



LAC-IEE-15-13

ENVIRONMENTAL THRESHOLD DECISION

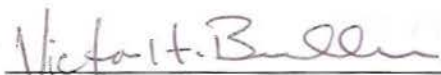
Activity Location:	LAC Region-wide
Activity Title	LAC Regional Higher Education Program
Activity Number	TBD
Life-of-Activity Funding:	\$50 million
Life-of-Activity:	FY 2015 - FY 2020
IEE prepared by:	Barbara Knox-Seith, LAC/RSD
Reference ETDs:	None
Recommended Threshold Decision:	Categorical Exclusion
Bureau Threshold Decision:	Concur
Comments:	

A **Categorical Exclusion** is issued to the LAC Regional Higher Education Program, pursuant to 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.);
- (iii) Analyses, studies, academic or research workshops and meetings;
- (v) Document and information transfers.
- (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.);

Amendments

- Amendments to Initial Environmental Examinations (IEE) shall be submitted for LAC Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO) approval for any activities not specifically covered in the IEE, which include:
 - Funding level increase beyond ETD amount,
 - Time period extension beyond ETD dates (even for no cost extension), or
 - A change in the scope of work, such as the use of pesticides, activities that may create medical or hazardous waste, construction of facilities, among others.
- Amendments to IEEs could include the need to do an Environmental Assessment (EA), and its by the LAC BEO could require an annual evaluation for environmental compliance.



Victor H. Bullen
Bureau Environmental Officer
Bureau for Latin America & the Caribbean

Feb 12, 2015
Date

Copy to: Rose Rakas, LAC/RSD, Office Director
Jessica Rosen

Copy to: Joe Torres (Regional Environmental Advisor,
CAM, Paul Schmidtke, REA/Caribbean, Gina
Cady, REA/SA)

Copy to: Eric Kite, LAC OLA, Jene Thomas, LAC/CAR

Copy to: ETD/IEE File

Attachments:

- Request for Categorical Exclusion

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INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EXAMINATION

<u>Activity Location:</u>	Region-wide
<u>Activity title:</u>	LAC Regional Higher Education Program
<u>Activity number:</u>	TBD
<u>Life of Activity Funding:</u>	\$50 million
<u>Life of activity:</u>	FY 2015 through FY 2020
<u>IEE prepared by:</u>	Barbara Knox-Seith, LAC/RSD

Recommended threshold decision: Categorical Exclusion

1. BACKGROUND AND ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Background: The LAC Bureau's Office of Regional Sustainable Development (LAC/RSD) plans to implement a new higher education program to strengthen the capacity of LAC tertiary and workforce development institutions to produce a workforce with relevant skills to support country development goals, to be funded with up to \$50 million in obligations over a five year period. The new program builds on successes of the Scholarships for Education and Economic Development (SEED) program (implemented December 2009-December 2015). Funding for the new program will include up to \$1.17 million in FY 2014 higher education funds as well as FY 2015 through FY 2019 funds. The new activities fall under the LAC/RSD Education area, supporting the Higher Education element.

The activities will not fund any school or other infrastructure construction.

Summary Activity Description:

During FY 2015 to FY 2020, USAID will support a regional higher education program that strengthens the capacity of LAC higher education institutions to provide market-relevant quality training for marginalized populations with limited access to tertiary education. This will be accomplished through establishing partnerships and alliances between LAC tertiary and workforce development institutions and appropriate actors such as U.S. academic institutions and other private and public sector actors. To strengthen the quality and relevance of the LAC institutions, the program will support development of faculty, improvement of curriculum, and institutional policy reform. Additionally, the program will provide scholarships for study at local workforce development institutions as well as for study at U.S. community colleges and universities.

2. JUSTIFICATION FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REQUEST

The LAC Regional Higher Education Program will not have an effect on the natural or physical environment. All of its activities fall within categories of education, technical assistance, training, analyses, studies, workshops, document and information transfers.

3. RECOMMENDED THRESHOLD FOR EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

It is recommended that a Categorical Exclusion be approved for these higher education activities. All interventions under the education activities fall within 22 CFR Section 216.2 (c) (2) as follows:

- (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.);
- (iii) Analyses, studies, academic or research workshops and meetings;
- (v) Document and information transfers;
- (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.)



Karen Towers
Education Team Leader, LAC/RSD/EDU

Concurrence



Rose Rakas
Office Director, LAC/RSD

Clearance page:

Victor Bullen, LAC/BEO