

SECTION I – Program Description

Introduction

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the Dominican Republic is seeking applications from qualified coalitions of national non-governmental organizations and not-for-profit and for-profit entities (including NGOs, business associations, and universities and academic institutions) to participate in its Program “Civil Society Action for Improved Public Sector Performance” (hereafter referred to as the Civil Society Program). Over a period of three years, the Civil Society Program aims to a) promote access to public information, b) promote participation in the implementation of legislative and institutional reforms, c) establish and strengthen mechanisms of oversight and d) promote coalition building and networking. This program have two overall purposes: One is to fortify civil society's role in advocating for the full implementation of past reforms and for future reforms that need to be undertaken, and then oversee government performance as the reforms are put into place; and the second is to strengthen the ability of civil society organizations to form coalitions, networks and movements that coordinate to achieve the first purpose. The winning applicant will 1) promote access to information about reform implementation and oversee government performance, transparency and accountability in the areas that USAID is supporting government institutions to improve their operations and performance, specifically justice sector reform and transparency and accountability, and 2) represent a consortium that consists of a minimum of three organizations that demonstrate capacity for citizen outreach and coalition-building with citizen organizations at the local level. Only one award is anticipated.

A. Background and Contextual Information

This Section contains a variety of background and contextual information including a summary of the program, the development challenge, explanations of the USAID/Dominican Republic strategy and indicators as they relate to this program and information regarding specified agreement terms that could impact program performance and/or pricing. Unlike Section I.B, which specifies the desired results of the program, this information is not intended to be incorporated into any program description under the RFA. Instead, this information is intended to help the applicant prepare a superior technical application and more accurately estimate the costs that will be attached to its proposed program. Section 1.C specifies deliverables and other elements of the RFA.

1. Program Summary

Working through coalitions of civil society and other public and private organizations, the Civil Society Program will promote the participation of civil society in the implementation and oversight of key policy reforms and mechanisms

that the Dominican Republic has put into place over the last number of years. USAID recognizes the role that civil society has played in promoting legislative reforms in the DR as well as the advances achieved in implementing many of them. However, much still needs to be done to implement these reforms fully; moreover, civil society has a fundamental role in evaluating how these reforms are functioning, the performance of the government and its conforming with the intent of the reforms, and the transparency and accountability with which the government acts. While many of the most important reforms have occurred, USAID also recognizes that there will be a need to promote the development and adoption of some additional reforms that support the continued development of democracy in the Dominican Republic. The emphasis of this program, nevertheless, is to promote the strengthening of the public sector institutions by ensuring the implementation of the reforms already in place. The desired end result that USAID seeks to promote is improved concerted action and participation by civil society in the implementation of needed public sector reforms. During the period of performance under this award, the Civil Society Program will build on the accomplishments achieved over the past decade by Dominican civil society to promote reforms. The program will take advantage of opportunities created by the justice reform process led by the Supreme Court and the Public Ministry, the advances already made in increasing transparency and government institutionalization, and the ratification and implementation of DR-CAFTA.

For the purposes of the Civil Society Program, the key democratic institutions that have been identified are justice sector institutions and those government institutions that will be instrumental for enhancing the transparency and accountability as part of the implementation of DR-CAFTA. The Civil Society Program has been organized around these key sets of institutional issues or result areas (*i.e.* justice sector reform and transparency and accountability), which have been identified as the most critical for consolidating democratic reform in the Dominican Republic and achieving Mission objectives of highest priority. Within both result areas, the development of initiatives that reduce opportunities for or increase awareness of corruption within these sets of institutions shall be integral parts of program approaches. In addition, both of these result areas shall incorporate activities which increase access to information, promote mechanisms for participation, provide technical input and increase oversight. Finally, a key aim of the Civil Society Program is to promote broadly cooperative and coordinated action among civil society organizations in their pursuit to achieve their objectives.

2. History of USAID Civil Society Programming

USAID investment in civil society began with the Democratic Initiatives Program (PID). The object of the PID was to support initiatives by citizen groups with the aim of promoting civic education, political reform, and support for the implementation of the civil service law. The PID can lay claim to two general results: greater citizen appreciation of and participation in democratic politics, and the overall strengthening and activism of civil society organizations.

Since 2002, USAID programs for civil society has focused more on generating political reform in the areas of primary focus (elections and political processes, judicial reform, and transparency and anticorruption) and conducting oversight of the implementation of laws and international agreements in these areas and the effective and fair prosecution of the 2003 banking fraud cases. Since 2006, USAID has aimed to broaden citizen awareness of corruption and action in promoting civic participation, transparency, and accountability. These latter initiatives included support for a civic movement against corruption called La Lucha (www.lalucha.com.do), the formation of coalitions and networks, oversight of the performance of specific district attorneys offices, and awareness-raising activities that included mass media campaigns, studies of corruption and how it manifests itself, and trainings for specific sectors (journalists, businesspeople, community-based groups, church groups, etc.).

3. Development Challenge

Dominican civil society first emerged as a political presence in the 1960s and their numbers increased dramatically in the 1990s. The last few years have witnessed important advances in the establishment of adequate institutional frameworks for the consolidation of democracy and citizen participation, all of which is necessary in order to reduce corruption, stimulate greater social responsibility and participation, give confidence to economic and social agents, and to develop the social capital of the country. Today, a shift is under way, as Dominican civil society moves from simply demanding change to identifying solutions and playing an active role in monitoring implementation and ensuring accountability and transparency.

As they undergo this shift, civil society organizations face some important challenges. Civil society organizations must improve their capacity to serve as an effective counterweight to government and business, to have ability to summon citizens and organizations to action, and to be able to negotiate key societal issues and take part in decision making alongside other political and economic actors. However, civil society's *desarticulación* – atomization, lack of interconnecting ties, disintegration – has undermined achieving these ends. Civil society organizations must solidify their role in the national dialogue (making civil society “co-responsible” for the development of social policy and the implementation of democratic reform). At the same time, they must continue to institutionalize civil society's role in the Dominican political arena by building a positive enabling environment that safeguards the autonomy, legitimacy and independence of civil society organizations and contributes to their long-term sustainability. Despite some initial successes, civil society actors still confront the ordeal of transitioning from a position of simply demanding change to one of engagement in the implementation of change and the monitoring of results. By expanding dialogue and ties between Dominican non-governmental organizations and popular organizations (such as community-based organizations, churches, local business associations, etc.), civil

society actors can begin to overcome the division between “civic” issues and “social” issues . They also face the challenge of developing clear boundaries among government, business and civil society actors – including an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each sector and the unique competencies of each – while at the same time looking for opportunities to form strategic partnerships among these three sectors around common goals. A final challenge consists of developing a concept of the public good that transcends individual interests and provides an umbrella under which civil society organizations can operate – one that focuses on both the implementation of institutional reform and poverty reduction. A common refrain among observers of Dominican democracy is that the problem is not a lack of good laws or appropriate rules, but the fact that the laws and rules that exist are not enforced.

4. Linkage to Democracy and Governance Strategic Framework

By design, the Civil Society Program supports the achievement of the results in the other two program areas where USAID provides assistance. As mentioned above, the Program has two overall objectives: to promote activities key to democratic citizen participation and to facilitate concerted, organized, and coordinated action by coalitions of civil society organizations. USAID has designed a framework for achieving these broad objectives which represent the four types of activities which will be promoted by the programs. The four types of activities are increasing citizen awareness and access to information; providing technical input on institutional reforms and their implementation; promoting civil society mechanisms for participation, transparency, accountability, and oversight of government performance; and developing capacity of civil society to build broad coalitions with the capacity to advocate and conduct oversight. Through the implementation of these activities, the program will aim to effect changes in the justice sector and in transparency and accountability of public sector institutions.

USAID’s overall results framework containing the specific results that USAID desires to achieve in the area of civil society can be found in [Annex X](#)

B. Program Results and Illustrative Activities

The following is a description of the basic parameters and related illustrative approaches that form the basis of the Civil Society Program. The Civil Society Program shall support four types of activities to promote the implementation of reforms in two sets of institutions and oversight of the performance of these institutions. The four types of activities which will be supported under this program are: 1) promoting increased access to information on the implementation of key policy reforms; 2) providing technical input by civil society organizations and coalitions on key policy reforms; 3) promoting the establishment of mechanisms for stakeholder participation and oversight of the implementation of policy reform; and 4) increasing the capacity of civil society organizations and coalitions to generate broad-based demand for the implementation of laws and regulations, effective

government performance, and reduced corruption. These four types of activities are interrelated and represent both the steps in the development, implementation and oversight of key reforms as well as the means to achieve these ends. The first two types of activities focus on citizen understanding, participation, and advocacy, which means that approaches are expected to focus on promoting or advocating changes which lead to increased access to information and the establishment of mechanisms for participation in the development and implementation of key policy reforms. The second and third activities are focused on direct implementation, so that approaches are expected to include the actual provision of technical input and the exercise of oversight related to key policy reforms. The last set of activities aim to improve the capacity of civil society to act in a coordinated way to achieve policy advocacy and implementation ends.

These four activities are expected to promote the implementation of reform and improved public sector performance in the following two result areas: 1) Justice sector performance improved to be more independent, transparent, efficient, and fair, and 2) Core governance institutions performance improved to be more effective at ensuring transparency and accountability within the Executive Branch. Programs in each of the two result areas must cover all four activities.

For ease of reference and based on the way in which USAID is interested in receiving applications, the program description has been organized by the two institutional or result areas, rather than by the types of activities. Within each result area, examples of the kinds of approaches that could be used are included. This information will form the framework for the program descriptions used in the actual agreement awarded under this RFA, though as explained in detail in Section II of this RFA, applicants will be required to include additional details regarding the approaches and specific activities they would include in their programs.

1. Definition of a Consortium and a Coalition

a. Consortium

The definition of consortium for the purpose of this award is a group of three or more organizations that join together to implement this activity. The consortium may be a group of organizations already formed or may be formed for implementation of this activity. It may be formed of purely Dominican organizations or Dominican and non-Dominican organizations, although the prime recipient must be Dominican and the consortium must be formed primarily of Dominican organizations. It is up to each applicant to determine the formal structure, legal status (if any) and nature of the consortium. For USAID, the importance of having the activity implemented by a consortium is that it can take advantage of the strengths of the individual consortium members and the synergies and flexibility that arise from the joining of forces. Given the varied nature of the interventions included in the activity, it is unlikely that any single organization will have all the skills and experience required to achieve

the results. In forming consortiums, applicants should consider including organizations that have expertise in the following: (a) research and analysis (including data gathering and statistical analysis); (b) policy analysis and dialogue/advocacy; (c) demonstrated experience in conducting oversight and exercising social monitoring; (d) demonstrated experience working with other organizations and forming coalitions; and (e) access to media and social networks, especially those that consist of organizations at the local level. Sound knowledge of the legal frameworks dealing with the substantive issues (justice reform and transparency and accountability) will also be useful.

While each member of the consortium will have a defined role under the agreement, there will be one prime Recipient that will be the signatory to the agreement and responsible to USAID for all administration, management and reporting requirements. Applicants should describe their consortium, each of its member organizations and their strengths and experiences, the proposed role and responsibilities of each organization and how the Prime Recipient will assure the flow of timely and accurate information, resources, etc., among member organizations in order to fulfill its commitments with USAID under the agreement. References for past performance review of each member organization should also be provided.

b. Coalition

As a substantive outcome of this activity, USAID seeks to support the formation of coalitions. For the purposes of this RFA, a coalition is a broad-based set of organizations that have one or more interests in common and work together to achieve a goal. The applicant may propose to form a single, broad coalition that achieves the results outlined below in both activity areas (justice reform and transparency and accountability); two separate coalitions each of which works within one of the activity areas but may work together where interest overlap; or various coalitions where each achieves results in specific areas. USAID's interest in promoting coalitions is threefold: to achieve the inclusion of non-traditional groups in civil society activities; to involve local or community-based organizations in attempting to achieve change that benefits society as a whole; and to create the learning opportunity that working with more experienced and institutionalized organizations will provide for these organizations. It is expected that the main benefit to members of a coalition will be receiving technical assistance and participating in organizational meetings, trainings, workshops and seminars; it is not expected that the building of the coalition will be based on the provision of direct subgrants to coalition members, except as indicated below.

2.Small grants program and subcontracting to develop local capacity

USAID recognizes the need that applicants will likely have to develop institutional capabilities to carry out some or many of the activities that are included under this

RFA and will need to take place to achieve the objectives of this program. Therefore, USAID encourages creative proposals to develop locally-based capacity and expertise and to build coalitions that are inclusive of community-based organizations, local NGOs, church organizations, universities, think tanks, etc., either through subcontracts or subgrants. USAID is not setting aside specific funding for a defined small grants program; however, the creative and judicious use of small grants that target express needs, carry out defined activities, and help achieve the goals outlined in this RFA will be considered as a valid approach by USAID. In addition, applicants should consider which skills and capacities among consortium partner and future coalition collaborating organizations might require assistance from international individuals or institutions. Applicants should propose, if needed, how they will access international sources of expertise in creative and economical ways, which could include subcontracts, incorporation of an international non-governmental organization or contractor as a member of the consortium, or using them as a resource organization that is not formally part of the consortium.

3. Geographic Focus

Activities supported under this program are expected to have impact at the national level, due both to the nature of interventions that are foreseen as well as the types of institutions that are the focus of this program. Although the majority of activities under this program are expected to take place at the national level by their nature (i.e. promotion of policy reforms within national-level institutions, such as the Comptroller General, or oversight of national justice sector institutional performance), a smaller number of activities may lend themselves to a specific geographic focus. For those activities which lend themselves to a specific geographic focus, **applicants will need to justify fully that these are the most feasible way to achieve expected results as defined in the Civil Society Program.** Activities that are conducted at the local level should feed into national level results, both in terms of the actual results (improved local level procurement offices lead to an overall improved government contracting system, for example) and in terms of the collection of data for monitoring program impact.

Result Area 1: Justice sector performance improved to be more independent, transparent, efficient, and fair

The two main issues affecting the justice sector at the current time are 1) the lack of independence in exercising its constitutional functions combined with endemic corruption and 2) the weak capacity of justice actors to perform their functions in the delivery of justice. Justice system actors are still in the process of acquiring new knowledge and skills they need to act effectively and in accordance with the new Criminal Procedures Code and justice institutions are still putting policies, regulations, processes and procedures into place that support the implementation of the Code. While the different justice institutions – the Supreme Court and Judiciary, the Attorney General’s Office and the Public Ministry, the Public Defenders Office,

and the National Police – exhibit differing degrees of commitment to making needed changes, citizens can play a vital role to ensure that these institutions continue the reform process already underway as well as evaluating the performance of public sector institutions and actors. The Judiciary and the Public Defenders Office have made the most progress, but they nevertheless face challenges as they continue to adapt and evolve. The Public Ministry and the National Police face the most daunting challenges, as they were fully established institutions under the prior system, they are the institutions which most recently initiated reforms, and their roles have been the most affected by the implementation of the Code. Citizens must understand both the challenges this institutions face and the progress they are making, and if they are not, why not. Citizens are frequently woefully uninformed about the reforms, their success or failure, what they can do to promote their continued implementation, and how they can participate to ensure that their needs and interests are addressed. Activities under this result area will help address these deficiencies and support the reform process in the justice sector.

a. Promoting citizen awareness of and access to information on justice sector reform implementation and justice sector performance

Although justice reform in the DR has been widely touted as a success story compared to other Latin American countries, the process, while steady, has been slow and uneven, both among the various institutions and within the same institutions. The major reform that has had a powerful impact on all justice institutions – the Criminal Procedure Code – has been criticized in some sectors for contributing to crime because some criminals are let off on technicalities and by other sectors as not having any significant impact on promoting equal justice. The justice institutions, to differing degrees, are seen by those within and outside of the system as not being transparent nor as operating independently. Support in this area is expected to increase understanding of the purpose and status of justice sector reforms, as well as the way in which these reforms relate to reducing opportunities for future judicial manipulation.

Expected Outcomes/Results:

- Increased access to information on the justice sector reform process and progress
- Increased access to information related to justice sector efficiency and effectiveness in processing cases
- Increased access to information on the selection, promotion, and disciplinary processes within justice sector institutions
- Increased access to information on judicial sector “success stories”

Illustrative activities:

- Publish user-friendly information bulletins regarding the institutional reforms taking place within justice sector institutions
- Promote public discussion of the planned roll-out of criminal and prosecution policy to be developed by the relevant justice sector institutions
- Analyze the operations of the Offices of Access to Public Information and public relations offices within justice sector institutions and propose changes that will facilitate citizen access and understanding

b. Providing technical input on reforms which engender greater independence of justice sector and better justice performance

While most legislative and constitutional reforms are in place, some key policy reforms are still pending, such as reform of the Penal Code, particularly regarding typifying the forms of corruption; establishing greater functional independence of the Public Ministry; drafting Criminal Sentencing Guidelines; the development of a model of constitutional justice; the pending constitutional reforms which could impact judicial independence; and the series of reforms outlined in the Supreme Court President's speech on the "second wave of judicial reform" (January 2007). In addition, the continued institutionalization of the Criminal Procedures Code, including the standardization of procedures, implies the greater independence of justice sector institutions and the need for continued internal reforms. The program will support the development and adoption of reforms that increase the transparency of justice sector operations and allow for increased internal and external oversight of judicial system proceedings. This effort would parallel the current process of developing a System of Institutional Integrity in the Judiciary, the Public Ministry, and Office of Public Defense. As changes are contemplated in the structure and operation of justice sector institutions, the incorporation of input from stakeholders will be key to ensure that reforms address needs and can be implemented.

Expected Outcomes/Results:

- Technical input provided by citizens and civil society organizations in the consideration of constitutional, legislative, and institutional reforms that affect justice sector independence

Illustrative activities:

- Prepare technical analyses of reform proposals and draft counter proposals with input by lawyers, academics, civil society leaders, and other experts for public consideration and debate and submission to the relevant authorities
- Promote forums that provide the opportunity for stakeholders, such as justice authorities, representatives of political parties, business, and religious and civil society organizations, to discuss different policy and institutional reform proposals

c. Exercising oversight of justice sector reform implementation and justice sector performance

Within this area, USAID will support the development of local organizational capacity to monitor and report on progress related to justice sector operations and the internal justice sector reform process. As judicial reform proceeds, it will be important to monitor the improvement in the provision of justice services, and ensure transparency and accountability of justice actors' decisions and performance. This implies that citizens perceive administration of justice as a public service, and that magistrates perceive themselves as responsible for providing that service. Therefore, the program will support civil society monitoring of justice sector progress, and the establishment of channels to receive feedback from citizens.

Expected Outcomes/Results:

- Regular monitoring of justice sector operations and performance occurs and information on progress disseminated
- Complaints on performance and ethical behavior are investigated by relevant authorities

Illustrative activities:

- Conduct user satisfaction surveys regarding justice sector performance
- Support the creation of joint public/private sector initiatives to monitor the status of the implementation of justice reform
- Establish observatories that monitor the performance of one or more justice sector institutions

- Monitor the implementation of the Criminal Procedure Code reform and related reforms coordinated by National Commission for Implementation of the Criminal Procedures Code (CONAEJ)
- d. Developing capacity to build coalitions and act in concert to advocate for justice sector reforms and their implementation and monitor justice sector institutions.

The main objective in this area is to empower social and community organizations through the formation of coalitions and networks and increase the impact of their efforts to effect change and hold justice institutions accountable. Through coordinated action, citizens, civil society organizations and stakeholders will develop a capacity for sustained demand for an efficient and effective criminal justice. Where these capacities are lacking it is expected that the coalition will seek assistance from individual experts and institutions. The Civil Society Program will support the development of capacities within local level organizations and networks to access information, demand change and propose reforms, conduct oversight, promote implementation, and ensure transparency and accountability in decision-making and the actions of justice officials.

Expected Outcomes/Results:

- Civil society organizations act in concert to advocate for justice reform
- A national network of civil society organizations exists to monitor the justice sector process and performance

Illustrative activities:

- Develop strategies with stakeholders within the business community or among church representatives to participate in the promotion of justice sector reform
- Contract technical experts to develop institutional capacities for coalition building among justice sector stakeholders
- Establish relationships between national level and local civil society organizations to conduct oversight in a representative sample of judicial sectors around the country
- Provide small grants to coalition partners to carry out specific activities to conduct oversight of justice sector institutions

Result Area 2: Core governance institutions performance improved to be more effective at ensuring transparency and accountability within the Executive Branch

Over the past few years, USAID has supported a variety of civil society based efforts to promote anti-corruption reforms, including the monitoring the Dominican government's compliance with international conventions against corruption to which it was party and the government's implementation of laws favoring transparency and accountability, such as the Law on Access to Public Information. USAID has also provided support to civil society organizations' efforts to raise public awareness about the forms and kinds of corruption, to stimulate demand for greater control and sanction of corruption, and to bear witness to efforts to bring to justice those who have been legally charged with committing corrupt acts. In addition to civil society organizations taking on a more active role in demanding transparency, they have also the media to develop the skills of reporters so they can conduct investigative journalism. Most recently, civil society organizations have demonstrated a predisposition to work together to achieve common goals, as demonstrated by the *La Lucha* campaign.

Under this result area, the Civil Society Program will build on the base of general knowledge of rights and responsibilities that was created through past efforts to support targeted activities and campaigns by civil society and other organizations that are directly linked to specific policy reform and advocacy efforts to ensure effective implementations of recently enacted reforms that support institutionalization of the Dominican public administration. As a matter of priority, the Program will focus its efforts on those reforms that are expected to have the most direct impact on the implementation of DR-CAFTA and increasing access to information and transparency and accountability of key government organizations that increase opportunities for citizen participation in policy implementation, decision-making and oversight. These types of interventions will have an impact in keeping attention focused on critical policy issues, while appropriately broadening participation in the policy discussion.

a. Promoting citizen awareness of and access to information on the implementation of transparency and accountability reforms and the performance of selected institutions of government control

Over the last decade, the Dominican Republic has ratified international agreements to control corruption and promote transparency and accountability, and has begun to put into place the laws required by these agreements. The agreements include the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (ratified in 1999), the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (ratified in 2006), the IMF Standby Agreement (approved in 2005), and the Dominican Republic and Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) with the United States and Central America (entry into force in 2007). The Dominican Republic has put a wide range of laws into place as a result, ranging from the five laws required by the Standby Agreement

(Public Contracting, Treasury, Budget, Controller General and Public Credit) to anti-bribery statutes in order to qualify for DR-CAFTA. However, many citizens are unaware of these laws – both those that have been promulgated and those that have not yet been, nor are they aware of the importance of these laws, including stakeholders who are most likely to benefit, such as businesses. If demand for transparency and accountability is going to coalesce and have an effect, citizens need to understand better the reforms that have been put into place, whether or not they have been put into practice, and whether or not they have been effective..

Expected Outcomes/Results:

- Increased access to information and reporting on the level of adherence and implementation of key anti-corruption reforms
- Increased quantity and quality of access to public information by Dominicans from different social sectors (media, private sector, church, and grass root organizations)
- Increased instances where appropriate legislative or executive measures were undertaken following civil society intervention
- Broad-based citizen's attitudinal change to decrease tolerance for corrupt behavior, change the expected norms of ethical behavior, and increase awareness of the cost of corruption

Illustrative activities:

- Produce and distribute widely easy-to-understand bulletins that explain the institutional reforms favoring transparency and accountability in government and how they are important to citizens
- Support the formation of public/private partnerships to disseminate information on the content and progress of implementation of reforms
- Organize local workshops or town hall meetings that highlight reforms, identify strengths and weaknesses of their implementation, and gather inputs for continued reform

b. Providing technical input on reforms which improve performance of government institutions that ensure transparency and accountability

Although there is a high level of consensus that a change in the corruption environment is needed, there is no agreement within the government or among citizen stakeholders on the specific types of changes that are needed or the

timeframe within which they should occur. The National Anti-corruption Commission, conceived to serve as a institution where government and civilians could define and oversee the implementation of anti-corruption priorities, has been criticized for not effectively taking advantage of its mandate. As a result, civilians and civil society organizations need to develop a voice for making concrete and technically sound proposals for improving institutional control of corruption.

Through this program, USAID will also support the promotion of citizen-proposed institutional measures that increase transparency and accountability in those government institutions whose role it is to control and limit corruption in government. Examples include the proposal of legislation, internal regulations, and systems of transparency and accountability that strengthen the capacity of institutions to a) apply internal control of corruption, and b) exercise horizontal accountability, that is, to investigate, audit, and evaluate the use of public resources and the effectiveness of government programs.

Expected Outcomes/Results:

- Technical input provided by citizens and civil society organizations in the consideration of constitutional, legislative, and institutional mechanisms that affect government transparency and accountability
- Increased quantity and quality of technical input provided by stakeholders during the consideration of key legislation by Congress or implementation of reform in public administration

Illustrative activities:

- Draft and submit to the relevant authorities of reform proposals that include the input from academics, businessmen and women, civil society representatives, political leaders and other stakeholders and experts
- Promote forums that provide the opportunity for stakeholders, such as business associations, political party leaders, and religious and civil society organizations to discuss policy and institutional reform proposals for enhancing transparency and accountability

c. Exercising oversight of implementation of institutional reforms related to transparency, accountability and competitiveness required by DR-CAFTA

Within this area, the Civil Society program will support the monitoring and reporting on progress related to the advancement of policy reforms related to transparency and accountability. The focus of this effort shall be on the *implementation* of policy supportive of transparency and accountability and related institutional reforms,

particularly those related to those agencies responsible for ensuring transparency in the implementation of DR-CAFTA. It is expected that the media shall play a key roll in reporting on oversight activities, as well as conducting investigations of their own.

Expected Outcomes/Results:

- Regular monitoring of government projects and programs to increase transparency occurs and information on progress disseminated
- System in place to track public procurement process in selected institutions

Illustrative activities:

- Publish semi-annual or annual transparency indexes measuring the degree of transparency in public institutions
- Carry out and publish an annual cost-of-corruption survey
- Develop citizen charters or sponsoring committees to work in coordination with the new Procurement Direction to monitor implementation of key DR CAFTA legislation.
- Publish greater information on the public budgeting and expenditure process thru the Integrated Financial Management System (SIGEF)
- Train reporters on investigative journalism techniques

d. Developing capacity to build coalitions and act in concert to advocate transparency and accountability reforms and their implementation and to monitor the performance of selected institutions.

Within this area, the Civil Society program will support the formation of coalitions and network increase demand for transparency and accountability and effectively disseminate information about the content of transparency reforms underway and the progress being made to implement them. Through coordinated action, citizens, civil society organizations and stakeholders will develop a capacity for sustained public pressure for transparency and accountability. Where these capacities are lacking it is expected that the coalition will seek technical assistance from individual experts and institutions. The Civil Society Program will promote the development of capacities within local level organizations and networks to access information, demand change and propose reforms, conduct oversight, promote implementation, and ensure transparency and accountability in decision-making and the actions of government officials.

Expected Outcomes/Results:

- Civil society organizations act in concert to advocate for increased transparency and accountability
- A national network of civil society organizations exists to monitor the implementation of transparency reforms

Illustrative activities:

- Promote partnerships between the public and private sectors to fight corruption.
- Develop model to engage youth in efforts to track government performance and conduct social audits of government programs at the local and national level.
- Provide small grants to coalition partners to carry out specific oversight activities,
- Build institutional capacity on the part of individual civil society organizations

C. Additional considerations

1. Gender Considerations

Because USAID's results under the Civil Society Program are focused on national level changes in national level institutions, in most cases, those impacted by the program are expected to be the general public. For example, as changes are made in judicial procedures to increase transparency through publication of judicial decisions and other mechanisms, this is expected to allow greater participation by the general public. In promoting greater access to information and mechanisms for participation which are intended to benefit the general public, proposed approaches shall ensure that groups traditionally marginalized from the political process in Dominican Republic (including women, rural poor, and immigrants) will have the same opportunity and access as other members of the general public. Ensuring equal access and opportunity for all groups is expected to be an explicit part of the program approach. In addition, approaches are expected to include a specific discussion of the proposed impact of the activities on the groups mentioned above which have been considered traditionally marginalized from the political process. Finally, it is expected that program monitoring plans will, at a minimum, report indicators that identify differential impact on men and women.

2. Local participation, non-traditional partners and dependency

USAID/Dominican Republic strongly encourages applicants to (1) consider using local resources (goods and services) to the maximum extent possible; (2) consider local resources as both a development tool and a means toward decreasing dependency (and increasing sustainability) while building local capacity through delegation of real responsibility; (3) consider that the macro-economic multiplier effect of project grants, other resources, and salaries paid locally will have a significant impact on the economy and on households and small businesses; (4) consider that applicants might use U.S. and international subgrantees and subcontractors to make more comprehensive their skill set, experience, and resource base.

3. Substantial Involvement Understandings

USAID/Dominican Republic anticipates the following substantial involvement in the recipient's activities:

a. Approval of the recipient's annual Implementation Plans: On an annual basis, the recipient shall prepare and provide for USAID's approval an annual implementation plan. The initial implementation plan for the first year of activities will be submitted as part of the applicant's technical proposal. Any changes in the initial work-plan will require additional approval.

b. Approval of specified key personnel: USAID will approve the personnel filling those position considered to be essential to the successful implementation of the award.

c. Concurrence in the selection of subaward recipients and the substantive provisions of the subawards: If subawards – either subgrants or institutional subcontracts – are anticipated, USAID will concur in the selection of subaward recipients and the substantive provisions of the subawards to ensure that program objectives are met.

d. Approval of the recipient's monitoring and evaluation plans: USAID will review and approve the recipient's monitoring and evaluation plan. An adequate monitoring and evaluation plan is critical for the successful tracking of program progress and achievement of results. This monitoring and evaluation plan should be clearly linked to the achievement of USAID's intermediate results, and should track program impact on men and women. All people-level data should be disaggregated by gender.

4. Key Personnel

The applicant must identify those individuals that are considered to be key personnel for the performance and achievement of the program. Information regarding all relevant experience, education, language skills and other technical skills should be provided for each key personnel.

5. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The initial Implementation Plan must set forth a comprehensive plan that measures impact and progress toward achieving results over the life of the award. The Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMP) must include indicators, targets, data sources and collection methods, baseline information, benchmarks and schedule for periodic evaluations by the Applicant.

The PMP must include mechanisms through which findings can be incorporated, on a continual basis, to the implementation process. Applicants must discuss ways in which the collection, analysis and reporting of performance data will be managed under the project. All data collected must be disaggregated by gender, if applicable. In designing the overall monitoring plan, applicants should consider the extent of the Applicant's human and financial resources necessary to implement that plan.

The implementer will be expected to assign a high priority to continuous monitoring and evaluation of all its operations and assistance, not only for the purpose of effective internal self-monitoring and planning, but also to ensure that the implementer can demonstrate results under the objectives of this project.

6. Reports

Reports shall be in accordance with 22 CFR 226.50-52, and include the following types:

a. Quarterly performance report:

The recipient shall submit quarterly performance reports based on USAID's fiscal year quarters (Oct-Dec, Jan-Mar, Apr-Jun, July-Sept). These reports shall be submitted 30 days after the end of the quarter. Reports submitted in October of each year shall be considered annual reports and shall contain annualized performance monitoring data. All quarterly reports shall include:

- i. progress towards objectives for the period, including progress towards meeting established program performance indicators and benchmarks;

- ii. a summary of any obstacles or issues affecting program implementation and the way in which the recipient addressed these issues; and
- iii. projected activities for the next reporting period.

b. Final Report:

The recipient shall submit a final report to USAID/Dominican Republic. The final report shall include, at a minimum the information required by 22 CFR 226.51(d) as well as, but not limited to:

- i. an assessment and analysis of the efficiency, effectiveness, viability and replicability of the program, and
- ii. results of the performance monitoring plan for the program

END OF SECTION I