



LAC-IEE-04-42

### CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

**Location:** Panama, Central America, Colombia and Ecuador

**Title:** Organization of American States, Forum on Environmental Law  
Public International Organization Letter Grant

**Grant Number:** LAC-G-00-01-00008

**Funding:** \$100,000

**FY's:** 2004-2005

**IEE Prepared by:** John L. Garrison, LAC/RSD/E

**Recommendation:** Categorical Exclusion

**Bureau Decision:** Concur with Recommendation

**Comments:** A **Categorical Exclusion** is issued for the OAS Environmentally Sustainable Trade project pursuant to 22 CFR Section 216.2 (c)(2)(i) and (iii).

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

Copy to : Cecily Mango, Director, LAC/RSD

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Attachment: IEE

## Initial Environmental Examination

Location: Panama, Central America, Colombia and Ecuador

Title: Organization of American States, Forum on Environmental Law  
Public International Organization Letter Grant

Grant Number: LAC-G-00-01-00008

Funding: \$100,000

FY's: 2004-2005

IEE Prepared by: John L. Garrison, LAC/RSD/E

Date Prepared: July 21, 2004

Recommendation: Categorical Exclusion

### Background and Activity Description

This IEE is for a Public International Organization Grant to the Organization of American States Inter-American Forum on Environmental Law (OAS) to fund the OAS Environmentally Sustainable Trade project. Under this Letter Grant, the OAS will:

1. undertake an environmental assessment of free trade in Panama;
2. hold a regional trade and environment workshop with government officials and civil society in Central America; and
3. national workshops in Colombia and Peru to review and disseminate findings of environmental assessments to be conducted in each of these two countries with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).<sup>1</sup>

**Panama Environmental Assessment.** The environmental assessment of free trade in Panama will explore to what extent domestic markets are likely to change as trade barriers fall, and what environmental consequences can be anticipated from these economically driven effects. The assessment will also examine how legal and institutional frameworks (domestic and regional) can address these changes. The analysis is intended to better place national governments and other actors in a position of making policy decisions that could make trade expansion more sustainable.

**Trade and Environment Workshops.** The main purpose of the regional Central American workshop is to present the results and lessons from ongoing trade and environment work in the

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<sup>1</sup> Work in the Andean region will be supported by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

region. This work includes an environmental assessment for Costa Rica and Guatemala and a scoping exercise of environmental capacity building needs related to trade liberalization in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua.<sup>2</sup> The workshops in Colombia and Peru will provide civil society and industry groups to comment on the draft OAS environmental assessment for the two countries.

### **Recommended Environmental Threshold Decision**

The educational, technical assistance, training and institutional strengthening activities to be implemented under each of the above areas will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment. To the contrary, the technical assistance and training provided under the Letter Grant will help countries to better identify and manage potentially negative environmental impacts that may result from entering into free trade agreements. Therefore, the Letter Grant qualifies for a categorical exclusion under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i) and (iii), respectively, “Education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.);” and “Analyses, studies, academic or research workshops and meetings.”

Approved:

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Cecily Mango, Director, LAC/RSD

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<sup>2</sup> The activities included in this proposal would contribute to address needs presented by OAS Member States through the Central America Free Trade Area (CAFTA) capacity building group and the Hemispheric Cooperation Program (HCP) of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).