. Paul des Rosiers
Acting Bureau Environmental Officer
Bureau for Latin America & the Caribbean

Copy to : James Vermillion, Director,
USAID/Nicaragua

Copy to : Steve Olive, MEO, USAID/Nicaragua

Copy to : Michael Donald, REA

Copy to : Anne Dix, Acting REA

Copy to : Sher Plunkett, LAC/CAM

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INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EXAMINATION

Activity Location: Nicaragua

Activity Title: More responsive, transparent governance

Activity Number: 524-021

Funding: US\$39,000,000 for 6 years

Prepared By: Steve Olive, MEO, USAID/Nicaragua

Date: 23 July 2003

Recommended for Threshold Decision

Based on the attached description, USAID/Nicaragua recommends a Categorical Exclusion for training and technical assistance activities that will be implemented under this Activity, which will not have a negative impact on the environment.

Concurrence: _____ **Date:** _____

James Vermillion, Ph.D
Mission Director

Background

USAID/Nicaragua will begin to implement its new Country Plan which is part of the new Central American Regional Strategy from FY03 to FY08. The Mission will implement activities under three Strategic Objectives.

Activity Description

USAID/Nicaragua seeks to help the Government of Nicaragua to rule justly and be more responsive and transparent in governance. It seeks to strengthen the rule of law in Nicaragua by improving access to justice and transparency and fairness in the justice system. Through technical assistance and training, USAID will work to strengthen the justice, including implementation of justice reforms and improving public prosecution and defense functions. USAID will promote increased access to justice through alternative dispute resolution and conflict prevention efforts in the short term and in the long term, through the establishment of human rights guarantees.

Illustrative Activities:

- Technical assistance and training to support public prosecution and defense functions;
- Technical assistance and training to help ensure effective implementation of the new Criminal Justice reforms;
- Technical assistance and training to establish and improve alternative dispute resolution mechanisms (cross-sector with IR 2.1);
- Technical assistance and policy dialogue to improve the legal framework needed to establish the rule of law.

USAID/Nicaragua also seeks to increase the transparency and accountability of the Government of Nicaragua (GON). USAID will support legal reforms that are key for government accountability and transparency. USAID also will consider opportunities for strengthening key government institutions based on the existence of adequate political will for their reform and de-politicization. In support of the trade negotiations in Central America, USAID plans to initiate assistance for legal reforms related to transparency that is needed to facilitate a better investment climate for economic growth and to improve Nicaragua's competitiveness.

Illustrative Activities:

- Technical assistance for legal reform on issues related to transparency (i.e. judicial career law, civil service law, freedom of information law, public disclosure, and codes of ethics);
- Support for watchdog functions, investigative reporting, advocacy and public awareness;
- Strengthening of public and private institutions in ethics and accountability; improvement of procurement transparency; and strengthened disclosure;
- Technical assistance and training for prosecutors of corruption cases.

Discussion and Determination

A **Categorical Exclusion** is recommended for these training and technical assistance activities that are proposed under this Strategic Objective Grant Agreement because they will not have a negative impact on the environment, in accordance with 22 CFR 216, paragraph 216.2(c)(2)(i).

If during activity implementation it becomes apparent that there may be environmental impacts not contemplated in the IEE, or if activities not covered by the IEE are included in final program design, a supplemental IEE shall be submitted to the LAC BEO for approval.

INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EXAMINATION

Activity Location: Nicaragua
Activity Title: More responsive, transparent governance
Activity Number: 524-021
Funding: US\$39,000,000 for 6 years
Prepared By: Steve Olive, MEO, USAID/Nicaragua
Date: 23 July 2003

Mission Clearance

Karen Anderson, DI _____
Margaret Kromhout, SMA _____
Susan Brems, DMD _____

REA Clearance

Michael McDonald, REA/G-CAP _____