REQUEST FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

PROGRAM/PROJECT DATA:
Program/Activity Number: Education/Project LEARN (Learning Enhanced Across Rwanda Now!)
Country/Region: Rwanda/East Africa
Program/Activity Title: Education/Project LEARN (Learning Enhanced Across Rwanda Now!)

Foreign Assistance Objective 3: Investing in People
Program Area 3.2: Education
Program Element: 3.2.1: Basic Education

Funding Begin: FY 2013        Funding End: FY 2018        LOP Amount: $45,621,593

IEE Expiration: January 20, 2020

IEE Prepared by: USAID/Rwanda, Education Team (Emily Routté)

Current Date: December 16, 2014

IEE Amendment (Y/N): No. It updates and replaces the 696-0007 “Rwanda_Education_RCE_011811”

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED: (Place X where applicable)
Categorical Exclusion:    X    Negative Determination:        ________
Positive Determination:        ________    Deferral:        ________

ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS: none

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

USAID/Rwanda seeks to institute Project LEARN for Rwanda’s education sector. The principal goal of this initiative is to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for children in primary grades, in order to increase opportunities for Rwandan children to succeed in schooling. The two main objectives leading to this goal include: 1) improving quality of instruction by strengthening systems for teacher training, and 2) increasing access to high quality, relevant teaching and learning materials for both teacher training and primary school students. Project LEARN also aims to encourage community participation in education, particularly through empowering Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs).

Activities covered under the Project LEARN are listed in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Activity</th>
<th>Intended Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| L3 (Literacy, Language, and Learning) | • Improved learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy, with a focus on the early grades  
• Improved access to teaching and learning materials  
• Improved quality of instruction |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Activity</th>
<th>Intended Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Mobile Libraries</td>
<td>• Improved access to reading materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Initiatives</td>
<td>• Increased culture of reading throughout Rwanda, through support of initiatives such as the Rwanda Reads network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACH (Teacher Effectiveness Achieved)</td>
<td>• Improved learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy, with a focus on the early grades</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enhanced teacher skills and pedagogy according to best practices appropriate for the Rwandan context for the teaching of reading and math, and for transition to English as the medium of instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improved access to teaching and learning materials, particularly reading materials</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strengthened teacher education systems, including creating and supporting a link between pre-service teacher education institutions and continuous in-service professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOPE (School-Community Partnership in Education)</td>
<td>• Increased community participation in education in order to support student literacy and numeracy acquisition, to promote a culture of reading, and to increase transparency and accountability within schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCOP (Mentorship Community of Practice)</td>
<td>• Increased use of ICT to improve instructional practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED:

CLEARANCE:
Mission Director: ______________________________ Date: ____________
   Peter Malnak

CONCURRENCE:
Bureau Environmental Officer, USAID/AFR/SD:__________________ Date: ______________
   Brian Hirsch
   Approved:__________
   Disapproved: ______

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ADDITIONAL CLEARANCES: (Type Name under Signature Line)

Education Officer: _________________ Date: ________________
   Susan Bruckner

Mission Environmental Officer: _____________________ Date: ________________
   Aimée Mpambara

Regional Environmental Officer: _________________ Date: ________________
   David Kinyua

Distribution List:
USAID/Rwanda Education Office A/CORs and Activity Managers
USAID/Rwanda Office of Acquisitions and Assistance
USAID/Rwanda Program Office
MEO, REA, RLA
APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED:

CLEARANCE:
Mission Director: Peter Malnak
Date: January 22, 2015

CONCURRENCE:
Bureau Environmental Officer, USAID/AFR/SD: Brian Hirsh
Date: 3/31/15

Approved: V
Disapproved: ___

File No: Rwanda_LEARN_RCE_2015_2020.doc

ADDITIONAL CLEARANCES: (Type Name under Signature Line)

Education Officer: Susan Bruckner
Date: 1/26/17

Mission Environmental Officer: Aimée Mpamban
Date: 12/1/16

Regional Environmental Officer: David Kinyua
Date: Jan 21, 2015

Distribution List:
USAID/Rwanda Education Office A/CORs and Activity Managers
USAID/Rwanda Office of Acquisitions and Assistance
USAID/Rwanda Program Office
MEO, REA, RLA
JUSTIFICATION REQUEST FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Title: Project LEARN (Learning Enhanced Across Rwanda Now!)
Foreign Assistance Objective 3: Investing in People
Program Area 3.2: Education
Program Element 3.2.1: Basic Education

1. Background and Activity Description

The goal of Project LEARN is to improve literacy outcomes for children in primary schools in Rwanda. This will be achieved by strengthening pre- and in-service teacher training systems, developing evidenced-based teaching and learning materials, and encouraging community participation in education to create a “culture of reading,” particularly through empowering Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) through the head teachers to promote reading in and out of school.

Project LEARN will achieve two key objectives: 1) Improved quality of instruction through teacher training, and 2) Increased access to high quality, relevant teaching and learning materials for both teacher training and primary school students.

- **Improved Quality of Instruction**

This component includes strengthening the capacity of MINEDUC and its relevant autonomous agencies - Rwandan Education Board (REB), and the University of Rwanda College of Education (URCE) and its affiliated Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), to design and deliver high-quality pre-service teacher education that supports the national curriculum, demonstrates effective practices for teaching literacy in the early grades and for supporting the transition to English as medium of instruction in P4, includes a pre-service practicum, and is complemented by and linked to effective in-service continuous professional development.

**Illustrative Interventions**
- Support the implementation a structured pre-service practicum teaching program that promotes and reinforces best practices in early literacy acquisition and the transition between Kinyarwanda and English
- Create linkages between TTCs and in-service training and professional development
- Enhance teacher training curricula and materials to reflect a pedagogical framework for reading instruction in Kinyarwanda and the transition from Kinyarwanda to English
- Engage and support the URCE and the Teacher Development & Management (TDM) department of REB, including TTCs and districts in conducting research and evaluation related to literacy (teaching and learning) and formative assessment
- Create a strategic plan and publish guidelines for the development of literacy instructional materials and supplementary low-cost reading materials for students
- Develop and train pre- and in-service teachers on specialized support for increasing skills and tools relevant to formative assessment in reading and English language within the primary classroom
- Improve the capacity of head teachers to foster a strong partnership among their schools, parents, and communities to support and hold schools accountable for delivering a quality education
- Design and implement strategies at the national, district, and school levels for effective parental and community mobilization and engagement in promoting literacy and a culture of reading in schools and communities
Increased access to high quality relevant teaching and learning materials

This component includes the development of systems to increase access to high quality relevant teaching and learning materials that support effective pre- and in-service teacher training, student learning, effective use of ICT, and promotion of a reading culture.

Illustrative Interventions

- Support for innovative approaches to developing teaching and learning materials (TLM), such as teacher-generated, multi-media, and interactive learning tools and materials for early literacy, transition from Kinyarwanda to English, and numeracy
- Training for teachers and instructors in the use of new materials
- Development of TLM that incorporate gender sensitive and empowering messages
- Development of TLM and parent resources that incorporate relevant nutrition and healthy habit messaging
- Production of big books for early grade reading in Kinyarwanda
- Support for the development/acquisition of grade-level appropriate literary tools to assist students in language acquisition – “pictionarys” and dictionaries in Kinyarwanda and English
- Foster and support public/private partnerships to improve instructional and/or reading material production in Kinyarwanda and English

2. Justification for Categorical Exclusion Request

The activities described above justify Categorical Exclusions, pursuant to 22 CFR §216.2(c)(1) and (2), for which an Initial Environmental Examination, or an Environmental Assessment are not required because the actions do not have an effect on the natural or physical environment.

The program interventions, as currently planned, fall into the following classes of action:
(a) education, technical assistance and training (216.2(c)(2)(i));
(b) analyses, studies, and workshops (216.2(c)(2)(iii));
(c) document and information transfer (216.2(c)(2)(v)); and
(d) activities that will develop the capability of recipient countries to engage in development planning (216.2(c)(2)(xiv)).

As currently planned, no intervention will directly affect the environment.

If during implementation, activities are considered under the education program that are outside the activities described above, and that may directly affect the environment (such as construction or rehabilitation of facilities), an IEE or amended Request for a Categorical Exclusion shall be submitted, as appropriate.