REQUEST FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DATA:

Country/Region: Syria

Activity Name: Syria Recovery Trust Fund (SRTF)

Objective: The United States is acting in partnership with the international community to assist the Syrian Coalition as it works toward building a democratic, inclusive and unified post-Asad Syria. This contribution will enable the United States to act as a lead donor in the multi-donor Syria Recovery Trust Fund (SRTF) and to help catalyze additional donations from the international community. This contribution of $15 million to the SRTF will help support the Syrian Opposition's ability to both strengthen its operations and help local councils and communities in liberated areas to procure and expand the delivery of basic goods and essential services.

Funding Begins: October 2013

LOP Amount: $15.0 million


IEE Amendment (YIN) N If "YES", Filename & date of original IEE ______

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED: (Place X where applicable)

Categorical Exclusion: [X]    Deferral: 
Positive Determination: []    Negative Determination with Condition: []
With conditions [ ]    Exemption [ ]

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & RECOMMENDED THRESHOLD DECISION:

Pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(a), environmental analysis/evaluation is required for new projects, programs or activities authorized by USAID. This IEE evaluates activities planned under multi-donor Syria Recovery Trust Fund and the potential environmental impact that will result from SRTF investments. The SRTF's Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) has determined that a Categorical Exclusion is appropriate for the actions described in the document.

Background and Activity Description:

This USG contribution will enable the United States to act as a lead donor in the SRTF and to help catalyze additional donations from the international community. The SRTF will harmonize donor funding and activities, reduce transaction costs, provide opportunity to interact with transitional governmental structures, shadow alignments and non-governmental organizations and spread the risk of operating in difficult environment. This contribution will help fulfill Secretary Kerry's commitment in April to provide an additional $123 million in assistance to the Syrian opposition.

The SRTF will finance reconstruction activities to rebuild the country and alleviate the suffering of the Syrian population as a result of the ongoing conflict. It will mobilize and bundle resources necessary to support projects focused on the provision of essential services such as water, energy, basic health care and food production. Specific investments are not known at this time. Due to the current inability of the World Bank or UN to engage with the Syrian opposition, Germany and the UAE (co-chairs of the Friends of the Syrian People Economic Recovery and Development Working Group) created the SRTF, a multi-donor trust fund, to meet the immediate priority needs of the Syrian people in a transparent and accountable manner. Germany's Development Bank, KIW, will serve as the SRTF Trustee. The SRTF will coordinate donor funding and activities, and leverage contributions from a wide range of donors.

Per ADS 351.3.2.3.b where a significant purpose of a grant to a Bilateral Donor (in this case, KIW) is accomplished upon disbursement of USAID funds, such funds may lose their federal character and specific application of USAID policies and procedures are therefore often limited.

While specific investments are not known at this time, the Framework Agreement which governs USG's participation in the SRTF includes provisions that prohibit the finance of expenditures that are harmful to the environment:

- hydro chlorofluorocarbons and halons as well as other substances subject to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the facilities for their production or use,
- asbestos, as well as substances and products containing asbestos

A condition of our participation in the SRTF is a permanent position on the Management Committee. In this capacity, the USG will have the opportunity to review proposals recommended for funding and has the option of reaching back to USAID for assistance if it is felt that
attention to the environment on a particular project is inadequate.

**Justification for Categorical Exclusion Request:**
The proposed activities are fully within the category listed in Paragraph (c) (i), 'Categorical Exclusions' of Section 216.2, "Applicability of Procedures of Title 22CFR Part 216,"AID Environmental Procedures."

For the class of Categorical Exclusions pursuant to 22CFR 216.2(c) (1) is recommended for:
1. The action does not have an effect on the natural or physical environment 22CFR 216.2(c) (1) (i).

A Categorical Exclusion pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(c) (2), is recommended for:
1. all education, technical assistance, and training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i),
2. all controlled experimentation exclusively for the purpose of research and field evaluation which are confined to small areas and carefully monitored 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(ii).
APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED:

Bureau Environmental Officer: USAID/ME.TS

Clearance: ME/MEA

John Wilson [Signature] Date 10/25/13

Ricki Gold [Signature] Date

Shereen Faraj [Signature] Date