

Data Sheet

USAID Mission:	Nicaragua
Program Title:	Ruling Justly
Pillar:	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Strategic Objective:	524-021
Status:	Continuing
Planned FY 2006 Obligation:	\$7,148,000 DA; \$3,366,000 ESF
Prior Year Unobligated:	\$0
Proposed FY 2007 Obligation:	\$4,232,000 DA; \$3,000,000 ESF
Year of Initial Obligation:	2003
Estimated Year of Final Obligation:	2008

Summary: USAID's program will strengthen justice institutions, increase transparency and improve governance, leading to a more democratic Nicaragua. Activities to strengthen the rule of law will contribute to more modern laws drafted and approved with strong public participation and ownership. USAID programs will mobilize public oversight groups to help promote and preserve reforms, including increased protection of human rights. USAID will focus on greater transparency and accountability of government by implementing an aggressive anticorruption campaign and promoting freedom of information. The program will also support elections through citizen participation, voter and civic education, public awareness, and election observation.

Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

FY 2006 Program:

Promote and Support Anti-Corruption Reforms (\$2,398,000 DA). USAID is funding targeted assistance to professional associations to improve their capacity to advocate for transparency related reform on behalf of their members. Technical assistance and training for public oversight groups are raising public awareness and increasing civil society participation in government decision making and oversight. Provided that progress in promoting judicial independence continues, USAID will fund technical assistance for judges, prosecutors, public defenders, police, and other officials to strengthen prosecution of corruption cases. Principal contractors: Casals and Associates, Checchi and Company.

Promote and Support Credible Elections Processes (\$2,000,000 DA; \$4,368,000 ESF). With Atlantic Coast regional elections set for March 2006, and national elections scheduled for November 2006, USAID is supporting activities to increase citizen and civil society participation, encourage democratic processes within political parties, and organize Nicaraguan advocacy groups for electoral observation and voter education. Activities include updating civil registries and files for voter registration, mobilizing public oversight coalitions and media involvement for electoral monitoring, increasing voter participation and public awareness, and providing training and technical assistance to political parties. USAID is funding technical assistance to the Supreme Electoral Council to resolve electoral management issues and to ensure the integrity of the transmission of electoral results. Principal grantees: International Foundation for Electoral Support, International Republican Institute, National Democratic Institute, Organization of American States (OAS).

Strengthen the Justice Sector (\$2,750,000 DA). USAID is funding training and technical assistance to advance implementation of the Criminal Procedures Code and the Criminal Code, reforms that were developed with USAID assistance. With the passage of the Judicial Career Law, which establishes ethical standards and defines tenure for judges, USAID will fund training for implementation of the merit-based system for selection, promotion, and discipline of judges and other judicial personnel, as well as judicial ethics. USAID funded technical assistance is

helping consolidate public prosecution and defense functions by improving the public defenders office's capacity to provide pro bono defense services to the indigent and expanding use of alternative dispute resolution. Technical assistance and training for public oversight groups is helping mobilize support for judicial reforms and human rights protection. Principal contractor: Checchi and Company.

FY 2007 Program:

Mitigate Conflict and Support Peace (\$1,500,000 ESF). USAID will address the expanding threat of gangs in Nicaragua by advancing community based approaches to policing, and involving non-governmental organizations, business chambers, churches, schools, medical facilities, police, firemen, women's groups and others local level actors in targeted, high-priority municipalities. Municipal governments, especially key mayors, will be the focal point for the program, and private sector participation will be critical. USAID will also support programs to provide youth-at-risk with alternatives in the form of education and job training opportunities linked with the private sector (through a potential Global Development Alliance), again in selected, high profile, high priority locations.

Promote and Support Anti-Corruption Reforms (\$2,116,000 DA). USAID support will assist the Government of Nicaragua (GON) to complete and implement Nicaragua's Anticorruption and Governance Strategy and Plan, as well as the GON's commitments under the Inter-American Convention against Corruption. USAID plans to support initiatives to improve budget transparency and management, with particular attention to the defense budget, education, health, and the justice sector. USAID may provide targeted support for governance and institutional reform efforts to increase the accountability of elected representatives to their constituents. USAID plans to continue to train local officials on transparent governance and help build local non-governmental oversight. Planned activities, that will help implement the Access to Information Law, include training and technical assistance to key government agencies regarding responsibilities to provide public information, as well as media training in investigative reporting. Principal contractor: Casals and Associates.

Strengthen Democratic Political Parties (\$1,500,000 ESF). In the wake of national elections in November 2006, and an inauguration of a new administration in January 2007, USAID will provide assistance to strengthen the Supreme Electoral Council (CSE) and to carry out democratic reforms within Nicaraguan political parties. USAID assistance will promote reforms in existing electoral laws to depoliticize the CSE; will provide technical assistance to the CSE to include streamlining the processes of issuing new voter ID cards to all eligible voters and keeping the voter registry up-to-date, and instituting systems for registering voters living overseas. As a follow-up to electoral assistance for the 2006 elections, USAID will foster political party reforms to establish democratic procedures to include transparency and citizen participation in the selection of candidates to ensure free and fair democratic elections. Implementers to be determined through a competitive process.

Strengthen the Justice Sector (\$2,116,000 DA). USAID plans to fund training courses for prosecutors and defense lawyers and establish training units within the Public Ministry, the public defenders office, and law schools to continue advancing implementation of new, key laws such as the Judicial Career Law, the Prosecutor Career Law, and the Arbitration and Mediation Law. USAID plans to strengthen justice services by extending alternative dispute mechanisms and identifying reforms that will make the justice system more accessible to ordinary citizens. USAID expects to support public oversight activities to advocate for justice and human rights reforms. Principal contractor: Checchi and Company.

Performance and Results: Important results have been achieved from USAID activities since the program began, including preliminary passage of a new Criminal Procedures Code, and passage of a Mediation and Arbitration Law. The implementation of a modern Criminal Procedures Code, enacted with USAID support, promotes transparency in the courts and access to justice. USAID played an instrumental role in getting a new Judicial Career Law passed.

Another activity expanded the public defender system to help provide due process to Nicaraguan citizens. USAID expects full implementation of the Criminal Procedures Code during FY 2006 and passage of other key legislation that will enhance government accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. By program completion, USAID expects that Nicaragua will have made progress in establishing strong and democratic institutions and practices that are essential to achieving a full, functioning democracy and improving the domestic and foreign investment environment. Access to justice will have expanded through more capable justice institutions as well as availability of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. Accountability of government and private institutions will have improved through better internal standards and increased citizen monitoring to prevent corrupt acts; and the government will have an enhanced capacity to identify and prosecute these acts when they occur.

US Financing in Thousands of Dollars

Nicaragua

	DA	ESF
524-021 Ruling Justly		
Through September 30, 2004		
Obligations	10,827	0
Expenditures	411	0
Unliquidated	10,416	0
Fiscal Year 2005		
Obligations	5,230	4,116
Expenditures	4,300	22
Through September 30, 2005		
Obligations	16,057	4,116
Expenditures	4,711	22
Unliquidated	11,346	4,094
Prior Year Unobligated Funds		
Obligations	0	0
Planned Fiscal Year 2006 NOA		
Obligations	7,148	3,366
Total Planned Fiscal Year 2006		
Obligations	7,148	3,366
Proposed Fiscal Year 2007 NOA		
Obligations	4,232	3,000
Future Obligations	7,619	906
Est. Total Cost	35,056	11,388