

REQUEST FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Document Purpose: This is a new activity called “Strengthening Local Capacity” which will coordinate with “Empower West Africa” (EWA), Power Africa’s flagship activity in West Africa. The Strengthening Local Capacity - West Africa award will focus on building capacity of local institutions and individuals through trainings, workshops, or other capacity-building interventions to advance the goals of EWA.

PROJECT/ACTIVITY DATA

Project/Activity Name:	Strengthening Local Capacity - West Africa
Geographic Location(s) (Country/Region):	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo
Amendment (Yes/No), if Yes indicate # (1, 2...):	No
Implementation Start/End Dates (FY or M/D/Y):	TBD
If Amended, specify New End Date:	N/A
Solicitation/Contract/Award Number(s):	TBD
Implementing Partner(s):	TBD
Bureau Tracking ID:	Strengthening Local Capacity - West Africa https://172.20.116.191/document.php?doc_id=61468
Tracking ID of Related RCE/IEE (if any):	Empower West Africa (EWA) IEE https://ecd.usaid.gov/document.php?doc_id=60833
Tracking ID of Other, Related Analyses:	None

ORGANIZATIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Implementing Operating Unit(s): (e.g. Mission or Bureau or Office)	Power Africa
Other Affected Operating Unit(s):	N/A
Lead BEO Bureau:	Africa
Funding Operating Unit(s): (e.g. Mission or Bureau or Office)	Power Africa
Funding Account(s) (if available):	
Original Funding Amount:	
If Amended, specify funding amount:	N/A
If Amended, specify new funding total:	N/A
Prepared by:	ECOS
Date Prepared:	19 December 2023

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE REVIEW DATA

Analysis Type:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Request for Categorical Exclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Deferral
Environmental Determination(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Categorical Exclusion(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Deferred (per 22 CFR 216.3(a)(7)(iv))
<u>RCE Expiration Date (if applicable):</u>	March 31, 2029
<u>Additional Analyses/Reporting Required:</u>	None
<u>Climate Risks Identified (#):</u>	Low <u> 3 </u> Moderate <u> # </u> High <u> # </u>
<u>Climate Risks Addressed (#):</u>	Low <u> 3 </u> Moderate <u> # </u> High <u> # </u>

THRESHOLD DETERMINATION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

PROJECT/ACTIVITY SUMMARY

The Power Africa “Strengthening Local Capacity - West Africa” activity will invest in local institutions to encourage West Africa’s transition to a more sustainable low-carbon energy system. This activity will coordinate with “Empower West Africa” (EWA), Power Africa’s flagship activity in West Africa aimed at closing the energy poverty gap within the region by increasing the availability of and access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern electricity in West Africa. As a complement to the broad scope of EWA, the Strengthening Local Capacity - West Africa award will focus specifically on building capacity of local institutions and individuals through trainings, workshops, or other capacity-building interventions to advance the goals of EWA.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATIONS

Upon approval of this document, the determinations become affirmed, per Agency regulations (22 CFR 216).

TABLE 1: ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATIONS

Projects/Activities	Categorical Exclusion Citation
Project/Activity 1: Capacity Building of Energy Sector Stakeholders	
Sub-activity 1.1: Trainings and workshops	§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.)
Sub-activity 1.2: Mentorship programs and on-the-job learning opportunities	§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.)
Sub-activity 1.3: Conferences	§216.2(c)(2)(v) Document and information transfers

CLIMATE RISK MANAGEMENT

Climate considerations will be included in work plan development, and shared with the IP, including in solicitations, to help address climate risks.

BEO SPECIFIED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Reporting Conditions: The AFR BEO requests that the activity managers/AORs/CORs upload this document to the appropriate sub-folder(s) of the [Environmental Compliance Library \(EC Library\)](#) Google Drive folder. Using this common folder will facilitate access by all parties who need these documents, including the Mission Environmental Officer and the AOR/COR, as well as the REA and the BEO Team.

IMPLEMENTATION

In accordance with 22 CFR 216 and Agency policy, the conditions and requirements of this document become mandatory upon approval. This includes the relevant limitations, conditions and requirements in this document as stated in Section 3 of this RCE and any BEO Specified Conditions of Approval.

USAID APPROVAL OF INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EXAMINATION

PROJECT/ACTIVITY NAME: Strengthening Local Capacity - West Africa

Bureau Tracking ID: https://172.20.116.191/document.php?doc_id=61468

Approval:	/s/ David Thompson	02/01/2024
	David Thompson, Acting Power Africa Coordinator	Date
Clearance:	/s/ Micheal Oppong-Adjei	01/10/2024
	Michael Oppong-Adjei, Contracting Officer's Representative (COR)	Date
Clearance:	/s/ Alex Hadzi-Vidanovic	01/11/2024
	Alex Hadzi-Vidanovic, Energy Office Director	Date
Clearance:	/s/ Nivann Govindasamy	01/10/2024
	Nivann Govindasamy, Mission Environmental Officer	Date
Clearance:	/s/ Jonathan Young	01/30/2024
	Jonathan Young, Acting Program Office Director	Date
Clearance:	/s/ Lisa Witte	02/01/2024
	Lisa Witte, Acting Deputy Coordinator	Date
Clearance:	/s/ Henry Aryeetey	2/5/2024
	Henry Aryeetey, Regional Environmental Advisor, West Africa	Date
Clearance:	/s/ Tashiana Osborne	02/22/2024
	Tashiana Osborne, AFR Bureau Climate Integration Lead	Date
Concurrence	/s/ Brian Hirsch	2/27/2024
	Brian Hirsch, AFR Bureau Environmental Officer	Date

DISTRIBUTION:

1.0 PROJECT AND ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE RCE

The purpose of this document is to establish that all proposed projects/activities 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/ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The Power Africa "Strengthening Local Capacity - West Africa" program will invest in local institutions to encourage West Africa's transition to a more sustainable low-carbon energy system. This activity will coordinate with "Empower West Africa" (EWA), Power Africa's flagship activity in West Africa aimed at closing the energy poverty gap within the region by increasing the availability of and access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern electricity in West Africa. As a complement to the broad scope of EWA, the Strengthening Local Capacity - West Africa award will focus specifically on building capacity of local institutions and individuals through trainings, workshops, or other capacity-building interventions to advance the goals of EWA.

Power Africa is committed to advancing USAID's localization goals. USAID defines localization as the set of internal reforms, actions, and behavior changes that the Agency is undertaking to ensure that USAID's work puts local actors in the lead, strengthens local systems, and is responsive to local communities. USAID is committed to shifting funding and decision-making power to the people, organizations, and institutions that are driving change in their own countries and communities because experience shows that local leadership over development is important for equity, effectiveness, and sustainability.

This Strengthening Local Capacity - West Africa program complements the strategy of Empower West Africa, by building the capacity of individuals and institutions advancing West Africa's energy sector development. The knowledge, skills, and abilities built through this award will form the foundation on which the West African energy sector can expand the supply of and access to affordable and reliable electricity services in West Africa.

1.3 PROJECT/ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

This Program will fill broad capacity gaps that hinder growth of the energy sector across West Africa. The Program will build the capacity of energy stakeholders (namely developers, electrification agencies, industry associations, cooperatives, savings and credit groups, and other enterprises and institutions, other decision-makers, and consumers) through trainings,

workshops, mentorship opportunities, on-the-job learning opportunities, conferences, certifications, etc.

Capacity building support will not include project-targeted support, for example transaction advisory services, design, feasibility studies, etc.

The Program may identify capacity building interventions via expert advice, capacity assessments, emerging opportunities, and recommendations from the Empower West Africa activity. As noted in the Empower parent IEE, the capacity building may include training and familiarization with environmental and social impacts of energy projects and the screening tool to be developed broadly for Empower IP to adequately assess the potential environmental and social impacts of the interventions.

TABLE 2: DEFINED OR ILLUSTRATIVE PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES AND SUB-ACTIVITIES

Project/Activity 1 — Capacity Building of Energy Sector Stakeholders	
Sub-activity 1.1: Trainings and workshops	<i>Trainings and workshops will involve group education sessions in a classroom or office environment to impart technical and professional skills to participants. The training and workshops will not include any physical, hands-on training related to energy system installation, construction, operation, or maintenance.</i>
Sub-activity 1.2: Mentorship programs and on-the-job learning opportunities	<i>Individual instruction, guidance, or advice to participants from peers or more experienced professionals and individual employment or internship opportunities with energy sector organizations.</i>
Sub-activity 1.3: Conferences	<i>Organization of or participation in energy sector or other applicable technical and professional development conferences, including but not limited to employment recruitment events or job fairs.</i>

2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

2.1 JUSTIFICATION FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

The activities under the Strengthening Local Capacity - West Africa activity are among the classes of actions listed in 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2) and have no foreseeable significant direct or indirect adverse effect on the environment. Therefore, under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(1), neither an IEE nor an EA will be required for these activities. Instead, a Categorical Exclusion is recommended for the projects/activities described above in Section 1.3 as follows:

TABLE 3: RECOMMENDED DETERMINATION FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Project/Activity and Sub-Activity #	Recommended Determination for Categorical Exclusion
Sub-activity 1.1: Trainings and workshops	§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.)
Sub-activity 1.2: Mentorship programs and on-the-job learning opportunities	§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.)
Sub-activity 1.3: Conferences	§216.2(c)(2)(v) Document and information transfers

2.2 CLIMATE RISK MANAGEMENT

This section summarizes the methodology used and findings of the CRM Screening (see Annex 1). The project design team, in consultation with the CIL, considered the potential effect of climate risks/stressors on the sustainability of the project (changing precipitation patterns, rising temperature, floods, droughts, fires, landslides, etc.) in addition to the impact of project activities on the climate (increased greenhouse gas emissions, land use changes, etc.).

Climate considerations will be included in work plan development, and shared with the IP, including in solicitations, to help address climate risks where appropriate.

3.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

The categorical exclusions recommended in this document apply only to projects/activities and sub-activities described herein.

Other projects/activities that may arise must be subject to an environmental analysis and the appropriate documentation prepared and approved, whether it be a new Request for Categorical Exclusion, an amendment, or other type of 22 CFR 216 document.

It is confirmed that the projects/activities described herein do not involve actions normally having a significant effect on the environment, including those described in 22 CFR 216.2(d).

3.1 MANDATORY INCLUSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS IN SOLICITATIONS, AWARDS, BUDGETS, AND WORK PLANS

USAID will ensure the environmental compliance requirements are incorporated into solicitations, awards, budgets, and work plans, including relevant limitations of Section 3 above. In addition, climate risk management requirements will also be incorporated.

3.2 GENERAL IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING REQUIREMENTS (IF APPLICABLE)

USAID will ensure that the following requirements are met:

- Provide briefings for Implementing Partner (IP) on environmental compliance responsibilities
- Ensure integration of compliance responsibilities in prime and sub-awards and grant agreements;
- Ensure compliance with applicable partner country requirements
- Annual review of project activities to ensure that scope is still covered by Categorical Exclusion

ATTACHMENTS:

Annex 1: Climate Risk Management Summary Table for Activity

ANNEX 1. **ACTIVITY** CLIMATE RISK MANAGEMENT SUMMARY TABLE

Tasks/Defined or Illustrative Interventions	Climate Risks ¹	Risk Rating ²	How Risks are Addressed ³	Opportunities to Strengthen Climate Resilience ⁴
Sub-activity 1.1: Trainings and workshops	Risks may include weather and water extremes that can contribute to challenges in terms of travel and access to training, workshop, and conference sites	Low	.	Include climate change and its impacts as well as measures to strengthen climate resilience and/or transition to green energy and green jobs as part of trainings, workshops, conferences, or other capacity-building and knowledge-sharing interventions in order to increase climate awareness and relevant skillsets
Sub-activity 1.2: Mentorship programs and on-the-job learning opportunities		Low		
Sub-activity 1.3: Conferences		Low		

¹ List key risks related to the defined/illustrative interventions identified in the screening and additional assessment.

² Low/Moderate/ High

³ Describe how risks have been addressed in activity design and/or additional steps that will be taken in implementation. If you chose to accept the risk, briefly explain why.

⁴ Describe opportunities to achieve multiple development objectives by integrating climate resilience or mitigation measures