



SOP 1, Template 2: Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE)

**United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Serbia
Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE)**

Program/Project/Activity Data:

Activity/Project Name:	Advancing Equity and Equality of Marginalized Groups Activity in Serbia		
Assistance Objective:	Economic Growth		
Program Area:	Economic Opportunity		
Country(ies) and/or Operating Unit:	Serbia		
Originating Office:	USAID Serbia/ODEG	Date: 07/21/2021	
PAD Level RCE: Yes ☐ No ☒	DCN of Original RCE/IEE:		
RCE/IEE Amendment: Yes ☐ No ☒	DCN of Amendment(s):		
Supplemental RCE: Yes ☐ No ☒			
If Yes, Purpose of Amendment:			
DCN(s) of Related EA/IEE/RCE/ER(s):			
Implementation Start/End:		LOP: 1/1/2022 – 1/1/2027	
Funding Amount:		LOP Amount: [REDACTED]	
Contract/Award Number (if known):			
IEE Expiration Date (if any):		Reporting due dates (if any):	
Recommended Determination: Categorical Exclusion			
Additional Elements:			
Government to Government: ☐ Local Procurement: ☐ Donor Co-Funded: ☐			

1. Project and Activity Description**1.1 Purpose and Scope of RCE**

The purpose of this document is to establish that proposed Advancing Equity and Equality of Marginalized Groups Activity belong to classes of actions eligible for Categorical Exclusions as set out in Agency regulations (22 CFR 216.2(c)) and that there are no foreseeable significant direct or indirect impacts that would preclude them from receiving a Categorical Exclusion. Upon approval of this document, the Categorical Exclusions are affirmed for the project/activity. This analysis also documents the results of the project/activity level Climate Risk Management process in accordance with USAID policy (specifically, ADS 201 mandatory reference 201mal).

This RCE is a critical element of USAID's mandatory environmental review and compliance process meant to achieve environmentally sound activity design and implementation.

1.2 Project Overview

The overall purpose of this activity is to support various economic empowerment initiatives for marginalized communities so as to help advance Serbia's inclusive and sustainable development.

2. Project Description and Climate Risk Screening

Through this activity, USAID/Serbia will look to support a number of initiatives that advance equity and opportunities for select underserved communities in Serbia (youth, women, persons with disabilities, LGBTI, ethnic minorities) by addressing existing barriers, providing technical assistance, and engaging the private sector in identifying market-driven solutions. While the Mission hopes to support a wide range of approaches, the three priority areas of interest that will be support through an Annual Program Statement are:

1. **Improvement of economic skills and capacity development of select marginalized groups**
Illustrative examples of activities that may be supported include, but are not limited to:
 - Piloting capacity building platforms
 - Creating more opportunities for training, mentorship, internship
 - Advancing career guidance for marginalized groups
 - Engaging private sector in capacity development
 - Improving outreach to job seeking members of marginalized communities

2. **Increasing commitment to and public awareness of importance of inclusivity to economic development**
Illustrative examples of activities that may be supported include, but are not limited to:
 - Trainings for managers and staff;
 - Development and/or support of platforms that can connect applicants from MG and business
 - Private sector actors developing internal diversity/anti-discrimination policies/mechanism
 - Internship programs
 - Improving existing affirmative actions,
 - Cross sectoral PR campaigns
 - Expanding access to benefits
 - Promotion of success stories

3. **Improving prospects for individual business development (entrepreneurship)**
Illustrative examples of activities that may be supported include, but are not limited to:
 - Mobilizing individual investors, private sector resources, initiating dialogue with banks and government on existing and new programs and affirmative measures
 - Business development capacity building, mentoring
 - Connecting relevant stakeholders
 - Reforming legislative, regulatory, and policy frameworks to advance affirmative approaches to marginalized group entrepreneurship

The CDCS Climate Risk Screening did not identify any moderate or high risks for the IR 2.2: Equity of Disadvantaged Communities Increased. The activity design team, in consultation with the Climate Integration Lead, considered the potential effect of climate risks/stressors on the sustainability of this activity (floods, droughts and storms) in addition to the impact of project activities on the climate (increased greenhouse gas emissions, land use changes, etc.)

Defined or illustrative activities under Component One — Improvement of economic skills and capacity development of select marginalized groups	Potential Climate Risk	Climate Risk Rating*
1.1 Piloting capacity building platforms	floods, droughts and storms	Low
1.2 Creating more opportunities for training, mentorship, internship	floods, droughts and storms	Low
1.3 Advancing career guidance for marginalized groups	floods, droughts and storms	Low
1.4 Engaging private sector in capacity development	floods, droughts and storms	Low
1.5 Improving outreach to job seeking members of marginalized communities	floods, droughts and storms	Low

Defined or illustrative activities under Component Two — Increasing commitment to and public awareness of importance of inclusivity to economic development	Potential Climate Risk	Climate Risk Rating*
2.1 Trainings for managers and staff;	floods, droughts and storms	Low
2.2 Development and/or support of platforms that can connect applicants from MG and business	floods, droughts and storms	Low
2.3 Private sector actors developing internal diversity/anti- discrimination policies/mechanism	floods, droughts and storms	Low
2.4 Internship programs	floods, droughts and storms	Low
2.5 Improving existing affirmative actions	floods, droughts and storms	Low

Defined or illustrative activities under Component Two — Increasing commitment to and public awareness of importance of inclusivity to economic development	Potential Climate Risk	Climate Risk Rating*
2.6 Cross sectoral PR campaigns	floods, droughts and storms	Low
2.7 Expanding access to benefits	floods, droughts and storms	Low
2.8 Promotion of success stories	floods, droughts and storms	Low

Defined or illustrative activities under Component Three — Improving prospects for individual business development (entrepreneurship)	Potential Climate Risk	Climate Risk Rating*
3.1 Mobilizing individual investors, private sector resources, initiating dialogue with banks and government on existing and new programs and affirmative measures	floods, droughts and storms	Low
3.2 Business development capacity building, mentoring	floods, droughts and storms	Low
3.3 Connecting relevant stakeholders		
3.4 Reforming legislative, regulatory, and policy frameworks to advance affirmative approaches to marginalized group entrepreneurship	floods, droughts and storms	Low

2. Justification for Categorical Exclusion Determination

The activities 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 under this award will not have an effect on the natural or physical environment and are among the classes of activities listed in 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2). Therefore, under §216.2(c)(1), neither an IEE nor an EA will be required for these activities. Instead, a categorical exclusion threshold determination is recommended for:

- Activities from 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 listed above fall under 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.);
- Activities under §216.2(c)(2) (iii) Analyses, studies, academic or research workshops and meetings; and/or

- Additionally, all activities under §216.2(c)(2)(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.).

3. Limitations of the Categorical Exclusion Determination:

This categorical exclusion does not cover classes of actions normally having a significant effect on the environment under §216.2(d):

- Programs of river basin development;
- Irrigation and water management;
- Agricultural land leveling;
- Drainage projects;
- Large scale agricultural mechanization;
- Resettlement projects;
- New land development;
- Penetration road building and road improvement;
- Powerplants;
- Industrial plants; and
- Potable water and sewerage projects

In addition, this categorical exclusion does not cover activities that:

- Support project preparation, project feasibility studies, engineering design for activities listed in §216.2(d)(1);
- Affect endangered species ;
- Provide support to extractive industries (e.g. mining and quarrying);
- Promote timber harvesting;
- Lead to construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or renovation work;
- Support agro-processing or industrial enterprises;
- Provide support for regulatory permitting;
- Lead to privatization of industrial facilities or infrastructure with heavily polluted property;
- Assist the procurement (including payment in kind, donations, guarantees of credit) or use (including handling, transport, fuel for transport, storage, mixing, loading, application, clean-up of spray equipment, and disposal) of pesticides or activities involving procurement, transport, use, storage, or disposal of toxic materials--pesticides cover all insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, etc. covered under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act; and/or
- Procure or use genetically modified organisms.

Any of these actions would require a Europe and Eurasia Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO) approved amendment to the categorical exclusion.

4. Mandatory Inclusion of Environmental Compliance Requirements in Solicitations, Awards, Budgets, and Work Plans

- Appropriate environmental compliance language, including limitations defined in Section 3, shall be incorporated into solicitations and awards for categorical exclusions.
- The implementing partner shall ensure annual work plans do not prescribe activities that are defined as limitations in Section 3.

5. Revisions

Under §216.3(a)(9), if new information becomes available that indicates that activities covered by the categorical exclusion might be considered major and their effect significant, or if additional activities are proposed that might be considered major and their effect significant, this categorical exclusion

determination will be reviewed and, if necessary, revised by the Mission Environmental Officer (MEO) with concurrence by the BEO. It is the responsibility of the USAID Contract Officer's Representative (COR)/Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) to keep the MEO and BEO informed of any new information or changes in the activity that might require revision of this determination.

6. Recommended Determination for Categorical Exclusion Clearances

Approval :	RICHARD TODD ANDREWS (affiliate) Digitally signed by RICHARD TODD ANDREWS (affiliate) Date: 2021.07.21 16:33:38 +02'00' Todd Andrews, Acting Mission Director	Date
Clearance:	Ivan Vukojevic Digitally signed by Ivan Vukojevic Date: 2021.07.21 15:55:03 +02'00' Ivan Vukojevic, Mission Environmental Officer	Date
Clearance:	Jelena Avramovic Digitally signed by Jelena Avramovic Date: 2021.07.21 16:05:54 +02'00' Jelena Avramovic, AOR/COR	Date
Concurrence:	STACY MARIE CREVELLO (affiliate) Digitally signed by STACY MARIE CREVELLO (affiliate) Date: 2021.07.21 11:15:52 -04'00' Stacy Crevello Acting E&E Bureau Environmental Officer	Date

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IEE File

MEO (to also provide a copy to AOR/COR)