Institutional Strengthening and Professional Development Support for the Election Commission of Nepal (2008-2012)

TERMS OF REFERENCE
MID-TERM EVALUATION

Background

Following 10 years of internal armed conflict, in November 2006 the seven political parties and the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists reached the "Comprehensive Peace Agreement".[1] An Interim Constitution replaced the 1990 Constitution and was formally approved by the Parliament in January 2007. An Interim Government was formed in March 2007 and Constituent Assembly elections were held in April 2008 that as a first step proclaimed the country as a Federal Republic and will draft a new constitution and establish the framework for the first post-conflict general elections and, possibly, for local government elections.

Project Description

Electoral Support Project consists of a 3-year technical assistance initiative, commencing upon the completion of the CA electoral process and following until mid 2011, with an envisaged further extension, depending upon the availability of additional funding. Without the immediate political and operational pressure for the ECN to deliver a specific electoral event, the strategic support provided by the Project in the inter-elections period (2008-2011) will have a strong emphasis on building a sustainable and enduring institutional and professional capacity within the ECN that could be easily and effectively re-employed in future elections. Through the provision of on-site technical advisory service and specialised electoral support, the Project seeks to enhance and further consolidate the institutional and professional capacities of the ECN, its Secretariat and the its subsidiary district offices to meet the numerous priorities that need to be addressed to further enhance the credibility and the adequacy of Nepal's future electoral processes. ESP has eight project activities: (1) Strategic Planning (2) Long-term Professional Development (BRIDGE) (3) Civil and Voter Registry Modernization (4) GIS and Electoral Mapping System (5) Regional Technical Cooperation and Professional Exchanges (6) Electoral Information and Education Centre (7) Public Outreach and Voter Information/Education (8) Electoral Complaint Resolution.

The primary objective of the Electoral Support Project is to significantly strengthen the professional capacities and institutional organisation of the ECN, particularly in view of its next major challenge, which is the preparation of the first legislative and, possibly, local elections to be conducted once the new Constitution of Nepal will be finalized and ratified in 2011. The results framework for this project and its link with UNDP country program is as follows

Intended country program outcome	Increased access to and participation in constitution building and free and fair electoral processes
Intended country program output	Election Commission supported to strengthen the operational and procedural administration of the electoral process
Output Indicators	1- # of election officials, CA members, political party representatives and CSO representatives trained on different modules of BRIDGE course 2- Gender and social inclusion responsive voter education strategy implemented.
Project outputs	1) Strengthened capacity of the ECN to function as a permanent, independent, credible and

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[1]   The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed on 21 November 2006.

	professional institution of governance
	2) Enhanced professional capacities of the ECN officials at headquarters and at the ECN subsidiary offices at the local level
	3) Expanded democratic participation in the next cycle of elections, particularly for under-represented and disadvantaged segments of the Nepali society

Context for the Evaluation

ESP provided the strategic support in the inter-elections period (2008-2011) after the 2008 CA election with a strong emphasis on building a sustainable and enduring institutional and professional capacity within the ECN that could be easily and effectively re-employed in future elections. ESP also assisting the ECN in the nation-wide implementation in three phases of the voter list with photograph process which had already been piloted in April 2010. This is an enormous undertaking where UNDP ESP has a key role to play in providing the best possible assistance to the process of the new voter registration and in managing the increasing technological and operational complexity of the program and in the implementation of ECN multi-year Strategic Plan. ECN confronts with a number of long-term challenges, particularly in the consolidation of the electoral system and the administration of elections in the Federal Republic of Nepal. On the political front, Nepal is faced with multiple challenges of timely promulgation of new constitution, future electoral system and state restructuring, social inclusion and diversity. The CA was extended for one year to complete the task of constitution drafting in June.

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to assess the overall progress of the project outputs to date and its contribution to the outcome as well as to review the relevance of the project outputs and activities vis-à-vis the current change context and challenges being faced by the Election Commission of Nepal and suggest the suitable ways to address the challenges.

Scope of the Evaluation

This mid-term evaluation will assess the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the project. More specifically this evaluation will assess whether the project activities and operational modality are relevant after the CA election and more importantly to address the current challenges, assess UNDP's contribution/approach for the outcome, and make recommendations for adjustments targeting project duration extended till December 2012. The evaluation will be also required to assess whether the project's interventions are as valid today as they were during the initial phase of project.

Evaluation Criteria

The project should be evaluated against the following criteria:

Relevance: the evaluation team should assess the degree to which ESP was, and through its adaptations, remained relevant during the rapidly evolving political context during which it was implemented.

Efficiency/management: the evaluation team should assess the outputs realized in relation to the inputs provided, looking for example at whether the management structures were appropriate.

Effectiveness: the evaluation team should assess the extent to which the project objectives were achieved, taking into account the evolving post CA election context.

Impact and sustainability: the evaluation team should assess the lasting change brought about by the project, at central and district election offices across the country.

Gender and social inclusion sensitivity: to what degree was ESP sensitive to gender and social inclusion

Key Evaluation Questions
- Is the project design still relevant given the current political context and the current needs and the priorities of the Election Commission of Nepal? What could be the potential areas of engagement in coming years?
- Did the project make the best use of its resources to achieve its results? Has the project been efficient in implementing its activities?
- To what extent the project has been able to build and promote its partnership with other relevant stakeholders for greater results?
- To what extent the project interventions have been institutionalised in the ECN to ensure its sustainability?
- Has the project been effective in providing support to the ECN in effectively implementing its five year strategic Plan (2009-2013)?
- To what extent the project is able to provide necessary policy and technical support to the ECN in order to effectively implement the voter registration program?
- How effective the project has been to promote social inclusion agenda in the electoral cycle?

Methodology
a) Review relevant background documents including various evaluation and review reports (list of key documents is annexed)
b) Obtain initial briefings from UNDP CO, ESP and ECN on the objectives and scope of evaluation and clarify any issues as required. Modify TOR based on mutual agreement if needed.
c) Consult relevant stakeholders/partners of the project
d) Organise participatory stakeholders workshop and focus group discussion to examine the relevant issues.
e) Visit the District Election Office outside kathmandu
f) Collect relevant information through meetings, consultative sessions, field visits, etc. Obtain other contextual information also as required.
g) Draft the report and make a presentation of findings and recommendations.
h) Finalise the report with comments and inputs from various stakeholders and partners.

Evaluation Team
The team will consist of a representative of UN DPA EAD, one international expert in Electoral Reform and will be supported by one national consultant (Gender and Social Inclusion). The estimated duration of evaluators' assignment is three weeks. The team will be based in the ECN secretariat with visits to the field outside the Kathmandu Valley.

Work Plan and Implementation Approach
The evaluation will take place over a period of 3 weeks. The tentative schedule follows:

Planned Activities	Tentative Days
Desk review and preparation of evaluation design (home based)	2 days
Briefing of Evaluators by UNDP CO, ESP and ECN	1day
Finalizing evaluation design, methods & inception report	1.5 days
Sharing and discussion of inception report with the Evaluation Reference Group for feedback	½ days
Stakeholders meetings, interviews, field visits	5 days
Preparation of Draft report, presentation of draft findings to the Evaluation Management Team	4 days
Stakeholder meeting to present draft findings	2 days
Field visit to District Election Commission outside Kathmandu	2 days
Finalize and submit report (Home Based) and evaluation brief	3 days
Total	21 days

To facilitate the evaluation process, UNDP ESP Senior Electoral Advisor/Project Manager will assist in connecting the evaluation team with the senior management, development partners and key stakeholders. In addition, the Senior Electoral Advisor/Project Manager will assist in developing a detailed evaluation programme; and organize meetings; and conduct field visits if necessary.

<u>Products and reporting</u>
An evaluation report including the following elements:
- Executive Summary
- Introduction (including context, scope, methodology)
- Findings and Conclusions
- Recommendations (corrective actions for new, ongoing or future work in this area of intervention)
- Lessons learned (main lessons learned from the evaluation that may have generic application)
- Summary evaluation matrix of project achievement by objectives and outputs

Annex -I

Background Reading Documents (Required)

- ESP Project Document
- Annual Work plans and reports, concept papers
- ECN Strategic Plan
- IFES Assessment Report and Pilot Project Appraisal Report
- UNDP Country Program Document
- CPAP Annual Reviews

Other Reference Documents produced by UNDP ESP

- Action Plan – (ECN/ UNDP: April 2009) Implementation of the ECN's Strategic Plan Electoral Cycle 2009-2013
- A Proposal on Efficient Management of Electoral Process of "Multi-Year Strategic Plan" From 2065/66 to 2069/70 (2008/9 to 2012/13) Proposal Submitted to NEPAL PEACE TRUST FUND, Election Commission- July 2009
- Preparation of Voter List with Photograph –July 16, 2009
- Operational Plan of Voter Registration Pilot Projects- July 17, 2009
- Software Requirements Specification for ECN Voter List Application - July 17, 2009
- Integrated Voter List, Civil Registration and National ID Concept for Nepal – September, 2009
- Concept for NID PIN Allocation – September 2009
- Electoral Dispute Resolution DRAFT Proposed Solutions Paper – Working Document- December, 2009
- Strategy Paper on Enhancing Public Participation and Understanding of the Electoral Process in Nepal – December 2009
- Concept Paper on Electoral Education and Information Center – December 2009
- Enhancing Public Participation and Understanding of the Electoral Process in Nepal – December 2009
- Draft: Concept paper "Establishment of Geographic Information System (GIS) within Election Commission of Nepal" - February 2010
- Suggested Pilot Project Measurements– February 2010
- Guidelines for Enumeration – February 2010
- Implementation Strategy for Voter Registration- February, 2010
- Finding and Recommendation from Pilot Voter Registration Projects – April 2010
- Instructions for Registration Unit Set-up – April 2010
- Electoral Dispute Resolution Project Assignment Report – June 2010
- Report on Gender Mapping in the Field of Elections - June 2010
- Election Commission of Nepal- Voter Register with Photograph Program - 15 August, 2010
- Draft: Continuous Voter Registration Strategy for Nepal- August 25, 2010