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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:	Civil Society Resilience Strengthening Activity		
Assistance Objective:	Governing Justly and Democratically		
Program Area:	Civil Society		
Country(ies) and/or Operating Unit:	Serbia		
Originating Office:	USAID Serbia/ODEG	Date: 04/20/2021	
PAD Level RCE: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DCN of Original RCE/IEE:		
RCE/IEE Amendment: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DCN of Amendment(s):		
Supplemental RCE: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
If Yes, Purpose of Amendment:			
DCN(s) of Related EA/IEE/RCE/ER(s):			
Implementation Start/End:		LOP: 10/1/2021 – 10/1/2025	
Funding Amount:		LOP Amount: \$8,000,000	
Contract/Award Number (if known):			
IEE Expiration Date (if any):		Reporting due dates (if any):	
Recommended Determination: Categorical Exclusion			
Additional Elements:			
Government to Government: <input type="checkbox"/> Local Procurement: <input type="checkbox"/> Donor Co-Funded: <input type="checkbox"/>			

1. Project Purpose

The overall goal of the Civil Society Resilience Strengthening Activity (CSRS) is to ensure that Serbian civil society is more resilient to shrinking civic space challenges and able to perform its watchdog, advocacy and citizen's engagement roles as a result of an improved enabling environment.

2. Project Description and Climate Risk Screening

Objective 1: Improved ability of CS to respond to new and emerging civic space challenges

Anticipated Results:

- CSOs are more skilled and able to respond to shrinking space challenges
Illustrative activities may include: resiliency skills building: (digital skills, cyber security and internet freedom, PR & communication included crisis response; building in country legal expertise; local/international); strengthening cooperation with international HR and Legal experts and bodies, support for collective sectoral dialogue and action, network formation and facilitation, emergency response funding, legal aid and support for attacked activists;
- Financial sustainability of CSOs improved
Illustrative activities may include: expansion of fundraising efforts from one-off to institutional; continued private sector engagement efforts; support for advocacy, policy

dialogue and development of online crowdfunding regulation; fundraising capacity building for advocacy organizations (advantage to be given to groups working on women's rights, youth, marginalized groups)

3. Constituency base of CS expanded to include more non-traditional actors
Illustrative activities may include: increasing number of citizens supporting CSO activism, engaging private sector and academia actors, greater engagement of youth, older generations, rural and minority populations; unions and other non-traditional stakeholders, gathering info about constituencies & outreach to them; creating linkages between CSOs and "untraditional audiences"; increasing the number of CSO supporters, volunteers, and followers.
4. Sectoral integrity and cooperation enhanced
Illustrative activities may include: Fostering intra-sectoral dialogue on advancing civil society transparency and solidarity; developing and piloting self-regulation approaches; supporting sectoral transparency initiatives; developing strategies and support to deal with dis-information and non-democratic actors targeting genuine civil society.

Objective 2: Improved Enabling Environment for Civil Society

Anticipated Results:

5. Increased dialogue and cooperation between CS and Government of Serbia (GoS) in policy making and implementation
Illustrative activities may include: meaningful and constructive participation of CS in legislative working groups and oversight processes; multi stakeholder convening (public, private, CS) on issues of common interest at the national and local level; support for annual sectoral dialogue events; support for greater solidarity among different CS sectors in policy development; creating space for a dialogue regarding local issues of national importance (i.e. environmental issues, social inclusion, etc).
6. Legal Enabling Environment enhanced
Illustrative activities may include: Preserving positive existing frameworks for CS through advocacy and policy dialogue at the national and local level; advancing policies where there is opportunity (ie. antidiscrimination, crowdfunding, taxations) through technical assistance, advocacy; Exploring new mechanisms for greater engagement of civil society in policy making and oversight; data driven monitoring of relevant civil society trends at the national and local level.
7. Civil society public image improved
Illustrative activities may include: improving cooperation between CS and mainstream media; support for initiatives/campaigns of significant public importance intended to mobilize citizen support and demonstrate solidarity; support for public volunteerism, building new partnerships and networks between media and civil society; pilot grants for civil society media development, promoting civil society success stories.

An activity-level climate risk assessment is not required because the CDCS Climate Risk Screening did not identify any moderate or high risks for the IR 1.2: Informed Citizen Participation Increased.

3. Justification for Categorical Exclusion Determination

The activities 1-7 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 to 7 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.).

4. 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):

- i. Programs of river basin development;
- ii. Irrigation and water management;
- iii. Agricultural land leveling;
- iv. Drainage projects;
- v. Large scale agricultural mechanization;
- vi. Resettlement projects;
- vii. New land development;
- viii. Penetration road building and road improvement;
- ix. Powerplants;
- x. Industrial plants; and
- xi. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Recommended Determination for Categorical Exclusion Clearances

Approval :	<p>Shanley Pinchotti <small>Digitally signed by Shanley Pinchotti Date: 2021.04.22 16:46:50 +02'00'</small></p> <hr/> <p>Shanley Pinchotti, Acting Mission Director</p>	<hr/> <p>Date</p>
Clearance:	<p>Ivan Vukojevic <small>Digitally signed by Ivan Vukojevic Date: 2021.04.22 16:41:17 +02'00'</small></p> <hr/> <p>Ivan Vukojevic, Mission Environmental Officer</p>	<hr/> <p>Date</p>
Clearance:	<p>Jelena Avramovic <small>Digitally signed by Jelena Avramovic Date: 2021.04.23 09:55:47 +02'00'</small></p> <hr/> <p>Jelena Avramovic, AOR/COR</p>	<hr/> <p>Date</p>
Concurrence:	<p>POOJAN BHASKER TRIPATHI (affiliate) <small>Digitally signed by POOJAN BHASKER TRIPATHI (affiliate) Date: 2021.04.27 10:10:49 -04'00'</small></p> <hr/> <p>Poojan Tripathi E&E Bureau Environmental Officer</p>	<hr/> <p>Date</p>

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