REQUEST FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
AMENDMENT #1

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DATA:

Program/Activity Number: (AID-623-IO-15-00001)

Country/Region: Somalia/East Africa

Program/Activity Title: Alternative Basic Education for Pastoralists
Somalia Education Fellowship
Somalia Education Sector Strategic Plan

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

Foreign Assistance Objective 6: Program Design & Learning (PD&L) and
Administrative & Oversight (A&O)
Program Area 6.1: Program Design and Learning

Funding Begin: 04/1/2015 Funding End: 4/1/2020 LOP Amount: $20,000,000

RCE Prepared By: Fatuma Adan, Program Management Assistant, Social Services and
Economic Growth, USAID/KEA/Somalia Office Current date: 02/24/2016

RCE Expiration: 04/01/2020

RCE Amendment (Y/N): Y Alternative Basic Education for Pastoralists Somalia
Education Fellowship. File #Somalia_Education IIP (DOC) (PDF), approved 2015-03-16

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

ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS: (Place X where applicable)
CONDITIONS ______ PVO/NGO: ______ PIO: X

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The purpose of this Amendment #1 to the Request for a Categorical Exclusion (RCE), approved
on 3/16/2015, is to include additional factors relevant to the project. The project is awarded to a
Public International Organization (PIO). Title 22 CFR 216 procedures and ADS 308, allows the
PIO to use its environmental policies and procedures in implementing USAID funded activities.

The activities described 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.

Specifically, USAID’s PIO grant to UNICEF for Alternative Basic Education for Pastoralists,
is recommended for a Categorical Exclusion based on 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(vi), because this activity
is a contribution to an international organization by the United States that is not for the purpose of carrying out a specifically identifiable project or projects. As further explained in ADS 308.11.3(c).


If during implementation, activities are above framework are considered, activities other than those described in the subject categorical exclusions, 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, to the BEO as appropriate.
APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED:  (Type name under signature line)

CLEARANCE:

Mission Director:  Karen Freeman

Date:  3/3/16

CONCURRENCE:

Bureau Environmental Officer (AFR):  Brian Hirsch

Date:  3/17/16

Filename:  Somali Alternative Basic Education for Pastoralists RCE Amendment

ADDITIONAL CLEARANCES:

Program Management Assistant, Social Services & Economic Growth ABE A/AOR:  Fatuma Adan

Date:  02/29/2016

Mission Environmental Officer/Regional Environmental Advisor:  David Kinyua

Date:  02/29/2016

Somalia Office Director:  Tyler Beckelman

Date:  3/3/11/16

Deputy Regional Mission Director:  Steve Olive

Date:  3/3/16

For information:
Lily Beshawred, Supervisory Program Officer, USAID/KEA/Somalia Office
REQUEST FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

1. Background and Activity Description

1.1 Background

More than two decades of conflict have nearly destroyed Somalia’s educational system, which is characterized by poor quality, insufficient numbers of qualified teachers, and inadequate resources. Enrollment in primary and secondary schools is low across the country, even in the relatively stable Somaliland and Puntland regions. As a result, the educational deficit in Somalia is one of the most acute in the world. Of the nearly 1.7 million primary school-age children in the country, only 710,000 are enrolled in school. And only 6 percent of an estimated population of 2 million 15-24 year olds is enrolled in secondary school. Somalia’s pastoralist populations face further impediments to education as communities are forced to move with their children and livestock in search of water and pasture, which makes receiving education in normal, static schools impractical and often impossible. Because of this deficit, youth and children miss out on critical services, face limited economic opportunities, and become increasingly vulnerable to recruitment by extremists and/or criminal elements.

Although the education sector in Somalia faces numerous challenges and constraints, political progress in the formation and the consolidation of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), combined with improvements in security and access have opened new opportunities for greater positive impact in the education sector. The USAID/East Africa/ Somalia Office is programming new activities under its education strategy, which will support the FGS in provision of basic education in the hard-hit and vulnerable South Central region, contribute to the training and capacity building of teachers, and support the development of an overall national education strategy. In doing so, these activities will directly contribute to the goals of the U.S. Government to help the people of Somalia achieve a just and lasting peace based on democratic principles, to protect human rights, to relieve human suffering, and to encourage the economic policies needed for sustainable and broad-based growth.

1.2 Description of Illustrative Activities

Support for USAID’s education strategy will directly contribute to the Foreign Assistance Objective three “Investing in People” under the Program Area 3.2 “Basic Education” and Foreign Assistance Objective 6 “Program Design & Learning (PD&L) and Administrative & Oversight (A&O), under the Program Area 6.1 “Program Design & Learning”, as stated in the Somalia Stabilization Project Appraisal Document (PAD), approved on July 9, 2013. Key activities are as follows:

a) Supporting Alternative Basic Education (ABE) for pastoralists

UNICEF, a PIO, has extensive experience in responding to the needs of hard-to-reach marginalized pastoralist children in Somalia through Alternative Basic Education (ABE) programs. To date, interventions have focused on Somaliland and Puntland; this agreement will allow UNICEF to expand the ABE model to South Central Somalia.

Planned activities under this agreement include utilization of the ABE model, which focuses on flexible hours, building semi-permanent Temporary Learning Space (TLS) and latrines with separate facilities for girls, Support to the Ministry to develop these minimum standards for TLS is part of the capacity-building component, establishing mobile schools and providing the
communities with mobile school’s teaching and shelter materials to the target education hubs that will enables them to continue benefiting from education during, mobile camel libraries, and facilitating interactive radio instruction (IRI) to enhance the quality of learning and conducts social mobilization campaigns to increase enrollment of children in target communities. This program will pilot the delivery of quality ABE programs in at least 15 pastoralist communities in four districts of Gede region in Central South Somalia (Luuq, Doolow, Belet Hawa and Elwak), that have been marginalized from education services. ABE relies on a specific curriculum for basic education, delivered in an accelerated format—condensing grades 1-8 in five years through a flexible timetable. Specifically, the school day consists of five hours of instruction five days a week. The primary mode of instruction is through IRI that is guided by a trained teacher, rather than in traditional classrooms. Teachers for ABE are sourced from local communities, and are provided with teaching materials and ongoing training and professional guidance and supervision by project staff.

The target groups for ABE programs are children and youth who have been disconnected from school for significant periods of time or have never been to school and are thus not able to follow up when studying within formal education structures. ABE provides uneducated and under-educated populations with the means to integrate (or re-integrate) into the formal education systems while at the same time providing basic education to youth who may not be planning to integrate into the formal system. To receive instruction, students receive textbooks and learning materials and radios.

In Somalia, ABE initiatives have been implemented directly by the Ministry of Education (MoE) through its existing central, zonal and district level structures, to ensure ownership and sustainability of the interventions. In line with this approach, the proposed activity will include the MoE as the main implementation partner and will work through its structures at the central, provincial, and district levels. In areas where the MoE has limited access to disadvantaged districts and communities, UNICEF will engage local and/or international NGOs in the work. The guiding principles for identifying NGO partners are their ability to pursue positive results for children and to efficiently utilize resources.

b) Promoting the next generation of educational leaders through the Somalia Education Fellowship (SEF)

At the African Leaders Summit in August 2014, Administrator Shah made a commitment to Somalia President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud to support scholarship opportunities for future Somali education leaders to study in the United States. The newly-created Somalia SEF activity will identify and support emerging Somali leaders in the field of education to pursue Master’s degree or certificate programs at U.S. universities, beginning in the 2015 fall semester. Eligible subjects for study include Education Administration, Educational Leadership, Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Policy, Special Education, or Cognition and Development. The SEF is a one-time activity with finite funding; there are no guarantees that there will be any future funding to support future cohorts of SEF Fellows. SEF will enable rising education professionals to upgrade their sector knowledge, administration, and leadership skills, strengthen their home institutions and place of work, and support USAID’s high-level commitment to improving education in Somalia.

The FORECAST II Contractor will provide a comprehensive package from solicitation for SEF applications through implementation during the academic year and follow-up upon repatriation of the Fellow. The Contractor will develop an outreach and promotion plan and will independently conduct recruitment and screening of candidates, based on pre-established, Mission-approved
criteria, and submit the candidates’ packages to the Mission for final selection and approval.

Specifically, the Contractor will provide the USAID/East Africa/Somalia Office with the following support, as requested:

- Develop outreach and program promotion plan
- Conduct recruitment, screening and selection of candidates for Mission approval
- Arrange for any university required or other competency testing (TOEFL, GRE, GMAT, etc)
- Design and conduct customized pre-departure in-country preparation, as needed
- Identify appropriate universities and handle all placement actions for the Fellows in the selected programs; provide program management and financial disbursements; maintain frequent communication with university, the Fellows and the Mission for the duration of scholarship study and facilitate Fellows’ timely return to country upon program completion.
- Plan and deliver pre-departure orientation and arrival orientation
- Handle administrative, travel, health and accident insurance enrollment, logistical and other support needs associated with the scholarship study; monitor Fellows’ progress and keep the Mission apprised of results
- Develop and administer post-scholarship study support activities and follow-on programs
- Report Success Stories and develop other public relations materials to promote understanding of the SEF achievements

c) Providing technical advice to the MoE to help develop a Somalia Education Sector Strategic Plan (SESSP)

In addition to USAID’s strong commitment to partnering with the FGS to increase educational opportunities and livelihood skills among Somali children, youth, and young professionals, USAID Administrator Shah committed support at the highest level of the FGS to help develop a national education strategy. This will serve as an important tool for building government capacity to deliver tangible improvements in educational quality and services for all Somalis under a national framework.

In September 2014, the Senior Field Technical Advisor from USAID/Washington E3/Education Office carried out a temporary deployment assignment (TDY) to provide technical guidance to the Somalia Office’s initial planning for development of the strategy. Findings from the TDY confirmed that the strategy should build on the three current regional education sector strategic plans, harmonize approaches and goals to the extent possible, and offer a more realistic and comprehensive plan and technical approach. The strategy process will begin with a nation-wide data collection and analysis which will be validated with an array of education stakeholders. Based on the information emerging from the data collection exercise, a strategy will be compiled under the leadership of the MoEs with a strategic plan (SESSP) for South Central, Somaliland, and Puntland. The activity will be done in full collaboration with the Global Partnership for Education and other development partners.

Following these efforts, the Somalia Office will award a task order (TO) under the ABE ACCESS Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract to procure strategic development support services for the development of the SESSP. The TO will support this design-and-build activity, with the following:
• Establish a two-person Scoping Team with expertise in education and evaluation in conflict-affected environments and a two-person Strategy Development team of experts in evaluation and the education sector planning in conflict-affected environments
• Rapidly analyze primary, secondary, tertiary, and non-formal education needs across Somalia
• Develop an action plan (costed process and timeframe)
• Carry out the action plan to develop the SESSP

2. Justification for Categorical Exclusion Request

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

The PIO grant activity is recommended for a Categorical Exclusion based on 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(vi), because this activity is a contribution to an international organization by the United States that is not for the purpose of carrying out a specifically identifiable project or projects. As further explained in ADS 308.11.3(c):

“For the reasons outlined in section 308.3.11.b and because of the nature of the awards, program contributions not for the purpose of carrying out a specifically identifiable project or projects, as well as all general contributions, will normally be categorically excluded from environmental analysis under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(vi). In awarding cost-type grants to PIOs with their own environmental policies, for activities that are not exempt or categorically excluded from environmental analysis under 22 CFR 216, USAID should strive to rely upon the PIO’s application of its own environmental policies to the activity proposed and include appropriate language in the PIO agreement. Any environmental conditions proposed to ensure adequate environmental review of the activity proposed should have due regard to both the independence and sovereignty of the PIO and the purpose and intent of the environmental impact assessment requirements of USAID.”


UNICEF will provide USAID with progress reports documenting the ABE’s fund’s environmental and social compliance. In the event that environmental and social compliance is found to be lacking or insufficient to satisfy USAID’s environmental compliance policy codified in 22 CFR 216, further contributions to UNICEF may be halted. A copy of this Request for Categorical Exclusion will be forwarded to UNICEF and explained by the AOR and MEO.