Attachment A – Program Description

CUBA

Foreign Sub recipient: Solidaridad Española con Cuba
Dates of Project: September 15, 2008, December 31, 2009
Amount Requested: $615,500

I. SUMMARY

A unique window of opportunity is currently opening in Cuba. Fidel Castro, the ailing dictator, is going to pass away soon and his substitute and younger brother, Raúl Castro, lacks charisma or strong popular support. The country has recently suffered heavy damages caused by hurricanes Gustav and Ike. The Cuban state does not have the capacity to respond to this crisis. It seems changes are now imminent or at least possible. But to a large extent, the nature and speed of changes towards democracy depend on the amount of pressure the opposition can put on the government. Equally, when those democratic changes come, it is important that Cuba has a strong civil society and does not become a corrupt failure state in the hands of a few recycled old-communist oligarchs.

Together IRI and Solidaridad Española con Cuba (SEC) will implement support activities designed to refine and expand the pro-democracy movement within Cuba, as well as independent Cuban civil society, under these new circumstances. With that purpose, we will design, develop and implement demand-driven, targeted training to several opposition and civil society groups -women, youth, trade union and journalists-, to enhance their skills and capacities. We will also increase their IT capacities by delivering IT equipment to them and instructing them how to use it. Finally, we will also increase their internal and external outreach and visibility by supporting their press relations, improving their marketing materials and enhancing their online presence.

II. BACKGROUND

Cuba has been suffering the totalitarian rule of charismatic dictator Fidel Castro for almost fifty years, since the triumph of the revolution in 1959. As such, it is a non-democratic exception within the community of democratic countries of Hispanic culture. This anomaly is explained by complex factors, such as the historic support of the Soviet Union, but after five decades, it may end soon. The regime is a personal dictatorship. Therefore, the approaching death of the ailing dictator is expected to be a major catalyst of change. His brother Raúl lacks his charismatic legitimacy.

Furthermore, the considerable damages caused by recent hurricanes Gustav and Ike put the country in a crisis situation. The government faces the daunting task of rebuilding thousands of houses destroyed by the hurricanes. Let us remember that housing was already a considerable problem in Cuba before these natural disasters. In addition, the hurricanes have also devastated a large number of crop fields and affected the tobacco
production process. Thus, it has further reduced the capacity of the government to feed the Cuban population and generate income abroad. The regime is arguably at its weakest point in history, because it as facing a permanent crisis without a charismatic leader to solve it.

The recent, sudden change in accusation charges and consequent release of punk rock star and regime-critic Gorki Aguila, following the international and national criticism of his detention, marks an unprecedented sign of psychological weakness inside the current Cuban government. A recent document signed by former Communist Party apparatchiks and diplomats asking for broad social and economic reforms - even if they should be “within the revolution” - sends the signal of emerging internal dissent.

In this favorable context, the Cuban opposition needs to be prepared to promote real changes that gear the country towards a functioning market economy and a working democracy. Once these changes do happen, Cuban civil society groups needs to make sure they play a role in a new, viable, democratic system, instead of being left out by a new oligarchy of post-communists barons that rule over an authoritarian post-communist regime, as has been the case in some of the successor countries of the former Soviet Union.

So far, we have concentrated previous support activities in assisting two groups:

**Womens Group**
We have been supporting and training one particular women group with very good results. Their recent progress has been impressive. They are already at an advanced level of development, with a clear identity, the tools and knowledge to move ahead and a concrete and successful campaign. We will continue to support this group and will identify any emerging women groups potentially suited for training, because women have been traditionally underrepresented in the Cuban opposition and it is important to integrate them as a key element of the opposition and civil society.

**Youth Groups**
Youth is often the dominant component of pro-democracy movements. This was the case in Serbia, with the Otpor -resistance- movement, as well as Georgia, Ukraine and Lebanon. Recent and reliable studies on Cuban public opinion show that Cuban youth are particularly disaffected with the Communist dictatorship. Young Cubans support change and democracy even more than the average. Paradoxically, though, young Cubans are currently underrepresented in the opposition. It is logical then to think that Cuban opposition groups made of youth and targeting the youth have a lot of growth potential.

We have supported in the past one youth group. This group has a clear identity and is developing the tools and knowledge required to advance their objectives. They still lack a clear focus and a well-defined campaign.
We have identified another youth group that has the potential to become a partner. We will explore the possibility of supporting this second group also and identify any emerging youth group with potential for cooperation.

Equally, independent journalists and related groups are the future journalists of a free Cuba and should not be neglected. They already play a significant role denouncing human rights violations and government abuses against Cubans. Finally, independent trade union activists have a large potential for growth and are the future trade union leaders of a free Cuba.

Nonetheless, all these groups share considerable problems: some of them lack a clear identity, purpose and objectives, many lack organizational and technical skills and capacities as well as basic IT equipment. Most of them lack a clear, well focused campaign and are still relatively unknown in Cuba and abroad.

III. SUBGRANT OBJECTIVES
The objectives of the Subgrant are:

1) To strengthen supported groups and help them reach a more advanced stage of development by improving their motivation, efficiency, strategic focus, social research and message delivery capacities; political communications, mobilization, organizational and technical skills as well as their internal and external impact and outreach

2) To increase their access to communications technologies as well as their technical capacity to use them

3) To increase the salience and visibility domestically and abroad of supported pro-democracy groups

IV. SUBGRANT ACTIVITIES

1) ASSESSMENT

1.1) Assessment trips
We will organize and coordinate three (3) assessment trips into the closed society, during the first months of the subgrant. Two (2) of them will be trips of two people and the remaining one will consist of a trip of one person.
These trips will allow us to assess the level of development and the structure of some of the groups we have contacted in the past. They will also allow us to know more about their needs.

1.2) To identify new partner groups and their needs
These assessment trips, together with other sources of reliable information, direct input from the groups and our experience supporting the different groups will allow us to identify new potential groups and add them as partners, in order to diversify and maximize the impact of the program.

**Journalism/Human Rights Reporting**
We have already identified and established successful contact with a group that works with journalism and human rights reporting. There seems to be a keen interest on their part to continue the relationship. In addition, we believe it is very important to support other journalists, either groups or individuals, since they are an important part of the emerging Cuban civil society and are key to denouncing human rights violations and will play a key role in the transition and the establishment of a free press.

**Trade Unions**
We have identified an independent group working in labor and trade union issues. It already enjoys a clear identity and purpose. We will assess their real strength and structure of this group, establish contact with them and assess which are their main priorities. We will assist them to move forward new stages of development. We have a link with their national leader who is living in exile.

**Bloggers**
Independent Cuban bloggers have recently become salient. Blogger Yoani Sanchez -generation Y blog- won the prestigious Ortega y Gasset prize given by leading Spanish newspaper El Pais. She has become famous -especially outside Cuba- and due to this phenomenon new blogs have become a new battlefield in the struggle for democracy and human rights in Cuba. We will take advantage of this new context and support independent bloggers.

In addition to these areas, we will also seek to identify emerging groups that are in a very early stage of development but have the potential of becoming relevant in the opposition or civil society. We will also explore potential niches for the possibility of contributing to the creation of completely new groups.

2) **TRAINING**

2.1) **Training using existing training fields**
We have already developed specific material and undertaken successful training in the following fields:

- Polling and research in a closed society
- Message Development
- Journalist Interviews
- Economic Proposal for a concrete transition in a certain area of the economy
We have trained two groups on these training fields, but we can train additional groups since those trainings fields are still valid -excluding the fourth field which was specifically prepared for one particular group-.

2.2) Development of additional training fields/training materials
By now, we understand the basic needs of the two groups we have supported but we will continue to gather and process their input about their priorities and most urgent demands. Based on our previous experience and the needs of these two supported groups -as expressed by them- we would like to develop specific material and undertake training in at least the following fields:

- Photography and photo edition
- Video edition
- Audio edition
- Writing workshop
- Blogging
- Non-violent civil struggle

Additional training fields could also be developed at a later stage if we believe they are necessary. Their content will vary and will adapt to changing circumstances.

Once we have identified the concrete needs of each group and the training fields that address them, we will develop specific training material for the new training fields, as we have done with previous training. This material is written to serve as background and support for the training. This material must take into account the particular and very unique Cuban situation. We will carefully write the material, have it printed, introduced and distributed inside Cuba. We will also send it electronically by e-mail to the desired recipients, whenever possible.

2.3) Selection and preparation of trainers and trips
We have by now developed a pool of high-quality trainers. We need to keep expanding that pool to replace trainers that get “burned” as they are detected by authorities in the closed society. In order to do that, we need to identify new potential trainers and then prepare and train them for the considerable challenge of conducting training in the closed society using the specific material, and other supporting materials. We will specifically train them for this purpose.

SEC experienced staff will select new trainers and train them, in Spain and abroad. We will travel to third countries on a regular basis for this purpose once per month.

Trainers will follow a traveling and security protocol that instructs them in how to behave for undertaking training in the closed society.

2.4) Training trips
We intend to coordinate a total of sixteen (16) trainings trips. Fourteen of them (14) will consist of trips of two trainers and the remaining two (2) will be trips of individual
trainers. Trainers will travel by couples or alone to the closed society to conduct the trainings. They will usually visit activists of only one group at a time, to reduce the chances of being detected. Typically, they will then come back for a second round at a later stage to train the same group, in a second trip. Trainers will also instruct and encourage recipients of training to utilize what they have learned and to extent the training to other members of their organizations.

2.5) Briefing, debriefing and reports
We will brief trainers before and after each trip, either in Spain or in third countries, to allow for the accurate evaluation of this initiative, and ongoing refinement of the training methodology. They will write a detailed narrative report for each training trip.

3) IT EQUIPMENT DELIVERY
We will also make sure support equipment reaches the supported groups. We intend to deliver to them fifteen (15) laptop computers, twenty-two (22) video cameras and twenty-two (22) digital cameras

IT Equipment Delivery Trips
For that purpose, we will coordinate a total of fourteen (14) IT equipment delivery trips. Seven of them (7) will consist of trips of two people and other seven (7) will consist of trips of individuals.

Based in our previous experience, we will send people in specific trips, unrelated with training, with the sole purpose of providing equipment to the groups, instead of sending the equipment along with trainers. The reason is that introducing equipment in the closed society increases the risks of being detected, especially when trainers travel in several occasions. Travelers bringing equipment would travel only once to the island.

| Summary of trips |
|------------------|----------------|-----------|----------|
| TOTAL TRIPS      | IN COUPLES | INDIVIDUAL | TRAVELLERS |
| ASSESSMENT TRIPS | 3          | 2          | 1        | 5        |
| TRAINING TRIPS   | 16         | 14         | 2        | (15*2)30 |
| IT EQUIPMENT DELIVERY TRIPS | 14 | 7 | 7 | 21 |
|                   | 33         | 23         | 10       | 56       |

There will be 5 people travelling for assessment, in three trips. Two will travel in couples and one alone. Ideally, trainers will come back for a second trip, which means the total number of trainers will be 15 instead of 30 -which would be the case if they travelled only once. There will be 21 people travelling for IT equipment delivery, in fourteen trips. Fourteen travelers will travel in couples -in seven trips- and seven alone.

4) ADDITIONAL SUPPORT ACTIVITIES
As a useful complement to the other direct support activities, we will undertake also marketing assistance, web assistance and communication activities promoting the supported groups in Spain, Europe and Latin America.
Supporting their press relations

Activities will include:
- writing and disseminating press releases related with supported groups
- writing and placing newspaper articles and Letters to the Director related with supported groups
- publishing online news related with supported groups
- undertaking e-mail outreach related with supported groups
- informing journalists about these groups
- providing the press -Spanish and international- with written/video/audio material about these groups

These activities will inform and influence Spanish, European and Latin American public opinion while providing moral support to members of the supported groups and increasing their visibility

Supporting their marketing tools
We will, as we have successfully done in the past, design and print marketing material for the supported groups, such as brochures. We will also improve any other marketing material of the supported groups according to their needs.

Supporting their online presence
We believe it is important for the supported groups to have state-of-the-art, functioning websites as part of their outreach efforts. We will help launch, re-design or develop the websites of supported groups who wish us to do so. We will also update them if needed. Equally, we will make sure their written/video/audio material is available by disseminating it and placing it in places such as You Tube.

V. EVALUATION

1) To strengthen supported groups and help them reach a more advanced stage of development by improving their motivation, efficiency, strategic focus; social research and message delivery capacities; political communications, mobilization, organizational and technical skills as well as their internal and external impact and outreach

- Assessment trips take place as planned and bring insightful knowledge about the situation and needs of supported groups
- Appropriate training materials are developed
- Appropriate trainers are selected and trained properly
- Training trips take place as planned
- Recipients utilize trainings and incorporate them into their activities with significant impact and improvement of their capacities and skills
- Trained networks are strengthened and able to move to a further stage of development
• Trained networks are able to attract new members and increase collaboration efforts with other pro-democracy groups

2) To increase their access to communications technologies as well as their technical capacity to use them

• IT Equipment delivery trips take place as planned; trained networks receive the IT equipment -computers, digital and video cameras- along with other peripheral equipment
• Network members increase their technical skills and learn the use of IT equipment
• Network members utilize and incorporate received equipment and knowledge into their activities with positive results

3) To increase the salience and visibility domestically and abroad of supported pro-democracy groups

• Written material on supported groups is produced and disseminated
• Video and audio content on supported groups is produced and distributed
• Training recipients receive media attention and coverage domestically and abroad
• Quality marketing materials are produced and distributed
• Websites of trained networks are improved or created
• New websites of trained networks have updated content
• Websites of trained networks receive frequent visits
• Network members and supporters abroad communicate through websites

VI. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Solidaridad Española con Cuba (SEC) is a non-profit NGO founded in early 2005 by a group of young Spaniards with the purpose of supporting Cuban democracy activists, political prisoners and their families, as well as the emerging Cuban civil society. Since its foundation, Solidaridad Española con Cuba has actively supported several democracy groups in the island.

Training and support
Together with IRI, SEC has successfully undertaken several training activities in the closed society. SEC has been supporting two groups of the Cuban opposition/civil society -one women group and one youth group- providing them targeted, demand-driven training. Training fields have included political research training -polls-, message delivery and communications training, journalist skills training and economic training.

SEC developed specific, targeted training materials for these trainings. They are state-of-the-art quality documents and also take into consideration the particular circumstances of the closed society. The trainings were highly successful and often had considerable
impact. They increased the capacities and skills of the supported groups and had very positive repercussions.

**IT equipment**

In addition to training, throughout time, SEC has also successfully delivered a considerable amount of IT equipment to these two supported groups. In the past we have also delivered support material to other networks.

**Other activities**

SEC successfully launched in 2006 a full-fledged “solidarity travel” marketing campaign encouraging people that travel to Cuba to add a solidarity dimension to their visits by supporting the Cuban opposition, political prisoners and civil society. The campaign received a considerable amount of coverage by the international and Spanish media. It included the publication of the innovative book *Solidarity Guide of Cuba*. This book has been translated into English, French, Polish, German and Italian, by different NGOs and organizations that are distributing it. Tens of thousands of people have downloaded it for free in the different versions -over 20,000 just in Spanish. As a continuation of this campaign, SEC has recently launched several websites that provide information about Cuban opposition and political prisoners, but also simultaneously provide general information about Cuba -which attracts web surfers.

The NGO especially supports in different ways the group of Cuban political prisoners Damas de Blanco (Ladies in White) in different ways, including the management and updating of their official website [www.damasdeblanco.com](http://www.damasdeblanco.com) -which was created by SEC. SEC has a network of over 200 voluntary members, half of them in Spain and the other half around the world. For more information, please visit our Website: [www.solidaridadconcuba.com](http://www.solidaridadconcuba.com)

**Executive Board and Staff**

SEC’s Executive Board is comprised of a President (Ricardo Carreras Lario), a Vicepresident (Juan Fauquier), a Secretary/Treasurer (Fernando Martinez), and Executive Board Members (Fernando Terrón and Carlos Vidal). In order to maintain SEC’s politically neutral position, board members include businessmen, professors, and independent consultants who are not affiliated with any political parties.

The President of SEC, Ricardo Carreras is an expert in political communication. He is a professor at the Universidad Complutense and the President of a consulting firm. He will be the executive director of all program activities and will dedicate half of his working time to the Subgrant, including general oversight and trips to third countries. Other members of the Board will assist with conceptualizing and planning program activities to ensure they are in line with the organization’s main goals and objectives.

SEC staff members include María Ángeles Altozano and María Rosa Espinosa, both experienced journalists. They work at the Communications department. Their responsibilities include activities described in 2) and 4), including the development of
training material and support activities such as writing of press releases and updating web content. María works at the Madrid office and María Rosa at the Saragossa office.

In addition, for the purpose of the Subgrant, we are intending to hire from the beginning a Program Assistant. She/He will work between 75% and 100% of his/her time in activities related with the Subgrant. He or she will assist preparing the financial and narrative reporting related with the Subgrant. She/He will also work in the accounting/administrative areas. She/he is likely to be at the Saragossa office. We intend to hire one intern to work 100% in activities related with the Subgrant, assisting in different areas.

From its foundation, SEC headquarters are in the Spanish city of Saragossa (Zaragoza), the home city of SEC President. SEC has here a large number of members. Nonetheless, media outlets, Cuba-related associations and contacts as well as potential trainers are concentrated in Madrid. For that reason, SEC opened a small office in Madrid early this year. It is important, to maximize the efficiency of the support to the partner groups, to keep both small offices in Saragossa and Madrid.

VII. BUDGET
See excel file attached.