# REQUEST FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

## PROJECT/ACTIVITY DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project/Activity Name:</th>
<th>Practical Education Research for Optimal Reading and Management (PERFORM) Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Location(s) (Country/Region):</td>
<td>South Africa/Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment (Yes/No), if Yes indicate # (1, 2...):</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation Start/End Dates (FY or M/D/Y):</td>
<td>05/2015 – 05/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Amended, specify New End Date:</td>
<td>05/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitation/Contract/Award Number(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing Partner(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracking ID of Related RCE/IEE (if any):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ORGANIZATIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementing Operating Unit(s): (e.g. Mission or Bureau or Office)</th>
<th>South Africa Regional Environment, Education and Democracy and Governance Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Affected Operating Unit(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead BEO Bureau:</td>
<td>AFR Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Operating Unit(s): (e.g. Mission or Bureau or Office)</td>
<td>USAID/Southern Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Account(s) (if available):</td>
<td>DA – Basic Education and Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Funding Amount:</td>
<td>60,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Amended, specify funding amount:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Amended, specify new funding total:</td>
<td>60,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared by:</td>
<td>Kevin Roberts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Prepared:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE REVIEW DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis Type:</th>
<th>☑ Request for Categorical Exclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Determination(s):</td>
<td>☑ Categorical Exclusion(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCE Expiration Date (if applicable):</td>
<td>05/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Analyses/Reporting Required:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate Risks Identifed (#):</td>
<td>Low ___ Moderate ___ High ___</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THRESHOLD DETERMINATION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

PROJECT/ACTIVITY SUMMARY

The Practical Education Research for Optimal Reading and Management (PERFORM) Project contributes to improved education in South Africa through four objectives: “improved methodologies for primary grade teaching and teacher training;” “increased quality of educational administration and support;” “Government of South Africa support for reading initiatives built at district, provincial and/or national level;” and “Evidence-based policies and practices for sustainable growth promoted.” The project uses the demonstration effect and rigorous evaluation to support the Government of South Africa to bring proven education solutions to scale, thus increasing the impact and value of national investments in the education sector.

Prior to this RCE, USAID’s South African education programs operated under another RCE that was drafted in 2010, and then amended in 2015 to add activities and increase funding levels. After nearly 10 years, USAID/South Africa’s activities remain largely the same. However, in preparation for this new RCE, activities were reevaluated for their scope and potential environmental impacts. Additionally, a Climate Risk screening was performed according to guidance in ADS201mal. As a result of the new content, this RCE was prepared as a new one, rather than as an amendment of the old RCE.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATIONS

Upon approval of this document, the determinations become affirmed, per Agency regulations (22 CFR 216).

TABLE 1: ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects/Activities</th>
<th>Categorical Exclusion Citation (if applicable)</th>
<th>Deferral¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng Grade R, Catalytic, Grade Reading Study II</td>
<td>§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.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBE Pre-Primary Audit, PERFORMANCE Evaluation IDIQ</td>
<td>§216.2(c)(2)(iii) Analyses, studies, academic or research workshops and meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended Finance Basic Education</td>
<td>§216.2(c)(2)(x) Support for intermediate credit institutions when the objective is to assist in the capitalization of the institution or part thereof and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Deferrals must be cleared through an Amendment to this RCE prior to implementation of any deferred activities.
CLIMATE RISK MANAGEMENT

The climate risk screening has determined that due to the technical assistance nature of the proposed illustrative activities the overall climate risk is low, and no further action will be taken.

BEO SPECIFIED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

IMPLEMENTATION

In accordance with 22 CFR 216 and Agency policy, the conditions and requirements of this document become mandatory upon approval. This includes the relevant limitations, conditions and requirements in this document as stated in Section 3 of this RCE and any BEO Specified Conditions of Approval.
USAID APPROVAL OF INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EXAMINATION

PROJECT/ACTIVITY NAME: Practical Education Research for Optimal Reading and Management (PERFORM) Project

Bureau Tracking ID:

Approval: [John Groarke], Mission Director  
Date 12/11/2019

Clearance: Cleared via email  
[Kevin Roberts], Education Team lead  
Date 04 Nov 2019

Clearance:  
[Judith Muhomba], Mission Environmental Officer  
Date 06 Nov 2019

Clearance:  
[Jeanette Normand], Regional Environmental Advisor  
Date 06 Nov 2019

Clearance: Clear via Email  
[Collin Quinn], Climate Integration Lead  
Date 12/11/2019

Concurrence:  
[Brian Hirsch], Bureau Environmental Officer  
Date 12/11/2019

Concurrence:  
[NAME], Bureau Environmental Officer [other BEOs required for cross Bureau funding or geographic responsibilities]  
Date

DISTRIBUTION:
1.0 PROJECT AND ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE RCE

The purpose of this document is to establish that all proposed projects/activities belong to classes of actions eligible for Categorical Exclusions as set out in Agency regulations (22 CFR 216.2(c)) and that there are no foreseeable significant direct or indirect impacts that would preclude them from receiving a Categorical Exclusion. Upon approval of this document, the Categorical Exclusions are affirmed for the project/activity. This analysis also documents the results of the project/activity level Climate Risk Management process in accordance with USAID policy (specifically, ADS 201 mandatory reference 201mal).

This RCE is a critical element of USAID’s mandatory environmental review and compliance process meant to achieve environmentally sound activity design and implementation.

1.2 PROJECT/ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

“Practical Education Research for Optimal Reading and Management” contributes to the achievement of the USAID South Africa Country Development Cooperation Strategy’s Development Objective 2: “South African resource effectiveness advanced in targeted sectors.” This project advances Intermediate Result 2.3, “Education innovations for improving literacy piloted and tested” and Intermediate Result 2.2 “Evidence-based policies and practices for sustainable growth promoted.” The project advances a top priority of South Africa’s National Development Plan, “Improving Education, Training and Innovation,” as well as 2018 USAID Education Policy which encourages innovative programming and leveraging private sector resources.

1.3 PROJECT/ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Current and foreseen activities that extend past the current RCE termination date are as follows:

**Name: Early Grade Reading Study II**
**Implementer: Wits Health Consortium**
**Total TEC: $3,500,000.**
**Dates: 10/21/2015 - 06/30/2021**

EGRS II builds on EGRS I (North West Province) and works in partnership with the Department of Basic Education to evaluate and compare the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of interventions focused on improving the performance of Grade 1 and 2 learners in English First Additional Language in Mpumalanga Province. The interventions are based on the "triple cocktail" of scripted lesson plans, classroom resources and ongoing support for teachers. The evaluation compares the cost and impact of traditional paper-based resources and face-to-face coaching for teachers with tablet-based resources and virtual coaching. A cost extension of the study was approved in May 2018 to include Grade 3 in 2019 and extend the end date to June 2021.

**Name: PERFORMANCE Education Evaluation IDIQ**
**Implementer: Khulisa management Services**
**Total TEC: $5,000,000**
Dates: 11/08/2017 – 11/07/2022
This contract delivers a range of evaluations across the USAID portfolio of activities and in response to requests from the Department of Basic Education. Evaluations include impact studies of interventions, performance evaluations of provincial roll outs, literature reviews of relevant research and meta-analyses of results across interventions.

Name: Gauteng Grade R
Implementer: TBD
Total TEC: $3,700,000
Dates: TBD
Through a Global Development Alliance USAID will contribute ½ of the funding for the US$7.4 Million activity that will bring Grade R teacher training, materials and curriculum development to public schools in Gauteng.

Name: DBE Pre-Primary Audit
Implementer TBD
Total TEC: $1,400,000
Dates: TBD
In a restructuring of responsibilities of Government of South Africa, The Department of Basic Education has been tasked with assuming the responsibilities of pre-primary education. They have secured US$1 million in funding and are soliciting donors for resources to perform an audit that will inform them of the state of pre-primary education in South Africa. This audit will focus on infrastructure, curriculum, and resources available, including resources for persons with disabilities.

Name: Blended Finance Basic Education GDA Activity
Implementer: TBD
Total TEC: $5,000,000 Basic Education/ $800,000 Higher Education
Dates: TBD
E3/Education Office released an addendum to the GDA APS to increase access to quality education through public-private partnerships. Specifically, USAID seeks partnerships related to the education sector that can conduct the following activities: (1) identify, test, and refine investment models; (2) innovate in service delivery and/or resource mobilization through private sector approaches; and (3) identify and/or address challenges, gaps, and barriers to private sector investment in the education sector. These activities will help ensure that the appropriate financial support and capital is available to small and growing businesses that provide education and training or ancillary education services. South Africa is a focus country for the addendum and we are expected to be able to provide commentary funds for subsequent activities.

Name: Catalytic
Implementer: TBD
Total TEC: $2,000,000 Higher Education
Dates: TBD
This activity which will be funded in conjunction with the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation will partner with the Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college system to improve TVET college graduation rates; increase number of “work ready” TVET graduates; and create a more impactful industry-wide approach to working with TVET colleges to align curricula with labor market needs.
2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

2.1 JUSTIFICATION FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

The activities under the Practical Education Research for Optimal Reading and Management (PERFORM) Project are among the classes of actions listed in 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2) and have no foreseeable significant direct or indirect adverse effect on the environment. Therefore, under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(1), neither an IEE nor an EA will be required for these activities. Instead, a Categorical Exclusion is recommended for the projects/activities described above in Section 1.3 as follows:

TABLE 2: RECOMMENDED DETERMINATION FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project/Activity and Sub-Activity #</th>
<th>Recommended Determination for Categorical Exclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng Grade R, Catalytic, Grade Reading Study II</td>
<td>§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.)</td>
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<td>DBE Pre-Primary Audit, PERFORMANCE Education Evaluation IDIQ</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended Finance Basic Education</td>
<td>§216.2(c)(2)(x) Support for intermediate credit institutions when the objective is to assist in the capitalization of the institution or part thereof and when such support does not involve reservation of the right to review and approve individual loans made by the institution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 CLIMATE RISK MANAGEMENT

This section summarizes the methodology used and findings of the CRM Screening (see Annex 1). The project design team, in consultation with the CIL, considered the potential effect of climate risks/stressors on the sustainability of the project (changing precipitation patterns, rising temperature, floods, droughts, fires, landslides, etc.) in addition to the impact of project activities on the climate (increased greenhouse gas emissions, land use changes, etc.).
3.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

The categorical exclusions recommended in this document apply only to projects/activities and sub-activities described herein.

Other projects/activities that may arise must be subject to an environmental analysis and the appropriate documentation prepared and approved, whether it be a new Request for Categorical Exclusion, an amendment, or other type of 22 CFR 216 document.

It is confirmed that the projects/activities described herein do not involve actions normally having a significant effect on the environment, including those described in 22 CFR 216.2(d).

3.1 MANDATORY INCLUSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS IN SOLICITATIONS, AWARDS, BUDGETS, AND WORK PLANS

USAID will ensure the environmental compliance requirements are incorporated into solicitations, awards, budgets, and work plans, including relevant limitations of Section 3 above. In addition, climate risk management requirements will also be incorporated.

3.2 GENERAL IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING REQUIREMENTS (IF APPLICABLE)

USAID will ensure that the following requirements are met:

- Provide briefings for Implementing Partner (IP) on environmental compliance responsibilities
- Ensure integration of compliance responsibilities in prime and sub-awards and grant agreements;
- Ensure compliance with applicable partner country requirements
- Annual review of project activities to ensure that scope is still covered by Categorical Exclusion.

ATTACHMENTS:

Annex 1: Climate Risk Management Summary Table for Projects
### ANNEX 1. ACTIVITY CLIMATE RISK MANAGEMENT SUMMARY TABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks/Defined or Illustrative Interventions</th>
<th>Climate Risks²</th>
<th>Risk Rating³</th>
<th>How Risks are Addressed⁴</th>
<th>Opportunities to Strengthen Climate Resilience⁵</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity developed of government department to ensure improved early grade reading instruction and outcomes</td>
<td>Increased temperatures.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Training will take place at provincial offices in urban areas supplied by water and electricity. Therefore, climate risk should have minimal impact on the activities.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1) identify, test, and refine investment models;  
2) innovate in service delivery and/or resource mobilization through private sector approaches; and  
3) identify and/or address challenges, gaps, and barriers to private sector investment in the education sector. | Increased frequency of extreme events and flooding which may impact on ability to attend training /workshop sessions.  
Reduced rainfall in the dry season and increased drought conditions. |  |  |  |

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² List key risks related to the defined/illustrative interventions identified in the screening and additional assessment.  
³ Low/Moderate/ High  
⁴ Describe how risks have been addressed in activity design and/or additional steps that will be taken in implementation. If you chose to accept the risk, briefly explain why.  
⁵ Describe opportunities to achieve multiple development objectives by integrating climate resilience or mitigation measures.