



Terms of Reference

Independent External Evaluation of the Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011 – 2014

1. Background and Context

Since 2004, UNDP and its partners have supported the Sierra Leonean National Electoral Commission (NEC) to implement a strategic planning and reform process, as well as prepare for and administer the 2007 elections – the country's second national election since the end of the 10-year civil war in 2002, and the first without the supervision and major logistical support of the international community and UN peacekeepers. Building on the earlier success stories Sierra Leone 2012 Election became a concluding step for Sierra Leone's peace consolidation process and NEC has greatly contributed to this positive lookout through its important and crucial role in managing the 2012 Elections. In 2012 NEC conducted and managed a technically complex election in a competent, fair and credible manner. With the successful conduct of these elections, and local elections and by-elections held since, Sierra Leone has made important gains in the consolidation of its post-conflict democracy and towards self-sufficient administration of its own elections. The 2012 elections passed peacefully and were deemed credible and transparent by international observers. However, as also noted by various observers groups, there remain significant capacity gaps which, if not addressed in 2013 and 2014, could once again result in reliance on the international community. There remain a fragile political situation featuring political polarization and regional and ethnic divisions which could become exacerbated leading to the 2016 and 2017 electoral processes. This, combined with a weak economy including high levels of unemployment, particularly among the youth, could negatively impact on electoral disputes and conflict management around the electoral process. The potential for conflict related to the electoral process remains a concern to the Government and the international community. Both intend to focus their support on continuing fostering an environment that is conducive to the holding of credible future elections and strengthening mechanisms that administer and oversee the electoral process and party competition in democratic manner.

The programme is being implemented under UNDP Direct Implementation with a dedicated programme management team led by a full Chief Technical Advisor under the leadership and full operational support of the UNDP Country Office with active cooperation with UNIPSIL headed by the Executive Representative of Secretary General (ERSG) who is also the UN RC and UNDP RR. The total programme budget of USD 42

million is funded through a multi-donor basket funding mechanism which currently receives contributions from the European Commission, DFID/UK, Japan, Germany, Irish Aid/Ireland, Peace-building Commission and UNDP. Cost-sharing agreements signed bilaterally between UNDP and individual Development Partners detail the contractual obligations of the parties.

The programme operates under the overall guidance and leadership of a Steering Committee providing specific policy and decision-making mechanism. The Steering Committee meets quarterly or more frequently, if need be, and is responsible for general oversight of programme activities, including financial oversight and approval of funding allocations within the overall budget as recommended by the Programme Management Unit (PMU). The Steering Committee receives regular reports from the PMU and the National Election Commission (NEC) and other stakeholders, approves major activities and expenditures, reach consensus and take decisions in any change in the programme work plan, provide ongoing risk analysis, and consider funding for emerging issues. Further support, as needed, comes from the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) and the UNDP Regional Bureau.

Specifically, by the programme's end, it is expected that the three main intended outcomes will be achieved the following:

1. Electoral institutions have the capacity to administer technically sound, credible and sustainable elections (with progressively less international support);
2. Improved public confidence and participation in the electoral process; and
3. Election-related conflict managed for peaceful polls (before, during and after).

2. Justification and Timing

The programme *Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011 – 2014* will come to end on 31 December 2014. As per the programme document, UNDP Evaluation Policy, and agreement among the partners, an evaluation is to be conducted to independently assess the relative achievement of intended results. While the programme comes to an end on 31 December 2014, it is suggested to conduct this evaluation after the electoral events, in order to benefit from the availability of programme staff and build on the findings of elections observers, both international and national, and other key stakeholders. The evaluation is expected to also make recommendations that would guide any needed actions in the remaining time of the programme up to December 2014. The evaluation should provide a qualitative, informative and summative assessment of the programme components in order to inform stakeholders on the appropriateness of the design, organisation, management, implementation, partnerships, and progress towards achievement of the stated programme objectives.

3. Scope and Objectives

The overall aim of the evaluation is to assess the contribution made by *the Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011 – 2014* programme to the conduct of free, fair and credible elections in Sierra Leone through its support and technical assistance to an array of stakeholders namely National Electoral Commission (NEC), Political parties Registration Commission (PPRC), Sierra Leone Police (SLP), Office of National Security (ONS), Judiciary, the Law Officers Department, Mano River Union (MRU), National Commission for Democracy (NCD) and Non State Actors (Civil Society, Inter-religious Council, Academics institutions, Political parties, Youth and Women groups). The evaluation is to validate the results achieved by the programme, their likely impact and their relevance to the overall intended outcome and their overall sustainability. Specific objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- Evaluate the performance of the programme with reference to its respective strategy, objectives, quantitative and qualitative indicators defined by the programme document and the implementation arrangements, and identify major management and operational issues that impacted on the achievement of programme objectives.
- Evaluate the relevance of the programme in the emerging country context and priorities, taking into consideration other electoral assistance interventions.
- Assess the overall degree of progress made by all supported partners towards development of national capacities aimed at strengthening their management capacities and systems for electoral management in Sierra Leone.
- The evaluation should inform and provide lessons especially in respect of identifying further capacity development needs in national democratic institutions, including suggestions regarding changes to the legal framework around elections.
- The evaluation should inform continued implementation of the programme, by making recommendations regarding further capacity development, how lessons learnt and key issues can be followed up in the post-election period, and suggesting immediate steps to be taken towards further improvement in the future electoral environment.
- The evaluation should cover the period from the approval of the Programme Document on February 2011 until the time of the evaluation. The evaluation will examine support programme provided to the multitude of partners and will encompass the entire scope of programme's capacity building initiatives and their impact.

The programme evaluation will also examine the:

Relevance – the extent to which the programme design and delivery of activities was able to respond to and address the organizational and programming priorities of the EMBs, and other participating stakeholders.

Effectiveness – the extent to which programme activities yielded expected outputs at the sub-component level and contributed to expected outcomes, e.g. improved:

- Performance of the EMBs and other recipient partners in planning and managing the elections, including: biometric registration, fingerprint matching, distribution of voters cards, procurement of sensitive materials, Election Day, results management, and the handling of security arrangements.
- Understanding of the elections process among voters;
- Coverage by the media of the elections;
- Knowledge of political party functionaries and activists of their rights and responsibilities;
- *Cost-effectiveness*: to what extent are the inputs to the programme sustainable, for future elections, particularly large procurements and investments?

Value for Money – the extent to which programme funds, expertise and time were used judiciously to achieve desired programme results? Were programme inputs procured in a timely way and with intended results?

Sustainability – the extent to which the legislative and policy innovations, strengthened human capacities, and management systems are likely to benefit the EMBs and other recipient partners into the future with a view to the next scheduled elections in 2016. Sustainability should be assessed in particular with regard to the following:

- Improvements to the Voter's Register because biometric registration.
- Skills and expertise development.
- Capacities for Voter Education.
- Improvements in the Media environment.
- Creation of a peaceful and non violence political environment.
- Future use of other assets procured by the programme.

Impact – the evaluation should seek to approximate or estimate the programme's contribution to free, fair and credible elections in 2012.

The evaluation should further aim to:

- Consider programme design as well as execution, and examine activities across all programme components;
- Assess the design and implementation of the programme in relation to core aid effectiveness principles such as; national ownership;
- Extract the lessons learned and best practices and elaborate specific recommendations to the participating partners and programme stakeholders.
- As much as possible, the evaluation should refer to the start of the programme period, or the start of programme monitoring where applicable, as its baseline for comparative analysis. While many improvements have been recorded in Sierra Leone's electoral environment since the 2002 elections, many of them are not attributed to this programme.

4. Methodology

The evaluation should use a combination of the following methods for data collection:

Document Review – three major categories of documentation will be examined:

- Documents that constitute formal agreement among programme partners and/or record progress; such as the programme document, meeting minutes, the monitoring and evaluation framework, the approved programme Work Plan, periodic reports, as well as reports prepared by contractors to document the progress of their commissioned work.
- Publicly available information such as opinion polls, reports from independent observers that document electoral performance (including some that were funded by the programme), including e.g. reports from Media monitoring and international and domestic observer reports, documentation prepared by political parties, the Electoral Offences Courts (EOCs) and other stakeholders before, during and in the immediate aftermath of the elections.
- Internal working documents or other documents produced during the course of implementation, such as monitoring reports, training materials, mission reports, and consultancy reports.

Key Informant Interviews – the evaluation should include interviews with key stakeholders:

- Senior management and other key focal points in NEC, PPRC, SLP, ONS, CSO, Non State Actors, Judiciary and the Law Officers Department.
- Other national stakeholders with a mandate related to the elections e.g. political parties, the Police, etc.
- Representatives of sub-contracted Implementing Partners (IPs) of programme components.
- Members of the Steering committee and representatives of programme donors;
- UNDP staff and management, including key programme personnel;

Stakeholder Consultations – Consultations with stakeholders including media, CSOs, Development Partners, Political Parties, National Observers etc.

In conducting data analysis and presenting the findings, the evaluation should use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. While the evaluation is expected to estimate programme impact, it is understood that the evidence of impact may not be available for all components.

5. Outputs and Deliverables

Preliminary findings report – a presentation of findings to key stakeholders orally and in writing will be made prior to completing the in-country mission. The purpose of this session is to provide opportunity for initial validation and elaboration of the evaluator’s observations and analysis.

Draft evaluation report – within two weeks the evaluator will submit a draft evaluation report to UNDP.

Final evaluation report – within two weeks of receiving comments from stakeholders, the Evaluation Team will submit a final document.

6. Evaluation Report Outline

As a minimum, the Evaluation Report (draft or final) shall include the following components:

- i. Executive Summary
- ii. Introduction / Background
- iii. Programme outline and management
- iv. Objectives
- v. Methodology
- vi. Analysis
- vii. Findings
- viii. Lessons Learned
- ix. Recommendations
- x. Relevant Annexes, e.g.
 - a. List of people interviewed
 - b. List of acronyms
 - c. Evaluation work plan and TOR
 - d. Key reference documents

7. Evaluation Team Composition and Required Qualifications

A team of two international independent experts will be contracted to undertake the evaluation. The Team Leader will lead, organize, and supervise the work of the evaluation team, ensuring a division of labor that is commensurate with the skills profiles of the individual team members.

He/she will have overall responsibility for the production of deliverables, in particular the evaluation report, and is ultimately accountable for its quality. The Team Leader is also responsible for ensuring adequate consultations with all stakeholders and for reporting to UNDP on progress.

Specifically, the team members will have the following profiles:

Evaluation Team Leader and Senior Electoral Expert

- An effective evaluation manager with at least 2-3 years' experience conducting international development evaluations.
- Broad knowledge of technical assistance to elections, with at least 5-10 year's experience of capacity development in electoral management bodies.
- Demonstrated strong understanding of international electoral standards and principles required.
- Demonstrated strong knowledge of Monitoring and Evaluation methods for development programmes.
- Knowledge of UNDP's results-based management orientation and practices.
- Prior experience of working in West Africa preferred.

International Expert, Democratic governance

- At least 5-10 years' experience in the design, implementation, management, and/or evaluation of democratization programmes in post conflict countries.
- Strong knowledge in key areas related to democratic governance such as political parties, the media, civil society, advocacy/education, human rights, women's empowerment, legal sector, judiciary reform, peace and development.
- Demonstrated knowledge of capacity development methods.
- Prior experience in conducting development evaluation.
- Prior experience of working in West Africa preferred.
- Experience in analyzing and evaluating Electoral systems preferred.

Qualification Requirements for both experts include:

- At least a Masters's Degree in a Social Science or other relevant area;
- Minimum of 10 years of work experience.
- Familiarity with programme implementation in complex multi donor-funded programmes.
- Fluency in the English language and excellent oral and written communication skills.

Note : *The evaluators must not have had any involvement in the design or implementation of this elections support programme and have no present affiliation with UNDP, its funding partners, electoral management bodies in Sierra Leone, or other key programme stakeholder organizations that in any way could jeopardize their objectivity in relation to the assignment.*

Evaluators will be contracted by UNDP and remunerated according to UNDPs standard rates for consultants and in line with the level of their experience and expertise. The contract will be output-based and payment issued only upon delivery of satisfactory outputs.

8. Evaluation Principles and Ethics

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles laid out in UNDP Evaluation Policy <http://www.undp.org/evaluation/>¹ and the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’ <http://www.uneval.org/search/index.jsp?q=ethical+guidelines>.

9. Implementation Arrangements

The Team Leader will report directly to UNDP Senior Management, who will provide guidance and ensure the monitoring of satisfactory completion of evaluation deliverables. UNDP and/or the Elections Programme will provide office space and access to office services such as local transport, internet and printing. Evaluators should provide their own computer and communications equipment.

In consultation with the Evaluation Team Leader and as requested, UNDP and Programme personnel will make available all relevant documentation and provide contact information to key programme partners and stakeholders, and facilitate contact where needed.

10. Time Frame for the Evaluation Process

The Evaluation is expected to start on 15 August 2013 and have an expected total duration of 30 working days. The final work plan will be confirmed by the Evaluation Team and UNDP upon submission of a draft

It is expected that the mission will spend 3 weeks in-country work and that remaining time will be allocated for the production of evaluation deliverables.

¹ The UNDP M&E Handbook <http://www.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/> is another useful reference to UNDP’s evaluation principles.