

PD-ABW-627

**EcoLinks Partnership Grants
Revised Annual Workplan
July 1, 2001– June 30, 2002**

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2001 Workplan EcoLinks Partnership Grants

I. Introduction

A. EcoLinks Structure and Objectives

EcoLinks is a cooperative program for Central and Eastern Europe and the New Independent States (CEE & E region) funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). EcoLinks is comprised of three components that are managed by different organizations:

Information Technology

The Information Technology component promotes greater use of the Internet to facilitate regional partnering and share information on environmental practices and technologies. The Ecolinks website, managed by Devtech Systems, provides a comprehensive guide to environmental information on the Internet, including links to environmental and business information sources. The Clean Technology Exchange, managed by the Global Environmental and Technology Foundation, is an interactive website that matches organizations having environmental needs with providers offering solutions.

Trade and Investment Promotion

This initiative, implemented by the U.S. Department of Commerce and USAID's Global Technology Network, identifies the demand for trade and investment in environmental technologies in the CEE & E region and then matches opportunities with U.S. sources. Environmental Technology Representatives in seven CEE & E countries inform U.S. and regional businesses about partnering opportunities. In addition, the Environmental Export Council conducts seminars and brokering events to inform participants about environmental opportunities in the CEE & E region and to strengthen business-to-business relationships.

Partnership Grants

Partnership grants are competitively awarded, cost-shared grants that support projects or activities that solve priority environmental problems and that are jointly managed by partners from the CEE & E region and the U.S. (or across borders within the CEE & E region). This component is managed by the Institute of International Education (IIE), under a five-year cooperative agreement with USAID. IIE has awarded a subcontract to the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) to serve as its main partner and assist in administering partnership grant activities.

The implementation activities of the Partnership Grants are the subject for this workplan. The primary objectives of the Partnership Grants are the following:

- Strengthen the capacity of businesses and local governments to develop market-based solutions¹ to environmental problems, with emphasis on the urban and industrial sectors in the CEE & E region
- Create lasting environmentally-focused partnerships between the CEE & E region and the United States and among countries within the region

EcoLinks Partnership Grants support USAID's strategic objective 1.6:

Increased environmental management capacity to promote sustainable economic growth.

Three intermediate results relevant for this strategic objective are:

- Increased institutional ability to identify and remedy environmental problems
- Best practices adopted by industrial and public sectors
- Increased environmental trade, finance, and investment

B. Expected Outcomes

As a result of EcoLinks partnership grants, the following long-term outcomes are expected:

Local governments, businesses and relevant associations are better able to:

- prepare acceptable project proposals that identify and remedy environmental problems
- form partnerships across borders to share experiences in addressing urban and industrial environmental problems
- develop market-based solutions to environmental problems

C. Status of Program Implementation

As the EcoLinks Partnership Grants Program begins its fourth program year, both Challenge Grants and Quick Response Awards are operating as planned. The Twinning Grants Program has been placed on hold. The status of all grants programs is detailed below:

Challenge Grants

To date 134 Challenge Grants have been awarded for \$6.2 million. The fifth cycle was announced on March 12, and the selection panel will meet on November 5 to select the winners. The grant topics are Cleaner Production, Global Climate Change and Water Quality Management. The grants from the first and second cycles have been closed. Approximately 70 grants are currently active and are being monitored by EcoLinks staff.

¹ Market-based solutions are defined as activities that are both economically and environmentally sound. Examples are public-private partnerships on public infrastructure projects, cleaner production practices, voluntary business standards, pricing mechanisms based on full-cost accounting, and the free flow of trade and investment.

Last year twenty-one Best Practices were prepared from closed Challenge Grants. These Best Practices demonstrate how both environmental performance and financial performance can be improved at the same time. They show how the experiences and technologies of U.S. and other partners can be applied under local conditions. By disseminating this information through the website and other means, these Best Practices can be transferred to other organizations in the region, thereby further increasing the impact of the program.

Quick Response Awards

To date 238 QRAs have been awarded for \$1,028,290. Of this total number, 87% involved U.S. partners. These awards have been very effective in initiating partnerships that lead either to approved Challenge Grant applications or to increased trade and investment in environmental goods and services. QRAs are offered on a rolling basis.

A survey was conducted last year among past awardees of Quick Response Awards to determine the success of the program in initiating on-going partnerships and to evaluate the service of the EcoLinks staff. Of the 98 organizations that responded, 78% reported that their partnership was still continuing and some of them described completed trade agreements. In addition, 75% rated staff support as excellent and 23% as good.

Twinning Grants

A pilot cycle for Twinning Grants was conducted last year, and the selection panel declined all three applications that were submitted. The applicants failed to comply with all the selection criteria, specifically the criterion for sustainable partnerships. Twinning Grants will be placed on hold, until further notice from USAID.

Post-grant successes

To date over \$15 million in trade and investment has resulted from 17 Challenge Grants and Quick Response Awards. By this account, total USAID-funded grants have already been leveraged by over 200%. This figure will increase as more projects mature.

D. Initiatives for the Next Year

Mid-term program modifications

In June USAID enlisted PricewaterhouseCoopers to conduct a mid-term assessment of the EcoLinks Grants Program. The evaluation was very favorable, stating that IIE's achievement of program objectives, its program administration and its financial and cost management controls were effective. The evaluation report also proposed a number of recommendations for the remainder of the program. USAID is considering these recommendations along with other ideas for mid-term changes in the program. The proposed changes are the following:

- Adding target countries for Challenge Grants and obtaining buy in
- Obtaining buy in from USAID Missions in existing seven target countries
- Adding new grant topics

These milestones would need to be achieved before February 2002 for the launch of the sixth cycle of Challenge Grants. The action steps necessary to implement these milestones are the following:

Milestone #1: Adding new target countries		
Due Date	Action Steps	Responsibility
Sept 3	Determine potential new target countries and buy-in mechanism	USAID
Sept 3	Approach new Missions and request buy in	USAID
Sept 15	Prepare budgets for new countries	IIE
Sept 15	Obtain Mission buy in from new countries	USAID
Sept 15	Announce available program officer positions in new countries	IIE
Oct 15	Collect and screen applications	IIE
Oct 20	Set up interviews	IIE
Oct 30	Conduct interviews and select candidates	IIE
Dec 1	New program officers start	IIE
Dec 15	Find office space in new countries	IIE
Dec 30	Order office equipment, furniture, supplies, etc	IIE
Dec 30	Commence office legal registration	IIE
Jan 30	Train program officers on grants/office administration	IIE
Milestone #2: Obtaining Mission buy in from existing target countries		
Due Date	Action Steps	Responsibility
Sept 3	Approach Missions and request buy in	USAID
Dec 30	Obtain buy in from Missions	USAID
Jan 1	Include countries in Request for Applications	IIE
Milestone #3: Adding new grant topics		
Due Date	Action Steps	Responsibility
Nov 1	Determine with OP if "rural" environmental problems will change the program scope	USAID
Dec 1	If necessary, amend both cooperative agreement to reflect new scope and workplan to include revised performance indicators	USAID
Dec 15	Prepare descriptions of new grant topics	IIE/USAID
Dec 31	Review new topics with USAID and selection panel	IIE
Jan 1	Train staff on new topics	IIE

Ongoing initiatives

During the next year the staff will administer about 100 QRAs on a rolling basis. They will also administer different stages of four cycles of Challenge Grants:

- Cycle 3 – Monitor and close
- Cycle 4 – Monitor and close
- Cycle 5 – Complete application and selection process
- Cycle 6 – Launch (contingent on USAID's approval for a two-year extension of the program)

At any one point 70-100 active projects will be monitored. About twenty best practices will be prepared from closed grants.

Challenge Grants Survey

In order to measure the impact of Challenge Grants, a survey will be conducted among grantees from the first and second cycles. The survey will address such issues as the success of Challenge Grants in initiating ongoing partnerships; the results of the funded projects, including trade or investment in environmental technologies; the success of the grantees in obtaining additional financing to implement their projects; and the assistance provided by the staff.

Financing EcoLinks Projects

Most EcoLinks grants fund pre-investment activities of environmental projects. In order for the projects to be fully implemented, additional financing needs to be obtained. However, many of the EcoLinks-funded projects are not large enough to attract the interest of the international financing institutions, such as The World Bank or EBRD. In addition, many of the grantees lack the capacity to prepare bankable documents, package their projects and present a financing proposal to financial institutions. To address these issues, IIE is contributing \$50,000 in cost share to enlist an outside consultant who has experience in packaging projects for financing. IIE and the consultant will work together to assist grantees from the cycles 1-3 to bundle their projects and present them to appropriate financing sources.

Tracking post-grant successes

IIE will track the results of grants on a quarterly basis and report to USAID. The aim is to identify success stories, especially in obtaining financing for project implementation or in generating trade in environmental products.

II. Grants Programs

Challenge Grants were scheduled to end with the close of the fifth cycle in April 2003. Additional cycles of the Challenge Grants Program can be planned if USAID extends EcoLinks Grants an additional two years, from June 30, 2003 to June 30, 2005. This workplan is based on the

assumption that the extension will be approved.

There are five principles that underscore the design and implementation of the EcoLinks Grants Program:

- Policies and procedures are fair and transparent
- Grant applications are demand-driven
- Project partners adopt an integrated, cleaner production approach
- An independent selection panel awards grants on a competitive basis
- A cross-border partner strengthens the capacity of the local organization to address environmental issues with a market-based approach

Two types of grants programs are planned for next year:

- Challenge Grants (\$5000 to \$50,000) support one-year cooperative projects or activities that help build the capacity of businesses and local governments to solve specific environmental problems and needs
- Quick-Response Awards (up to \$5,000) initiate contacts and support immediate needs, such as travel to meet prospective partners or attend technology demonstrations.

The grants budget for the year is the following:

Challenge Grants	\$1,500,000
Quick Response Awards	<u>500,000</u>
Total	\$2,000,000

The schedule for Challenge Grants is the following:

	Announce RFA	Concept Papers	Full Applications	Selection Meeting
Cycle 5	Mar 12, 2001	May 7, 2001	Sept 10, 2001	Nov 5, 2001
Cycle 6	Feb 11, 2002	Apr 8, 2002	Sept 2, 2002	Oct 28, 2002

Both Challenge Grants and QRAs are described in detail in the following section.

A. Challenge Grants

Purpose

To build the capacity of professionals in business and local government to develop market-based solutions to urban and industrial environmental problems.

Activity Team

The activity team consists of a Project Leader, up to two Partners and optional Associates. The Project Leader is the organization in the region that has the specific environmental problem to be

addressed under one or more of the topics in the Request for Applications. At least one of the Partners must come from a different country. Partners are expected to help build the capacity of the Project Leader through the exchange of expertise, experience and information. Optional associates include other stakeholders, such as NGOs, universities and research institutes that can provide additional support and assistance.

Eligible organizations

Eligible organizations for Project Leaders and Partners are the following:

- Businesses
- Local governments
- Utilities
- Associations of businesses, local governments or relevant professionals

Eligible countries

Project Leaders must come from one of the following countries:

Bulgaria
Bosnia Herzegovina*
Croatia
Kazakhstan
Macedonia
Romania
Russia Far East (Khabarovski Krai, Primorski Krai, Sakhalin Island)
Ukraine

*Restrictions apply to eligible municipalities

Partners and Associates may come from one of the following countries:

United States	Latvia
Armenia	Lithuania
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Macedonia
Bulgaria	Moldova
Croatia	Poland
Czech Republic	Romania
Estonia	Russia
Georgia	Slovakia
Hungary	Turkmenistan
Kazakhstan	Ukraine
Kyrgysztan	Uzbekistan

Amount

Up to \$50,000 each (about 30 grants)

Illustrative activities funded

Technical assistance, demonstration projects, pre-feasibility assessments of environmental projects/investments, professional exchanges, training

Equipment

Environmental equipment can be purchased up to 20% of the value of the grant (maximum \$10,000)

Cost-sharing

25% of the total value of the proposal, in cash or in-kind contribution, to be negotiated between the project partners

Application Process: Concept Papers

The Request for Applications is announced with three grant topics. The applicants prepare concept papers that are screened by the EcoLinks Grants staff and approved. These concept papers are also forwarded to the Foreign Commercial Service Officers/Tech Reps in each country who review the financial viability of the applicants.

The screening criteria for the concept papers are the following:

- The activity fits under one or more of the grant topics.
- The environmental problem of the Project Leader is clearly defined and the basis for the project concept
- The project activity complies with the legal requirements of the country.
- The activity is completed within one year and is expected to yield measurable results at the end.
- The budget is within the limit.
- There is a competent English speaker in each partner organization.
- If the Leader is a business, it must be legally registered. Companies are required to provide a company profile, including references.
- If the Leader is a municipality, it must be able to demonstrate the commitment and support of the government organ or body tasked with the management of the specific environmental problem.

Partnership Facilitation

After the project concepts are approved, the applicants find suitable partners. EcoLinks will assist in identifying partners in the U.S. or in the region. Quick Response Awards are available to initiate these partnerships.

If the applicants need assistance in finding partners, they complete a Partner Search form that briefly describes the project activity and their organization and lists any criteria for the partner. The Partner Search form is then forwarded to the U.S. Program Officer and the CEE Grants Manager who conduct searches on behalf of the applicant in both the U.S. and the region.

For the U.S. search, the U.S. Program Officer taps a number of resources to identify potential organizations that match the partner criteria: IIE's in-house database of environmental suppliers, its network of 36 resource organizations, USAID's Global Technology Network, and other associations and networks. Promising partners are contacted by the U.S. program staff who determine their interest in the proposed project and encourage their participation. The list of potential partners is qualified by the U.S. Program Officer to ensure that the U.S. organizations can provide the requested expertise. Typically, about three to five potential partners are then forwarded to the applicant in the region.

For the CEE & E search, the CEE Grants Manager contacts a variety of resource organizations and individuals in the region, including the FCS Environmental Technology Representatives.

After both the U.S. and CEE & E searches are completed, the U.S. Program Officer and the CEE Grants Manager submit a short list of potential partners to the applicant. The applicant is free to contact the most promising candidates directly and make the partner selection.

Full Applications

The applicants (both the Project Leader and Partners) prepare the full application and submit it by the deadline to the designated EcoLinks office. All applications are forwarded to an independent selection panel that scores each application based on the selection criteria and then meets to discuss them. The winners are selected at the meeting on a competitive basis.

The selection criteria are the following:

- The capacity of the Project Leader to implement the project is strengthened through a partnership that provides for the sharing of experience, expertise, information and/or technology.
- The project promotes market-based solutions to urban or industrial environmental problems. The project is both economically and environmentally sound. It also demonstrates an understanding of market incentives and their application.
- The project is clearly defined and relevant to the local situation.
- The goals and objectives are feasible, and the goals can be reached within the project scope.
- The implementation plan clearly defines the key activities that are required to achieve the objectives as well as the tasks, timelines and deliverables for each partner. The plan describes how the project will be managed and defines the roles of each partner.

- The members of the project team are capable of managing and completing the project, both financially and organizationally.
- The project generates tangible results by the end of the grant period. These results are verifiable, measurable and consistent with the expected outcomes.
- The project has a high potential to result in a best practice or model that can be replicated in another organization or country.
- The budget is complete, reasonable and cost-effective. It is clearly explained, proposing realistic and cost-effective solutions and spending limited funds in the most efficient manner.

Start-up meetings

A winner's meeting for all project partners is organized in the home country to sign the grant agreements; to meet other winners and learn about their projects; and to meet the EcoLinks grants officer assigned to the project who will explain the reporting requirements and procedures for funds disbursements.

Monitoring and reporting

The projects are monitored by EcoLinks staff, and grant funds are disbursed in installments. The grantees are required to submit a mid-term progress report and a final report. Both reports contain a narrative performance report and an expense report.

B. Quick Response Awards

Purpose

To initiate one-to-one partnerships within the framework of the EcoLinks program, either to prepare a Challenge Grant proposal or to facilitate environmental trade and investment

Eligibility

Same types of organizations as Project Leaders for Challenge Grants. Only one Quick-Response Award can be given to an organization during a calendar year.

Applicants must come from one of the following countries:

United States	Latvia
Armenia	Lithuania
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Macedonia
Bulgaria	Moldova
Croatia	Poland
Czech Republic	Romania
Estonia	Russia
Georgia	Slovakia
Hungary	Turkmenistan
Kazakhstan	Ukraine
Kyrgyzstan	Uzbekistan

Amount

Up to \$5000 each (about 100 will be awarded during the year)

Illustrative activities funded

Travel to technology demonstrations and consultant services for small-scale tasks. The award can offset part of the costs to link up with a potential partner.

Selection Process

Quick Response Awards are approved on a rolling basis, and the application procedures are streamlined, fast, and non-bureaucratic. The applicant submits a short application to either the Country Program Officer or the Regional Program Manager, with a justification for the award. The application is forwarded to the Foreign Commercial Officer in the country to review the financial viability of the applicant. After the RPM recommends the application and the Foreign Commercial Service Officer reviews it, the application is forwarded to the EcoLinks office in Washington for final approval. The EcoLinks Grants Administrator disburses the funds.

Reporting

Both a final expense report and a short narrative report of achievements are required after the activity is completed. USAID receives a quarterly report listing all Quick-Response Awards approved during the prior quarter. In addition, the Tech Reps receives an updated QRA list by country each month.

III. Program Management

A. Organization and Program Staffing

The only major organizational change planned for the next year is the recruitment of a new Regional Program Manager in the CEE region to replace Jacek Podkanski, who resigned effective September 1, 2001 to accept another position at the REC. His replacement will be approved by USAID since this position is listed as key personnel in the cooperative agreement.

EcoLinks' organization structure is divided into three regions: U.S., CEE and NIS. The U.S. is headed by the Deputy Director, and the CEE and NIS regions are each headed by a Regional Program Manager. The Deputy Director and the Regional Program Managers report to the Chief of Party in Budapest (see Annex A: Organizational Chart). Program Officers in each of the target countries report to Grants Managers based in Szentendre or Kiev who, in turn, report to the CEE and NIS Program Managers.

IEE's Washington, DC office is the U.S. regional office and main headquarters, REC's Szentendre office is the CEE regional office, and the EcoLinks office in Kiev serves as the NIS regional office. In addition, EcoLinks staff is based in seven target countries: Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Russia Far East.

The staff submits monthly progress reports to the Chief of Party, describing the status of the grants, their outreach activities, and any other implementation issues. Each week the Chief of Party convenes a conference call with the Deputy and the Program Managers to coordinate the program's implementation across the three regions.

A training program is held each year to further train the staff in grants management, to introduce new initiatives, to discuss and resolve any implementation problems, to increase their understanding of key environmental issues, and to build team spirit.

B. Program Coordination

Several mechanisms or activities provide program coordination with EcoLinks partners:

Coordination with USAID Missions

The Grants Program Officers and Regional Program Managers meet regularly with their contacts at the USAID Missions to update them on the program's status and latest developments. In addition, the Chief of Party meets with a senior representative of each mission at least once a year.

Country Program Officer – Tech Rep coordination

The Grants Program Officers have regular contact with the Tech Reps. They consult with the Tech Reps on the concept papers for Challenge Grants and discuss promising leads for environmental trade and investment that may arise from the Challenge Grants.

Coordination with Information Technology

EcoLinks Grants staff regularly posts the Requests for Applications, Grants Summaries and Best Practices to the EcoLinks website.

Monthly Partner Meetings

Each month representatives from USAID and the three components meet to discuss any implementation issues, update each other on the status of the program and coordinate any joint activities.

Annual Partner Meetings

Each year the representatives of the partner organizations meet to assess program achievements to date and to develop and coordinate major initiatives for the next year.

C. Communications and Outreach Program

A communications and outreach program publicizes EcoLinks' activities and its successes. The major components are the following:

Informational Materials

EcoLinks Grants plans to produce the following materials:

- An annual marketing report that explains the grants program, describes key achievements, and lists all the grants awarded during the year
- A leaflet that describes best practices or success stories captured from projects (contingent on available funds)

Requests for Applications

The Request for Applications will be publicized in the countries eligible for challenge grants and posted to the Ecolinks website.

Press Releases

Press releases will be prepared periodically and distributed to selected journalists, in cooperation with USAID staff in Washington and in the missions.

Website postings

All of the above information will be posted to the EcoLinks website.

Presentations at Conferences and Related Events

The Chief of Party, Deputy Director, Regional Program Managers, and Country Program Officers will continually represent EcoLinks at conferences and related events in both the U.S. and the region.

E. Reporting and Evaluation

Reporting:

The following reports enable EcoLinks and USAID managers to monitor EcoLinks' performance and financial control:

Reports to EcoLinks Management

- Monthly expense reports

- Monthly progress reports from Country Program Officers that include basic activity statistics, status of grants, major tasks accomplished, outcomes of meetings, upcoming conferences and opportunities, and any problems or obstacles. These reports are submitted by the Regional Program Managers with a brief overview.

Reports to USAID

- Quarterly financial and program performance reports
- Annual workplan

Evaluation:

Performance Indicators

USAID and IIE have agreed on performance indicators by which the progress and success of the EcoLinks is measured and evaluated. These indicators support USAID Strategic Objective 1.6. and the following expected outcomes:

Local governments, businesses and relevant associations are better able to:

- prepare acceptable project proposals that identify and remedy environmental problems
- form partnerships across borders to share experiences in addressing urban and industrial environmental problems
- develop market-based solutions to environmental problems

In addition, these indicators support three USAID Intermediate Results:

- IR 1.6.4 Increased institutional ability to identify and remedy environmental problems
- IR 1.6.3a Best practices adopted by industrial and public sectors
- IR 1.6.2 Increased environmental trade, finance and investment

The following results framework correlates USAID Intermediate results, EcoLinks activities, the proposed performance indicators, and their targets.

Intermediate Results	EcoLinks Activities	Fourth Year Performance Indicators	2001 Targets
IR 4: Increased institutional ability to identify and remedy environmental problems	Proposal-writing workshops	-Number of Challenge Grant proposals that meet prescreening criteria	50
	Partnership facilitation	-Number of partner searches that result in an on-going relationship (e.g., challenge grant proposal)	15
	Challenge Grants	- Number of projects that result in institutional changes that enhance the project participant's ability to identify and remedy environmental problems*	30
IR3a: Best practices adopted by industrial and public sectors	Challenge Grants	-Number of Challenge Grant projects that result in a best practice to solve an environmental problem	20
		-Number of Challenge Grant projects that result in a market-based solution to an environmental problem	45
IR2: Increased environmental trade, finance and investment	Quick Response Awards	Number of QRAs that result in an agreement to pursue environmental trade, finance or investment	30
	Challenge Grants	Number of Challenge Grants projects that result in an agreement to further pursue environmental trade, finance or investment	15

Note: Annual targets are based on the assumption that 100 quick response awards will be awarded and 70 challenge grants (cycles 3 and 4) will be closed.

* Institutional changes may include the following:

- development of a long-term strategy or plan that will serve as a guideline for future environmental activities
- development or implementation of policies or procedures that enhance the participant's ability to identify or remedy environmental problems
- development of a business plan or bankable documents to support a new environmental activity or investment
- creation of a new organizational unit or position within the participant's organization that enhance its ability to identify or remedy environmental problems
- improvement of skills of participating organization's employees that enhance their ability to identify or remedy environmental problems
- assumption of a leadership position by the participant to promote an environmental initiative

- other linkages with organizations that strengthen the participant's ability to identify or remedy environmental problems

V. Implementation Plan

This workplan covers the period July 2001 to June 2002 and includes 7 major tasks with corresponding activities:

- Task 1: Implement Quick Response Awards
- Task 2: Implement Challenge Grants (four cycles)
- Task 3: Design and implement Challenge Grant survey
- Task 4: Prepare financing proposals for grantees
- Task 5: Develop and conduct staff training program
- Task 6: Implement communications initiatives
- Task 7: Report and evaluate

Task 1: Implement Quick Response Awards

Evaluate and process applications on a rolling basis

Task 2: Implement Challenge Grants (four cycles)

Cycle 3:

- Monitor projects
- Close projects
- Prepare best practices

Cycle 4:

- Monitor projects
- Close projects
- Prepare best practices

Cycle 5:

- Collect and screen applications and send them to experts for evaluation.
- Organize and convene selection meeting of expert panel.
- Notify winners and declined applicants.
- Prepare grant awards and contracts.
- Organize and convene start-up meeting.
- Disburse initial grant funds.
- Monitor progress on a continuous basis.
- Review and approve mid-term financial and performance reports.
- Conduct site visits.
- Disburse next tranche of grant funds.
- Review and approve final financial and performance reports.
- Disburse final tranche of grant funds.
- Disseminate results of project.

• Cycle 6:

- Review grant topics with USAID and prepare any new ones.
- Prepare and publicize RFA.
- Conduct information workshops to explain RFA and the grant topics and train how to shape a project concept.
- Review and approve concept papers for potential projects.
- Assist applicants to find suitable partners, if necessary.
- Conduct proposal-writing workshops to train how to prepare acceptable proposals

Task 3: Design and implement Challenge Grants survey

- Design survey
- Distribute to grantees from cycles 1 and 2
- Collect results
- Evaluate results and report

Task 4: Prepare financing proposals for grantees

- Screen grantees to identify promising prospects
- Collect necessary information about projects and organizations
- Prepare ID sheets for projects
- Bundle projects into key areas
- Identify potential financing sources
- Prepare financing packages
- Present to financing institutions
- Follow up on results

Task 5: Develop and conduct staff training program

- Develop agenda
- Identify and enlist trainers
- Arrange logistics for trainers and staff
- Conduct training

Task 6: Implement communications initiatives

- Prepare and print Marketing Report
- Prepare and print leaflet on best practices
- Prepare and distribute regular press releases
- Post EcoLinks information to websites
- Present EcoLinks at conferences and related events

Task 7: Report and evaluate

- Prepare quarterly reports to USAID
- Prepare annual report to USAID

August 15, 2001