



LAC-IEE-04-32

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Activity Location : LAC Regional

Activity Title : ADCOH: TA to support free trade initiatives throughout the Western Hemispheric region

Activity Number : 598-021

Funding : \$9,941,000

Life of Activity : continuing

IEE Prepared by : Janet Rudasill-Allen, LAC/SPO

Recommended Threshold Decision : Categorical Exclusion

Bureau Threshold Decision : Concur with Recommendation

Comments:

This activity will provide consultations to assist LAC countries in preparing and implementing comprehensive trade capacity building strategies on a national and regional basis. Pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i), a **Categorical Exclusion** is issued for this activity. It is evident that it will not have an impact on the natural or physical environment.

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

Copy to : Kermit Moh, Acting Director, LAC/RSD

Copy to : William Brands, LAC/RSD/BBEG

Copy to : Janet Rudasill-Allen, LAC/SPO

Copy to : IEE File

REQUEST FOR A CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Activity Location : LAC Regional

Activity Title : ADCOH: TA to support free trade initiatives throughout the Western Hemispheric region

Activity Number : 598-021

Funding : \$9,941,000

Life of Activity : continuing

IEE Prepared by : Janet Rudasill-Allen, LAC/SPO

Recommended Threshold Decision : Categorical Exclusion

Date Prepared : June 17, 2004

RECOMMENDATION FOR THRESHOLD DECISION:

Pursuant to 22 CFR part 216.2 (c)(2)(i), a Categorical Exclusion is permitted for “Education, technical assistance, or training programs, except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment...” Consultations to assist LAC countries in preparing and implementing comprehensive trade capacity building strategies on a national and regional basis entails technical assistance that does not effect the physical environment. Therefore the SO team requests a **Categorical Exclusion** for this activity.

BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

The Advancing Development Cooperation Opportunities in the Hemisphere (ADCOH) Strategic Objective provides the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) with the programming vehicle to respond to special development opportunities, foreign policy issues, legislative earmarks, and initiatives not presently covered by LAC Bureau strategic objectives. Activities under this strategic objective support: (a) innovative approaches to promoting cooperation among regional partners; (b) organizational strengthening efforts designed to improve the regional capacity to carry out development efforts; (c) special initiatives that respond to foreign policy issues but do not fall under an approved strategic plan; (d) organizations with the objective of expanding the USAID network of partners working on development problems in LAC. This Strategic Objective was approved in FY 2001.

DISCUSSION: The LAC Bureau currently has \$9.941 million set aside for the Hemisphere Cooperation Program. These funds will expire at the end of FY 2005. Trade liberalization in Latin America and the Caribbean serves U.S. interests by promoting economic growth, openness,

and democracy. The resultant stability and prosperity will strengthen our own security, increase economic opportunities for U.S. businesses and workers, and reinforce cooperation to address common problems. Funding for trade capacity building through the HCP and other programs is helping countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) prepare for negotiations, implement obligations assumed by trade agreements, and cushion the economic transition to free trade. This allocation of funding is predicated on the urgent need for resources to respond to capacity building requirements in Haiti, the smaller economies of CARICOM countries and Paraguay, and efforts to support new FTA(s) with Central America and the Dominican Republic, Panama, and the Andean region. The present activity is to fund the consultation process which is basically technical assistance.

Pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2 (c) (2) (i) a **Categorical Exclusion** is requested for these activities.

Approved:

Kermit Moh
Acting Director, LAC/RSD

Date:

Clearances:

William Brands, LAC/RSD/BBEG _____

Date _____