

Final Evaluation Report

**Support to the Electoral Cycle
in Sierra Leone 2011-2014**

**United Nations Development
Programme**

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
APPWA	All Political Parties Women's Association
APPYA	All Political Parties Youth Association
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BVR	biometric voter registry
CD	Capacity Development
CNA	capacity needs assessment
CR	civil registration
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
CTN	Cotton Tree News
DCMC	District Code (of Conduct) Monitoring Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
EBF	Electoral Basket Fund
EC	European Community
EMB	Election Management Bodies
EOC	Electoral Offenses Court
ERSG	Executive Representative of the U.N. Secretary General
EU	European Union
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
IC	International Consultant
IMC	Independent Media Commission
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission (Nigeria)
IP	Implementing Partner
IRC	Inter-Religious Council
IRN	Independent Radio Network
IT	Information Technology
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MRU	Mano River Union
NAM	Needs Assessment Mission
NASSIT	National Social Security and Insurance Trust
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NCC	National Coordinating Committee
NCD	National Commission for Democracy
NCPC	National Council of Paramount Chiefs
NCRA	National Civil Registry Authority
NEW	National Electoral Watch
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NRS	National Registration Secretariat

ONS	Office of National Security
PBF	Peace Building Fund
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPRC	Political Parties Registration Commission
ProDoc	Project Document
PSO	Procurement Support Office
RRF	Results and Resources Framework
SC	Steering Committee
SFCG	Search For Common Ground
SLBC	Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
TOT	training-of-trainers
TA	technical assistance
VR	voter registration
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIPSIL	United National Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone
USD	United States Dollar
WEECs	Ward Electoral Education Committees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNDP sought a Final Evaluation of the “Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011-2014” project to review the performance of the programme, assess project processes, examine the extent that the project contributed to sustainable elections management in the country, and draw conclusions, lessons learned, and make recommendations based on this experience for future electoral assistance projects in Sierra Leone. Earlier the United Nations and international community supported the 2002 elections at the end of the civil war in the country. Then UNDP and the United Nations Mission in the country supported the restructuring of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and assisted them in administering the 2007 elections and broader processes for the electoral cycle. The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) requested UN assistance, on multiple fronts, with the 2012 elections. UNDP developed the project using the electoral cycle approach. The United Kingdom, European Union, Japan, Germany and Ireland were the main funders of the USD 45 million project, which was also supported by the United Nations (UN) Peace Building Fund and other bilateral donors.

The project’s financial and fiduciary responsibilities rested with UNDP; the United National Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) led the programmatic implementation in the public confidence and security outcomes with UNDP maintaining financial oversight. UNIPSIL worked with civil society through PBF resources and supported security through work with the UN Police (UNPOL) with the Office of National Security and Sierra Leone Police. UNDP led programmatic implementation for the remaining outcomes.

The project initially focused on achieving three outcomes:

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).

A fourth outcome was developed and added after the 2012 elections:

4. Strengthening the Civil Register to support NEC with a technically sound, credible and sustainable Voter Register

UNDP created a Project Management Unit (PMU), led by a Chief Technical Advisor, with a dedicated staff to implement the project. Leadership was provided through a Steering Committee (SC) co-led by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development and the UNDP Country Director.

The evaluation was conducted using standard UN Evaluation Group methods. The independent evaluator conducted interviews in Freetown between 20 September and 7 October 2015, as well as reviewed documentation from the project and other organisations. A validation workshop was held on preliminary findings, conclusions,

lessons learned, and recommendations with key stakeholders. Findings are facts provided by informed stakeholders in interviews or documents. Accumulated findings were analysed and used to reach conclusions, determine lessons learned, and make forward-looking recommendations. The evaluation was organized using the outcomes of the project, plus a section on the PMU, and evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

Electoral Institutions

There are two main electoral institutions in Sierra Leone. The NEC administers elections and the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) regulates political parties and supports their development.

The electoral cycle project was an essential partner to the NEC. Project support was critical to the successful delivery of the 2012 elections. This support included technical assistance, equipment, and supplies for the development and use of a new biometric voter registration (BVR) system and for elections themselves, including the vote tally and result transmission system. The project was less successful in supporting NEC capacity building after the elections. Dedicated consultants were engaged by the project to conduct in depth lesson learned and subsequent capacity building of senior to mid-level managers of NEC in operational planning, financial management, voter education, training and IT in 2013 and 2014. The project also funded a capacity needs assessment in 2014 on request of donors, which the Commission continues to follow up on. This assistance was not sufficient for sustainability of these achievements or to enable the NEC to successfully manage future national elections without the support of the international community.

Plans for comprehensive set of activities to build the legal status and operational capacity of the PPRC to implement its responsibilities were not fully executed due to the lack of action on legal reform by Parliament and continued leadership and capacity issues at the PPRC. These pre-existing limits on the PPRC limited the work that the project tried to do with the PPRC. The project led the implementation of assistance to the PPRC in this output; UNIPSIL led in the provision of other assistance to the PPRC for the public confidence output, which was administered by UNDP. This structure complicated project management and led to management issues with broader negative effects on the project, the PPRC, and UNDP – especially once a case of fraud was noted with Peace Building Fund resources from Outcome Two. Limited UNDP engagement combined with limited PPRC capacity to produce limited results in delivery through the project and limited capacity development for the Commission and its partners.

Public Confidence

UNIPSIL-led Outcome Two of the project, which was largely funded by the PBF but financially managed by UNDP. The UNIPSIL-designed Non-State Actors (NSA) project provided support to a wide-ranging set of civil society organisations which was important in encouraging a more inclusive political system as well as non-violence in electoral processes. The NSA project was developed based on political goals and managed in a

non-evaluable approach, without baselines or targets. UNIPSIL did not regularly report on the project to or engage with the SC. The outcome focused more on non-violence than participation. The UNIPSIL emphasis on rapid engagement across the country with the PPRC and a large number of CSO partners that had limited financial and reporting capacity led to problems administering this component for UNDP. These problems had a broader negative influence on the electoral cycle project once a USD 200 thousand-corruption case was detected in the PPRC and referred to the Anti-Corruption Commission for action. Audit findings that concluded under USD 200 thousand in a USD 45 million project should be repaid by the PPRC as a result of this corruption did not satisfy some donors who remained upset with UNDP. These DPs strongly felt that UNDP should have done more to manage the financial resources provided to the PPRC. Nevertheless, the activities in the outcome are widely seen to have contributed in important ways to the most peaceful elections in Sierra Leone's history.

Conflict Management

Support for conflict management and security in electoral processes was important in Sierra Leone due to the legacy of the civil war which ended in 2002, social cleavages linked to conflict, and continued political polarisation. The project supported the establishment of the Electoral Offences Courts (EOCs) to deal swiftly with all election related matters including elections related violence cases. However the personnel, including judges who presided in those EOCs, were no different from the normal courts. Hence the same challenges, including prolonged judgment and sometimes political interference, were observed with EOCs.

Support to the main security providers, the ONS and SLP, was provided to train trainers who in turn trained security providers. The project also provided food and fuel to trained SLP and other public safety staff to support their deployment to secure registration, electoral campaigns, and polling stations. The project administered this component directly as neither organisation had undergone the needed vetting for national implementation modalities to be used for the delivery of assistance.

Civil Registration

Project support for the development of a unified civil registry, which could be used to extract the voter registry from, was developed as UNDP and donors sought ways to make voter registration more sustainable. The project did not plan to support the completion of the civil registry as UNDP recognized that the two years that remained in the electoral cycle project were not be enough time to finish Sierra Leone's civil registry process. The electoral cycle project scoped the activity and supported early development for handoff to another UNDP project. The effort would have benefitted from a more comprehensive approach from outset that built a complete, costed operational plan to take civil registration to a successful conclusion. The future success of the civil registration effort remains uncertain. A working, coordinated civil registry is now needed for the NEC to have a voters register and registration process – or a back-up plan is needed - for the next national elections.

Project Management

While the project was developed and managed in accordance with the principles of the electoral cycle approach, project assistance needed to start earlier in Sierra Leone to build capacity prior to the elections, which could then be used in the elections, and finally developed further after the elections. Project performance varied based on the strengths of project and country office management, which changed over time. While the lean project team was able to manage many aspects of the project efficiently, it was not able to manage UNIPSIL and some key implementing partners like the PPRC, which then led to issues with DPs. A stronger PMU, with a larger role in quality control and support for capacity building of project partners, may have been able to avoid, minimize, or better manage these problems.

MAIN LESSONS LEARNED

Electoral Institutions

Electoral cycle projects should endeavour to start early, with capacity building and detailed, comprehensive operational planning with EMB partners, to increase the effectiveness of these partners, make support more efficient, and increase the sustainability of assistance through greater use of national partners. One of the ways that these outcomes may be stimulated is to begin support under the electoral cycle more than a year before an election to allow more time for capacity building; this is particularly the case for support for activities such as boundary delimitation and voter registration that need to be completed before the elections themselves. Projects should endeavour to develop and implement a comprehensive capacity development plan that emphasizes sustainability for EMB partners as part of the eventual exit strategy for these institutions from international assistance.

Electoral cycle projects need build relationships to consistently and credibly deliver “bad news” to implementing and development partners. Projects should develop ways to test partner capacity and processes to build consensus on capacity needs and ways to support them. Projects should consider building and institutionalizing technical platforms for EMBs and their main partners in the country to meet on a regular basis in a structured way to discuss and address technical issues.

Electoral cycle projects should continue to build-in the capacity to surge resources and international consultants on short notice to support critical, time sensitive processes in elections – particularly for ones that place the election at risk.

Public Confidence

While the UNDP can administer a programme that supports the diverse CSO community, UNDP should consider whether this ambitious reach can be implemented with adequate controls. Risks in this case were recognized by the programme and UNDP management but were not effectively managed, especially during the interim Country Director. UNDP implementation to support UNIPSIL-led programming, based on implementing partners

with limited capacity and limited capacity to manage and monitor on the part of UNIPSIL, can have counter-productive effects beyond the outcome itself for UNDP.

Conflict Management

The limited nature of the project's ties to key stakeholders in this outcome made these security stakeholders limited partners in terms of what they were able to accomplish in their activities with the project. This implies that for electoral projects, a judiciary activity with a more limited scope may be sufficient to support electoral justice.

Project support to ONS and SLP as service providers for electoral security was done successfully. Project support can successfully approach security providers not as partners but as providers of support for key outputs, like security. It is important to manage the distribution of funding to security service providers to directly reach those that provide the security at polling stations, as was done in 2012 under the project.

Civil Registration

The outcome supporting the development of a civil registry was added to the electoral cycle project after the elections. Additions to projects should have realistic, achievable goals and build for sustainability through the development of a comprehensive, detailed, complete and fully-costed plan to reach these goals.

Project Management

Complicated, large projects need strong staff and larger staff structures to support sustained technical and PMU engagement with key partners and large numbers of diverse activities with different partners. The strong Steering Committee was important in this politicized area of assistance; the project benefitted from a strong investment in SC partnerships, which were critical to successes in the project.

UNDP can be caught in middle of disputes in project implementation as an implementing partner (IPs) itself supporting other UN organisations "working as one." Controversies, once developed like the PPRC corruption case, may prove difficult to move past with development partners (DPs). The damaging effects of insufficient transparency may be hard to overcome with some development partners.

Project management needs to invest substantial time and resources for working with IPs and their partners on reporting and planning documents. PMU engagement in key processes and projects with partners should start long before the submission of workplans. Workplans need to have adequate levels of financial and programmatic detail for UNDP to manage their implementation and to garner support from DPs.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Electoral Institutions

UNDP should explore and consider the development of an electoral cycle project to support the complicated elections anticipated in 2017 or 2018. Electoral uncertainties and difficulties have been compounded by the Ebola outbreak and restrictions on political and

governmental activities, which delayed activities in the final year of the project and have impeded preparations for future elections.

The NEC requires additional support for the next elections since it does not yet have the resources or tested, full capacity to administer national elections. The experience of 2012 suggests that the NEC does yet have adequate planning and operational capacity or internal management processes to manage complex national election processes on its own. The NEC especially needs a system for permanent voter registration, which now depends on the civil registry that is under development. Areas where support may be particularly needed include the extraction of data from the civil registry for voter registration, the potential for registration and voting by the diaspora, boundary delimitation, tallying and transmission of results, conduct of referenda, and international procurement and logistics. The NEC would be handling diaspora registration and voting as well as a referendum for the first time and need technical assistance in order to manage them successfully. The NEC does not have other sources for support that have a proven record of delivery. And the GoSL has grave resource capacity limits.

The UNDP, the NEC, and DPs should collaborate to mobilize resources to support the finalisation and implementation of initiatives that have come out of the 2014 NEC capacity development assessment, which potentially includes training support for the use of the log frame now under development for management. Future support to the NEC should focus on building a resilient institution and sustainability.

The PPRC requires substantial assistance to revise and meet its mandate and the institution remains a crucial one for strengthening and improving peaceful electoral competition. However, the limited results achieved under the past electoral cycle project suggest that project assistance should be conditioned on legal and institutional reforms that might enable greater effectiveness on the part of the PPRC. UNDP, electoral stakeholders, and development partners should evaluate whether this support should be provided through a separate process from assistance to the NEC and elections.

Public Confidence

While concerns about violence in electoral processes in the country remain, any future public confidence support should consider focusing on broader civic and voter education beyond issues of peaceful competition, which could be developed and delivered through civil society. Civic and voter education should begin sooner than a few months prior to the elections. Assistance to civil society is still needed to support their engagement with and oversight of electoral and political processes; support should target CSO coalitions that focus on elections.

Conflict Management

Training and supporting security provision for electoral processes through the ONS by the SLP and other GoSL institutions by the project was effective in 2012. These processes should be used again as needed for the next national election. An assessment of security risks should inform the decision making about whether risks are high enough to warrant this investment.

Support for the judiciary in this electoral cycle did not demonstrate a clear value to supporting separate EOCs; however the judiciary is still likely to need refresher and new training in electoral law going forward, as revised legislation is expected before the future elections.

Civil Registration

UNDP should continue to support civil registration as critical to future elections, since the civil registry is needed for the extraction of the voters list by the NEC. Support for civil registration could be included in the development of a future electoral cycle project. The alternative of supporting a separate project on civil registration may also be viable; a component of an elections project could be developed to support NEC collaboration with the effort and the extraction of the voters list from the registry.

Project Management

Electoral cycle projects should use a longer time frame to enable capacity development in key partner institutions, and start on capacity support long before elections.

UNDP should invest in strong PMU to provide technical assistance and manage project partners, particularly for highly political partners or large numbers of low-capacity partners like local CSOs.

UNDP should continue to build high-level partnerships with national counterparts and DPs which are needed to decisively identify and pro-actively address issues in project development and implementation.

PMU's should consider developing and institutionalizing staff-level working groups that link the PMU and key partner organization to strengthen communication and increase the engagement of project staff in technical areas. Greater integration should strengthen relationships and may increase trust and confidence in ways that encourage raising and tackling tough issues openly and honestly together in a timely fashion.

1. BACKGROUND

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has supported the development of electoral institutions and the conduct of elections in many countries around the world. In Sierra Leone, the United Nations (UN) managed the 2002 elections that brought an end to the 11-year civil war. UNDP then supported the reform of the country's Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), starting from 2004. This included supporting the development and implementation of a strategic planning and reform process that led to the creation of an entirely new independent body to administer elections, the National Electoral Commission (NEC). The UN and UNDP supported the NEC's preparations for and administration of the 2007 elections, the country's second national elections since the end of the civil war. The successful 2007 elections, local elections held in 2008 and by-elections since that time show that Sierra Leone has made important gains in the consolidation of its post-conflict democracy. These measures also demonstrate progress towards self-sufficient administration of its own elections.

However, after the 2007 cycle, the national authorities and international community remained concerned about next elections, scheduled for 2012. The fragile political situation, with political polarization and regional and ethnic divisions, could be exacerbated during elections and lead to violence. Sierra Leone was also seen to lack the resources and capacity to manage the unprecedentedly complex electoral processes planned for 2012: boundary delimitation, voter registration, and then simultaneous presidential, parliamentary and local council elections, plus a possible presidential run-off. This complexity, the post-civil war context, and a weak economy with high levels of unemployment, particularly among youth, led to concerns about the risks of violence around elections and fears that clashes around the elections might reignite civil conflict.

This background led to the development of a second UNDP electoral cycle support project for the 2012 elections that provided technical and material assistance to the NEC and other key electoral stakeholders in Sierra Leone.

This Final Evaluation examines UNDP's support to the 2011 to 2014 election cycle in Sierra Leone through the "Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011-2014" project. The project was designed to help foster an environment conducive to holding of credible elections in the country. Support through UNDP aimed to strengthen mechanisms for the administration of elections and oversight of electoral processes and party competition in these processes as well as aid electoral dispute resolution, help provide for electoral security, and encourage non-violent participation in elections across the country.

This background section introduces the evaluation, provides a brief introduction to the context of for elections and electoral assistance in Sierra Leone – including the development and start-up of the project - and then outlines the methods used in conducting the evaluation.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Sierra Leone has had limited experience with competitive multiparty elections. After the intervention of the United Nations to end the eleven-year civil war, the UN managed elections in 2002 to establish new legitimately elected authorities for the country. The second multiparty elections in the country were held in 2007. This landmark election, conducted with the support of the UN and UNDP, led to the first replacement of an incumbent President by opposition victory through elections in the country's history.

However, the losing party, the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP), continued to not recognize the legitimacy of the winning party and challenge the 2007 results through the legal system. Relations between the governing party, the All Peoples Congress (APC), with a strong base of support in the North and West, and the SLPP, with its base in the South and East, remained strained - with risks that poor relations could lead to conflict. Political violence in February 2009 in Freetown between supporters of these political parties served as a reminder and an alert to national and international stakeholders of the risks of violence around the forthcoming 2012 elections.

For many years, UNDP has supported developing countries in carrying out elections and developing the capacity to hold credible elections with reduced levels of international support. The 2011-2014 project was informed by the electoral cycle approach, which has been adopted as a best practice by UNDP worldwide. The project took a holistic approach towards supporting improved electoral administration and other electoral processes in Sierra Leone country based on electoral cycle methods. The key insight of the cycle approach is that assistance should not simply focus on the election itself but instead support longer-term processes needed to support credible electoral administration and contestation in any country.

The project was formulated in 2010 following a UN Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) that examined the political context of the elections and assessed the capacity of institutions in Sierra Leone to administer the 2012 elections. The NAM determined that UNDP support for key national electoral stakeholders was warranted. A project formulation mission led to UNDP development of a comprehensive project document (ProDoc), which was discussed with and approved by the Government, and funded through a basket fund mechanism by donors. The main donors to the Elections Basket Fund (EBF) were the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the European Commission, and Irish Aid; other donors included Japan, and Germany. The ProDoc outlined a budget of USD million for a wide range of activities, organized through these three outcomes and associated outputs. Actual spending under the project was USD 45.18 million.

1.2 CONTEXT

The Government of Sierra Leone, UNDP, and Development Partners (DPs) identified the need to assess the processes and impact of the “Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011-2014” Project as part of standard practices for large development projects. In addition, UNDP and DPs recognized the need to distil lessons learned and recommendations for future electoral assistance programs in Sierra Leone and elsewhere.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the evaluation, attached as Annex 1, explained that the purposes of the final evaluation were to:

- a) Review the performance of the Project in achieving the outputs anticipated in the Project Document and their contributions to outcome level goals;
- b) Identify factors which facilitated or hindered the achievement of results, both those in the external environment and those internal to the project and key partners and stakeholders (including assessing strengths and weaknesses in Project design, management, coordination, human resource, and financial resources);
- c) Assess the appropriateness of Project’s implementation strategy, including management arrangements and the basket fund modality, for reaching the intended outputs and outcomes;
- d) Establish the extent to which the approach and implementation of the Project contributed to sustainable electoral management in Sierra Leone;
- e) Define the extent to which the Project addressed cross cutting issues of gender, human rights, and conflict prevention and management; and
- f) Make clear, focused recommendations towards enhancing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of a future electoral assistance programme in Sierra Leone.

The project was based on the ProDoc, which outlined an approximately USD 45 million project to support institutional development and election management of key institutions for credible elections in Sierra Leone: the National Electoral Commission (NEC); Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC), the Judiciary and Electoral Offences Courts (EOCs); the Office of the National Security (ONS), the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), and civil society organisations in the country.

The Project focused on three areas through the Project Document which developed three outcomes (and associated outputs towards these outcomes). The three outcomes were:

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).

A fourth outcome was developed and added during implementation after approval by the project's management board, the Steering Committee (SC). This outcome was:

4. Strengthening the Civil Register to support NEC with a technically sound, credible and sustainable Voter Register.

Oversight of the project was provided by a Project Steering Committee comprised of key national and international stakeholders co-chaired by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) and United Nations Resident Representative.

The project was directly implemented by UNDP Sierra Leone under the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). Consultations were held with implementing partners on project implementation throughout the project. Some activities were implemented by national partners under National Implementation Modality (NIM). UNDP oversight included asset verification of implementing partners (IPs) and their partners that received assets through the project.

The project was hampered by the breakout of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in the second half of 2014 and first quarter of 2015 that claimed the lives of thousands of Sierra Leone citizens and left deep impact on the economy, political life, and social fabric of the country. Project and partner activities were seriously affected, particularly after the declaration of emergency at the end of July 2014 which prohibited large gatherings such as trainings and workshops.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was conducted using the principles and norms of the United Nations Evaluation Group. The independent evaluator conducted the evaluation independently based on the TOR prepared by UNDP/Sierra Leone. The TOR for the evaluation included a long list of questions generated through and informed by the discussion between UNDP and Government of Sierra Leone and donor stakeholders about the purpose of the evaluation and prospective support for the current electoral cycle. These questions fit into standard categories used by UNDP evaluations, which have been informed by best practices of the United Nations Evaluation Group.

The evaluation is organised around key criteria commonly used in UN evaluations. These five key criteria are relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Relevance assesses the extent to which the programme design and delivery of activities was able to respond to and address the organizational and programming priorities of beneficiaries, stakeholders, and partners. Effectiveness examines the extent to which programme activities led to the outputs expected and contributed to expected outcomes. Efficiency considers the extent to which programme funds, expertise and efforts were

used judiciously to achieve desired programme results, particularly whether programme inputs procured in timely, cost-effective ways. Impact evaluates the extent to which the activities of the project supported legislative and policy development, help strengthen institutional and human capacities, built relationships, and contributed to critical electoral processes and results during the electoral cycle. Finally, sustainability considers the extent to which this impact is likely to persist into the future to support the ability of Sierra Leone to manage and administer their own electoral processes with less international support.

The TOR included key questions organized by these five criteria to be answered in the evaluation (see Annex 1). The findings of the evaluation and conclusions that follow from these findings target these specific questions. The questions thus also influence the lessons learned from the project found in the evaluation.

To conduct the evaluation, the evaluator first drafted an inception report, with evaluation matrix, to develop a plan for the fieldwork and analysis to address the purposes of the evaluation and answer all of the questions in the TOR. The draft was shared with UNDP for discussion in Freetown, then finalised by the evaluator, and approved by UNDP. The evaluator then executed the methodology and fieldwork plan from the approved inception report in Sierra Leone from 20 September to 7 October 2015.

Data collection was conducted through key informant interviews with UNDP and project management, staff, and consultants as well as partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries (see Annex 2: Interview List) and document review (see Annex 3: Bibliography). The evaluator analysed these data and presented an Initial Draft Evaluation Report of initial findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations at a validation workshop in Freetown 6 October 2015 for discussion with UNDP/Sierra Leone, partners, beneficiaries, and stakeholders. These processes have built the data base for the analysis and writing of this Draft Evaluation Report. UNDP will comment and circulate the draft for additional comments; after the receipt of comments, the evaluator will revise to complete the Final Evaluation Report for UNDP approval (with a target date of on or before 6 November 2015).

To evaluate the four years of work of the Support to the Electoral Cycle project, the evaluator has reviewed all available project documents (the Project Documents and revisions, annual reports, reports to the steering committee, work plans and other reporting document). Document review used the main planning and reporting documents of the project to understand what the project planned, implemented, and the kinds of outcomes reported. Document review has also included the main reporting and ad hoc documents released by the main partners in Outcome One, the NEC and PPRC.

Semi-structured key informant interviews were conducted with UNDP and project staff, stakeholders, and partners to gather their perspectives on project processes, activities and outcomes. The evaluator arranged all interviews independently; with one exception (Irish Aid), all interviews were conducted one-on-one to encourage the most candour. Interviews were conducted in person with informants in Freetown; interviews with key

informants no longer in Sierra Leone were conducted over Skype or the telephone. All interviews began with outlining the purpose and methods of the evaluation and assuring interviewees that none of their remarks or opinions will be directly associated with them in the drafting and finalisation of the report. Informed consent for the interview was explicitly obtained for all interviews. Initial questions asked about interviewees' backgrounds, positions (including length of time in post), and roles in the elections and electoral processes/institutions. Interviews were conducted through general, open-questions to allow interviewees to explain their experience with project activities, their views of outputs and outcomes, and any concerns they had with project processes and engagement. Follow-up questions by the evaluator to their initial responses further targeted project activities, outputs, and outcomes based on their experiences with the project.

The evaluator has gathered sufficient valid and reliable data to address the evaluation's purposes and answer the evaluation questions. The evaluation faced several potential limitations, identified in the inception report, which were adequately managed in the course of planning the evaluation, conducting the fieldwork and analysing the data collected. Limited time for fieldwork, challenges locating and reaching key informants after project completion and the passage of time, limited baseline data, limited final data, key informant recall issues, and motivated biases in informant views did not create unmanageable impediments to the evaluation's methods.

One outcome in the project however proved problematic in the evaluation. Outcome Two, Public Confidence, was not constructed with an approach to make a clear evidence-based evaluation possible. The outcome, as designed and managed by UNIPSIL, emphasized the importance of spreading messages of non-violence around the elections and monitoring risks of violence around the elections through a diverse set of civil society and media mechanisms and partners. Baseline data for the outcome was not specific enough to be measurable, nor was subsequent output or outcome data. However, documents and interviews with key informants active in implementation of the outcome were able to make claims and provide supporting evidence adequate to reach some conclusions about the contributions of the assistance under the outcome.

2. FINDINGS

Findings are facts collected and aggregated based on the review of documents and interviews with key informants in the fieldwork for the evaluation. These findings need to be seen in the context of 2011-2014 Sierra Leone to draw conclusions, distil lessons learned, and make recommendations based on the analysis of these findings.

Several contextual factors are critical to keep in mind. The first is the post-civil war situation in the country. Eleven years of conflict had deep and enduring effects on the political and social fabric of Sierra Leone. Another key part of the context is the history of elections and EMBs, particularly the recent history. The UN ran the 2002 elections that ended the civil war. Afterwards, the UN and UNDP supported the complete restructuring of the National Electoral Commission in 2005. The 2007 elections were managed by the NEC with substantial engagement from UNDP. This election led to the first peaceful transfer of political power between parties through elections in the history of the country.

The 2012 elections were thus only the second electoral cycle in the NEC's existence. This cycle was the first for which NEC would take the lead in its administration. UNDP support for NEC management of the elections - and UNDP support for other important institutions for the management of political competition - was seen as critical by the UN in the NAM. The cost of elections and the sustainability of international support were identified as key issues for the future in the ProDoc. The political, legal, and institutional context for elections in Sierra Leone as well as resource and revenue constraints for the government in one of the poorest, least developed countries in the world limit GoSL contributions. This context establishes the environment not only for partner institutions and organisations but also for the Project's assistance.

2.1 OUTCOME ONE: ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS

Outcome One, "Electoral institutions have the capacity to administer technically sound, credible and sustainable elections (with progressively less international support)," was developed to support the two main electoral institutions in Sierra Leone, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC). The outcome focused on institutional strengthening through enhancing the institutional and management capacity of the NEC and PPRC to administer elections and regulate and mediate political party competition. Support to the NEC provided assistance for legal reform, strategic planning, voter registration, institutional strengthening, results management, and regional networking. Support to the PPRC provided assistance for capacity building at the Commission, capacity strengthening for key electoral stakeholders, and support for coordination and the management of electoral stakeholders.

The two outputs under the outcome focus on the two main institutions for the administration of elections and management of political processes in the country. The two are examined separately through the project's separate outputs for the NEC and PPRC.

NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (NEC)

The National Electoral Commission is tasked with administering elections in Sierra Leone. The NEC, wholly restructured with the support of the international community in 2005 in the previous electoral cycle project, was facing only its second national elections in 2012. International support was extensive in 2007, requested for 2012, and found necessary by the UN. Donors concurred and developed a basket fund to support electoral needs, particularly for the NEC, through UNDP.

The ProDoc outlined a budget of USD 24.9 million to support the NEC and the administration of elections over 2011-2014. Actual spending on Output 1.1 for the NEC was USD 25 million; most resources were used in 2011 and 2012 to support biometric voter registration (BVR) and the elections themselves. USD 1.4 million was expended in 2013 and 2014 to support the NEC.

Relevance

Stakeholders interviewed and the documentary record make a compelling case for the relevance of project assistance to the NEC for the 2012 elections and broader electoral cycle. The restructured NEC worked closely with UNDP leadership to administer the 2007 elections. The NEC thus had not had the experience of managing a national election on their own. UNDP, donors, the NEC, and other stakeholders recognized that the previous electoral cycle project provided valuable technical leadership and resources to manage the elections with the NEC in 2007. The 2012 elections were universally seen as critical to democracy and stability in the country, with the strong party of the incumbent president seeking re-election and the party that had lost the 2007 polls seeking to make a comeback. In addition, national elections were unprecedentedly complicated with four elections held simultaneously, plus the potential for a Presidential run-off. The NAM and ProDoc that followed it noted both how the NEC had benefitted from major project support in 2007 in both advice and delivery and had substantial needs for successful administration of the 2012 election.

The ProDoc outlined a comprehensive design to support the needs of the NEC in electoral administration under an electoral cycle approach to assistance consistent with best practices in the field.

The design however was noted in many interviews to be overambitious. This feature was recognized two different ways. First, the design was not credible in its assertion that this would be the last – or was “likely” the last - electoral cycle project that would be supported (ProDoc, p. 8). During implementation, interviewees noted that assertions to this effect at steering committee meetings were not taken seriously by GoSL stakeholders. Second, the ProDoc built in plans for substantial capacity building for the NEC in the pre and post-election periods. Delays in finalising the legal framework and the limited time available prior to conducting voter registration meant that there were not opportunities for capacity building prior to elections; a slower pace at the NEC and in the project itself after the elections made for slow going in capacity building. Dedicated consultants were engaged by the project to conduct in depth lesson learned and

subsequent capacity building for senior to mid-level managers at NEC in operational planning, financial management, voter education, training and IT in 2013 and 2014. At donor request, the project also supported a comprehensive capacity needs assessment (CNA) in 2014 and follow-up; however the late date of the assessment and the Ebola outbreak impeded activities, particularly follow-up on the findings of the CNA, in the last year of implementation.

In the 2012 electoral cycle, the NEC also drew on other sources of technical support outside of the project. The NEC availed itself of support from the Nigerian Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), with whom the NEC has close relationships through the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS). In a late intervention, the INEC promised in 2012 to provide a district-based tally and transmission system to the NEC. The INEC proved incapable of delivering on this system which threatened the results of the entire election and required substantial leadership and effort from the project to develop and manage the regional tally and transmission system that successfully delivered the elections.

Effectiveness

The electoral cycle project was successfully able to support the effective delivery of the 2012 elections through assistance for all processes in the elections: from voter registration to the tallying and transmission of final voting results. The project played a particularly large role in the technical BVR processes, bringing in best international practices through the CTA and ICs. This assistance enabled the NEC to develop a secure system that was critical given the concerns about the quality of the past voters list and high levels of partisanship in the country. The new system was seen as a big improvement on the past voters list. The biometric system is credited with encouraging people to register, and increasing confidence in the system, particularly as double registrations were easily detectable.

The project was particularly important in the development, technology, and management for the tallying and transmission processes, which as election-day approached, had not been prepared for by the NEC with sufficient clarity or lead time. The project's ability to surge ICs and equipment for prepare and roll-out a regional system was critical in the timely tally and reporting of results, which enabled the NEC chair to make a confident declaration of results quickly. Risks of violence were thought by interviewees to have been dramatically reduced through this system which led to a quick, credible declaration.

However, the project delivered limited capacity development to the NEC, less than might be expected under the electoral cycle approach. The needs in BVR crowded out the limited time available for capacity building with the NEC prior to elections. After the October 2012 elections, capacity building was also limited. Throughout the electoral cycle project, challenges in planning and operations within the NEC slowed project-supported processes. This was particularly the case for the post-elections lessons learned workshop, which was not held until May 2013, 7 months after the elections. NEC decision making processes and actions were seen in interviews and project documentation to be overly centralized, late, and sequential; the project was not able to

get the NEC to fundamentally change its management style. This system of decision making led to problems as delays mounted, which started in key areas like legal reform. The 2012 Election Act was only passed in March, barely more than six months prior to the elections themselves. This left little time for the NEC to plan and execute operations. This late start and slow, sequential decision making at NEC left critical processes like the tally and transmission process unsettled until the last minute in ways that imperilled the elections and placed a heavy burden on the PMU and UNDP leadership. The 2014 NEC CNA came about following repeated requests by DPs; it was widely seen to be late in terms of helping NEC assess its capacity and for NEC to address the main items identified as areas for improvement in the assessment with project support.

Efficiency

Timing challenges external to the project from the GoSL and Parliament in legal reform, difficulties with GoSL funding, and slow NEC decision making led the project to appropriately focus on supporting delivery of critical electoral processes with the NEC for 2012. The project's first CTA, based on his strong technical capacity in elections administration, was seen as able to work with the NEC to increase their efficiency. Interviews and project reporting note consistent efforts to work with the NEC to make decision making more inclusive, decentralized, and timely to increase the efficiency of the NEC's operations. The project was seen as less able to work with the NEC under the second CTA who lacked experience in electoral cycle projects. The 2014 CNA and follow-through on the conclusions and recommendations of the study also focused on increasing the NEC's efficiency. However, the project was not able to fundamentally change NEC decision making style during this electoral cycle.

Project support to the NEC was timely and well managed by UNDP to deliver the elections; this imperative however impeded some aspects of capacity development. Some issues with finalising the voter register and cleaning the database also increased the pressure on the 2012 preparations and NEC planning processes. The project's surge in consultants as needed to develop and implement the regional tally and transmission system was done efficiently.

One activity under the output targeted gender mainstreaming. Support in 2013 and 2014 was provided to the NEC for two discrete gender activities. The first helped develop women's knowledge of and capacity in electoral administration through support for training for women at the Institute of Electoral Administration and Civic Education (INEACE). In the second, the NEC conducted gender mainstreaming workshops for its staff, including regional staff, using project funds.

Impact

The electoral cycle project had tremendous impact in that it helped the NEC deliver successful elections. Project documentation and interviews noted the substantial contributions of the project and recognized that the successes of the registration and elections in 2012 would not have been possible without the support of the project. The BVR processes were recognized as successful innovations in Sierra Leone and were noted to be areas where the project and NEC collaborated well in successful delivery.

This included significant engagement by the project with the NEC on the strategic and operational planning needed to bring the complex process to a successful conclusion. This leadership and push from the project for improved, decentralized, simultaneous decision-making was not however able to transform the institutional style of the NEC; this then led to potential roadblocks with indecision over the tally and transmission process, which the project was able to successfully address through the IC surge.

The electoral cycle project had less of an impact in capacity development for the NEC. Throughout 2012, the project supported training as needed to deliver key electoral process, but beyond these trainings, there was limited support for capacity development beyond all of the on-the-job training and collaboration in the delivery of the registration and elections themselves. The CNA had less impact than anticipated as it was delivered only in 2014 and had limited follow-up, in part due to the EVD outbreak. Some of the follow-up to the CNA like the development of a comprehensive log-frame for strategic and operational planning, was close to being finalized at the time of the evaluation's fieldwork.

Support under some outputs was seen as having less of an impact; project-led training and support for the staff of NEC ward-level structures, the Ward Electoral Education Committees (WEECs), produced more controversy than apparent results. Project and donor scepticism about the NEC's capacity to effectively lead and manage the efforts of the WEECs were never met by the NEC with evidence to support claims that they had effective management or impact at this level across Sierra Leone.

Sustainability

The electoral cycle project operated through a style that worked with and through the NEC towards building national ownership and sustainability of election administration. This effort required consistent strong backing from the project to support NEC planning and operations. However, the NEC still lacks the resources to administer and deliver future elections. The mid-term evaluation – like this evaluation - also found NEC staff in interviews noting that they still needed international support for future national elections (p. 34). Despite this overall style that supported sustainability, the project also supported key processes such as BVR that key staff recognized were not sustainable with NEC capacities and resources, but were priorities of the NEC and DPs.

Some project assistance to the NEC, while essential for the NEC's delivery of the elections, was delivered in less than sustainable ways. This was the case for example with the technical equipment for the regional tally and transmission system, which was reportedly still held in UNDP warehouses in 2015. The project did follow-up on the development of district-based tally and transmission planning assistance to the NEC in 2014.

The inability to focus on capacity development for the NEC due to the press of time before the elections and limited interest after the elections on the part of the NEC left less sustainable capacity development for the EMB than was intended in the ProDoc. NEC capacity and processes are recognized to have been improved through the project, but

there remain substantial uncertainties about the sustainability of project-supported achievements at the NEC going forward.

POLITICAL PARTIES REGISTRATION COMMISSION (PPRC)

The Political Parties Registration Commission is included in the constitution, where the PPRC's responsibilities are to register political parties. The 2002 Political Parties Act added a large number of additional responsibilities to the Commission, including supervising the conduct of political parties, monitoring of the accountability of parties to their membership, leading the mediation of intra and inter-party disputes and conflicts, and promoting political pluralism. The PPRC is expected to be a regulatory body, a conflict-resolution mechanism, and a liaison with the parties to complement the work of the NEC. The PPRC was recognized to be an institution in need of assistance, with a large set of mandates, challenging partners, a weak legal framework, and limited organisational development in the Project Document, which assessed the potential of the organisation as "largely untapped" (p. 16).

The ProDoc noted that work with political parties would be implemented with UNIPSIL's Political Affairs and Peace Consolidation Section. UNIPSIL also led in Outcome Two (see below), where many activities were implemented with the PPRC directly or as an IP to work with other organisations. UNIPSIL took the lead on the output under Outcome One with the most funding, the "Promotion of intra or inter party dialogue and commitment from political parties constructive political discourse and peaceful elections." The ProDoc envisioned using USD 2.9 million in work with the PPRC over 2011-2014. Funds expended reached USD 2.6 million, despite using only USD 38 thousand to fund the PPRC in 2013 and 2014. The UNIPSIL-led output was almost USD 1.2 million of the total, largely for pre-election support to parties through the PPRC in 2011 and 2012.

Relevance

The critical importance of the PPRC as an institution for the management of political competition in Sierra Leone was clearly noted in the ProDoc. International and national stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation noted the clear relevance of the PPRC for political party development and competition, which thus had a direct impact on elections through the individual parties and candidates contesting offices.

However the design of activities with the PPRC in the ProDoc was seen to be overly ambitious in retrospect. The overall plan of work with the PPRC was even more ambitious as the PPRC was central as an IP for Outcome Two (see below for Outcome Two). One activity was to support legal reform to widen the ability of the PPRC to carry out its mandates. At time of the development of the ProDoc, proposed legislation revising the authorities of the PPRC had been awaiting cabinet action for several years without success. Had legal reform been forthcoming, especially legal reform via project-supported revisions, and had the PPRC not become embroiled in corruption cases over

the misuse of project resources, the design may not have actually turned out to be overly ambitious.

Effectiveness

The electoral cycle project worked with the PPRC to build the capacity of the Commission, particularly the regional offices, and to support the Commission's work with political parties. Project support went to build communications practices and capacity, including through an IC, and a broader capacity assessment in 2014. The late timing of this assessment in the project's timeline and the EVD outbreak limited the follow-up available to the CNA for the Commission through the project.

The challenging partnerships in this output - between UNDP, UNIPSIL, and PPRC, well between the PPRC and party stakeholders and partner organisations, and later between UNDP and DPs – impeded results in the output. The PPRC by its nature has the most political constituencies in the country – the different political parties in Sierra Leone. Limited capacities on all sides to effectively manage – in activities for the PPRC and parties/coalitions, in oversight and communications for UNDP and UNIPSIL, and in oversight for DPs - made the development of activities, the implementation of activities at the PPRC and by the PPRC with their partners, and reporting and communication on financial and programmatic results in the output problematic.

The output was also affected by the complex overall framework of the electoral project. Both PBF UNIPSIL and EBF UNDP resources were used. The PPRC was a beneficiary of support in this output while an IP for Outcome Two. This framework proved problematic for UNDP, UNIPSIL, and PPRC as different priorities and different funding streams complicated relationships in ways that impeded project support to the PPRC, weakened the PPRC's ability to effectively work with electoral stakeholders, and damaged UNDP's relations with donors.

The PPRC leadership noted that after the election, they discovered and reported suspected corruption among four staff members to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), who started an investigation. Some at the PPRC lamented not only the corruption accusations, but also the consequences of reporting the issue to the ACC, as it limited donor and project support to the PPRC afterwards. The slow pace of the ACC investigation, which had not been completed at the time of the evaluation (two years after the case was first brought to their attention), and the unsettled state of the corruption case impeded the project's collaboration with the PPRC in 2013 through the end of the project.

Efficiency

Accountability issues limited project cooperation with the PPRC. Work with the Commission was more difficult for UNDP to execute with the needed shift to DIM execution for all activities with the PPRC after the corruption issue. UNDP then had to manage all payments, even to the level of making small payments to individuals for their transportation allowances to support their attendance at PPRC workshops in the regions. Some donors felt and complained that it was inefficient to use project resources through

the PPRC to support all ten registered political parties, as was done in some cases; other project support through the PPRC was not controversial with donors in this way as this assistance went only to the four political parties with seats in Parliament. On the other hand PPRC interviews emphasised that their mandate was to support and regulate all registered political parties, not only the largest ones; PPRC interviewees felt that providing support to only four parties was improper.

The accountability issues also contributed to a more limited delivery of assistance to the PPRC, as did the failure of the reform legislation to progress. Without a stronger mandate, less work was done by the PPRC with parties, and less project support was forthcoming (for example to review political party constitutions). The PPRC was also not able to implement as much of the capacity building within the Commission planned after the capacity assessment in 2014. Without a stronger mandate or increased capacity, the PPRC continued to face challenges in administering activities, as well as in its funding. One of the ways these administrative and financial issues manifested itself was to further impede the electoral cycle project's cooperation with the PPRC. As of October 2015, the PPRC had not yet returned the funds that were used inappropriately to UNDP as required by the agreement between UNDP and the Commission.

Project support under this output directly supported increased youth participation in political processes. The project supported the formation and operation of a cross-party youth associations, the All Political Parties Youth Association (APPYA), including its regional offices, as part of the broader push of the project with key stakeholders to increase the role of youth in politics in the country. Less attention was placed on women under this output, as the formation and institutionalisation of a women's association was supported under Outcome Two with the PPRC (see below).

Impact

Project support to the PPRC has had limited results. The PPRC has not been able to strengthen the legal framework for its operations; while the project supported the technical work to review and revise the law, the electoral cycle project, its stakeholders, and the PPRC have not been able to build political enough support to have Cabinet and Parliament consider the measure and pass it into law. Pressing needs to work with political parties and cross-party organisations prior to the election led to project work with the PPRC without the time to build organisational and staff capacity of the Commission first. The PPRC's weak mandate, limited institutional capacity, and challenges with management as well as the limited management capacity of their partners and differences in approach between UNIPSIL and UNDP made it possible for some PPRC staff to allegedly divert funding provided through the PBF in Outcome Two. This corruption issue then impeded further work with the PPRC under the output as well as in Outcome Two after the elections.

Sustainability

The sustainability of project support to the PPRC is limited. Since the project was not able to help bring the needed legal reforms for the Commission to their conclusion as laws, the framework for the PPRC remains problematic. The capacity building of the

project for the PPRC was also limited. Interviews, project reporting, and PPRC documents continue to note the need for an improved legal framework and stronger capacity at PPRC to be able to strengthen political parties and the management of party competition in Sierra Leone. PPRC staff have done an impressive job in some areas, for example to continue to manage and update the Commission's web site, support the mediation of intra-party disputes, and encourage inter-party forums after project assistance.

2.2 OUTCOME TWO: PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

Outcome Two, "Improved public confidence and participation in the electoral process," was developed, led, and managed by UNIPSIL. UNIPSIL developed the project in 2010 as the Non-State Actors (NSA) programme with UN funding from the Peace Building Fund (PBF). UNIPSIL reported on this programme separately to the PBF under the title "Promoting non-violent, free and credible elections through enhanced participation of non-state actors." Most activities were funded through PBF resources not those of the EBF. With the development of the Electoral Cycle Project, UNIPSIL turned to UNDP to administer these funds through the project. The NSA and Outcome Two are thus synonymous.

UNIPSIL and other key international and national stakeholders were concerned about the potential for widespread violence around electoral processes, given the recent civil war, enduring political cleavages, and difficult social conditions in the country. UNIPSIL designed and led Outcome Two not only to spread messages of non-violence around electoral processes but also to support inclusive participation by targeting the expansion of electoral and democratic awareness and participation, particularly for underrepresented and disadvantaged segments of society like women, youth, and people with disabilities.

The Outcome was implemented through fifteen IPs, including government institutions like the PPRC and National Commission for Democracy (NCD) as well as leading civil society and media organisations. These IPs were used to reach other key electoral stakeholders such as political parties, smaller civil society groups, and media providers to reduce the level of political tension and promote a more conciliatory, non-violent, and consultative political and electoral process.

The outcome was divided into four outputs:

- 2.1. CSOs are able to monitor the electoral process and promote broad civic and voter education;
- 2.2. Political parties play a constructive and informed role in the electoral process;
- 2.3. Media monitoring and improved reporting standards; and
- 2.4. National unity and cohesion for a peaceful election.

Each output was subdivided further into sub-outputs.

UNIPSIL used a different organisation based around “expected achievements” to report to the PBF. These achievements, however, do not appear to be results-based or suitable for results-based monitoring.

- Project 1: Facilitating political dialogue, participation and non-violence;
- Project 2: Provision of institutional support to Traditional and the Inter-faith Groups;
and
- Project 3: Provision of institutional support to Media, Academia, Sports & Arts.

UNIPSIL appears never to have provided programme reporting to UNDP organised to meet the electoral cycle project’s outputs. The four outputs were thus often reported on and considered together at the outcome level by UNIPSIL and by the electoral cycle project. This approach is correspondingly taken for the evaluation as well.

Funding allocated to the outcome in the ProDoc was USD 7 million from the PBF and almost USD 1.2 through the basket fund; actual end-of-project funding was USD 3.5 million due to capacity constraints of the IPs under the outcome, resource constraints, and the provision of civil society support by DFID for the elections through other mechanisms (neither the PBF nor EBF). Only USD 365 thousand was expended in 2013, and no financial support was provided in 2014.

Relevance

Only a decade since the civil war had devastated the country, in a context where the underlying social issues that contributed to the conflict were widely seen to remain by national and international stakeholders, a comprehensive approach to supporting peaceful electoral competition needed to go beyond the key institutions to reach important organisations and the public directly. As designed in the project document, the outcome was intended to support inclusive participation by expanding levels of electoral and democratic awareness and participation, particularly for under-represented and disadvantaged segments of society (notably women, youth, and people living with disabilities). As designed for the PBF, the NSA programme created a set of activities to encourage non-violent political contestation and participation.

Civil society was supported in the previous electoral cycle by UNIPSIL to good effect. The electoral cycle design noted the perceived need and opportunity to support civil society efforts to expand democratic participation and support non-violence – sentiments that civil society interviewees and international partners confirmed in interviews for the evaluation. The needs of CSOs for capacity and resources to support programming in the electoral cycle could also be met through UNIPSIL’s ability to access PBF funds.

While the design was clear on the problems of developing democratic awareness and supporting non-violence, the goal of having a peaceful democratic contest, and the approach to addressing these problems and supporting the goal of peaceful elections through working through stakeholders such as political parties, civil society, and the media, the outcome proved a challenge to design in such a way as to facilitate

implementation, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation. This is due to the different areas of work, absence of a baseline, and large number of IPs, as well as the different approaches and emphases of UNIPSIL and UNDP to the programme were never reconciled. Plus the NSA component was not the only support for civil society and the elections. In addition to supporting the EBF, the United Kingdom, through DFID, ran a separate programme of support for key CSOs focused on the elections. Since some of the key institutions for elections were supported through this other mechanism, the NSA component worked less with them in favour of supporting organizations that did not have other resources to help them reach their goals in the elections.

Effectiveness

Activities under the outcome helped to create avenues for political parties, civil society organisations, and media stakeholders to engage each other in dialogue, defuse tensions and address issues of common concern. Opportunities for political dialogue between contending parties were otherwise meagre. Civil society too lacked ways and organisation to engage in political discussion and interact with political parties in a constructive manner.

The project addressed these lacunae. The outcome, working through PPRC, provided support to help the four most prominent political parties with transportation and communications equipment to increase their cohesion and ability to reach both their members and citizens. The project also worked through PPRC to support the formation and operation of a cross-party women's association, the All Political Parties Women's Association (APPWA). APPWA in particular asserted that they could not have been formed nor had as wide a reach without the support of the programme.

The outcome also worked with traditional authorities to encourage non-partisanship; this resulted in the adoption by the National Council of Paramount Chiefs of the Declaration on the Elections as well as an approved code of conduct for chiefs. These measures were important efforts to encourage non-partisanship by the traditional authorities. The outcome also worked to support the independence and capacity of the media. Project support led to the development and approval of code of conduct for print media which was approved by the Guild of Editors. A broader Media Code of Practice for electronic and print media was also developed through the project. Project support enabled the Independent Media Commission (IMC) to monitor and enforce the Media Code of Practice; The IMC also provided training to district councils on the utility of community radio. In addition, the project funded the production and broadcast of civic and voter education programming through the independent network of the Cotton Tree News (CTN). CTN content reached citizens directly with messages of non-violence.

Support under the outcome also helped NEW and the broader NCC work with and coordinate electoral stakeholders, including through the project's SC. These project approaches that endeavoured to coordinate civil society efforts and foster collaboration between CSOs were valued by key election stakeholders interviewed, including the NEC and PPRC. The CSO situation room established by the project was prepared to help manage violence around the polls in 2012 – and was fortunately silent since no violence

was reported on Election Day. A parallel women's situation room was organized by UN Women.

The effectiveness of assistance in this outcome faced challenges due to the limited capacities of CSO partners. Activities under the outcome were not designed to focus on capacity development (CD), but instead emphasized non-violent participation in electoral processes.

Some key activities under the outcome explicitly focused on gender issues and human rights. This was particularly the case with the development of APPWA and the organisation's goal of increasing women's engagement in party politics. Activities sought to achieve a 30% quota for women in elected office, despite the unfavourable first-past-the-post framework for elections which made this over target optimistic. However the project was able to support substantial advocacy for women's political participation and the training of women leaders and candidates which promotes greater women's political leadership.

Efficiency

The outcome's management and implementation arrangements were seen as troublesome. UNIPSIL, as a political mission, could not administer the programme without an IP to handle the financial and logistical arrangements, which UNDP basically became for the NSA programme. But for UDNP, the stakes were far greater simply those of an IP, since UNDP had developed, continued to manage, and was responsible for results in this outcome as well as for results with many of these same implementing partners in other parts of the electoral cycle project. The different approaches of UNIPSIL and UNDP to the NSA programme/Outcome Two had broader negative impacts on the overall management of the project and its relations with partners - both implementing partners and development partners.

Many activities in the outcome were implemented through independent government agencies. The PPRC had the most prominent role in implementation, as the mechanism to reach the political parties and organisations that linked parties. Other activities were channelled through the NCD, another independent government agency, or stronger civil society structures, like the IMC. Because the outcome had multiple, diverse CSO partners, many of which lacked capacity, UNDP had to assume greater roles in project implementation, including DIM modalities, for many awards. This was – or became the case – for PPRC-managed activities as well due to credible concerns about misappropriation of PBF-funds by some PPRC staff.

The issue of corruption in PPRC activities became a substantial impediment to the outcome – and even more to UNDP's relationships with key development partners as well as with implementing partners (first and foremost but not exclusively the PPRC). Key donor counterparts felt that UNDP had failed to take adequate measures to safeguard donor resources from corruption – and then that UNDP had been insufficiently proactive and open in addressing alleged corruption issues once the case came to light. Implementing partners felt that they had received different guidance and instruction from

the UN through the program, with UNIPSIL emphasizing the need for quick action and UNDP emphasizing the need for proper administration and management (to the potential detriment of the timeliness of activities). These different emphases also raised tensions between UNIPSIL and UNDP. UNDP staff report in files and in interviews ways that the project objected to inadequate documentation and information about programme activities in the outcome; UNIPSIL did not take up these issues effectively with its partners in the programme and UNDP was not able to require the level of financial and programmatic accountability expected by donors and project staff for some activities in the outcome. The corruption issues, which led to four PPRC staff losing their jobs and their cases being referred to the Anti-Corruption Commission (which had not concluded and closed these cases as of the evaluation's fieldwork in October 2015) also impeded the project's work with the PPRC under outcome one.

The activities under the outcome were difficult to implement, coordinate, monitor, and evaluate. UNIPSIL, as a political mission, provided limited oversight and management of progress towards the outcome, the outputs under the outcome, and the diverse IPs. One of the ways these challenges was manifested was difficulties with activity planning by CSOs led to the late development of workplans, later approvals, and late implementation. This was the case even with some of the effort and resources devoted to supporting strategic and operational planning of CSOs and coalitions themselves.

The civil society effort had a focus on encouraging the increased participation of youth and women in political processes. Close-out of these projects with youth and women's groups often lagged, both in financial and programmatic reporting. The NSA project also reached out to and used many human rights-focused CSOs in the development and implementation of activities.

Impact

Under the outcome, UNIPSIL supported up to 70 partners to implement multiple small-scale activities across the whole of Sierra Leone. UNIPSIL reporting and interviewees asserted that the programme made important contribution to peaceful elections; UNDP, CSO and PPRC interviewees agreed with this assessment. However, the programme output was not designed for evaluability. As the final report to the PBF noted, no results framework was developed nor were baselines clarified. Thus the evaluation cannot evaluate the impact of this outcome concretely. In the few places where a post-hoc baseline was suggested, it was general and based on the 2007 elections. The 2012 election cycle was much different than 2007 for many reasons, which makes it all but impossible to assess the impact of the outcome's work. However, all relevant interviewees noted positive contributions of these activities towards more peaceful participation in the 2012 elections. UNIPSIL staff interviewed felt that local conflicts were defused or resolved through the project's activities; the project's final report also made this general argument. The contribution of the activities to the outcome is clear, although the precise magnitude of the effects of these activities on non-violence or increased participation cannot be assessed.

The consensus is that the project contributed significantly to make the 2012 elections the most peaceful and participatory in Sierra Leone's history. As UNIPSIL noted, for the 2012 elections, no significant instances of political violence were recorded. This is an important achievement for the country, which the project contributed to.

After the elections, the project continued working with selected partners in 2013 to finish delayed activities, reinforce political practices that cut across party lines through APPWA and APPYA, and continued to advocate non-violence.

Sustainability

The NSA and outcome were not designed for sustainability and was not implemented for sustainability. Instead, the emphasis was on supporting dialog to avoid violence and spreading messages to encourage peaceful electoral participation for 2012.

However, project support helped to consolidate some key national stakeholders, in particular the National Council of Paramount Chiefs. The project formed other institutions, which have to date survived without project support. However, the All Political Parties Youth Association and the All Political Parties Women's Association have ramped down their presence and activities without project support and are concerned that they may not survive as organisations going forward.

Donor, UNDP, and CSO interviewees noted that CSO capacity could be made more sustainable through an approach that emphasized capacity development rather than the elections themselves. Interviewees – including GoSL agencies - recognized that CSO partners were needed for any comprehensive approach to supporting credible elections across the country.

2.3 OUTCOME THREE: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Outcome Three, "Election-related conflict managed for peaceful polls (before, during and after)," was developed to support the legal resolution of disputes over electoral processes and to provide security for electoral processes. The outcome thus had two outputs, one for the Judiciary and one for the country's main internal security providers, the Office of the National Security (ONS) and the Sierra Leone Police (SLP).

The project supported conflict management and electoral security by improving the access to justice and the administration of electoral disputes as well as by strengthening the capacity of ONS and SLP to ensure electoral security.

Judiciary

The project provided support to the Judiciary for their engagement in electoral processes by encouraging information dissemination, networking, and training and funding 6 months of staff salaries (which were matched by the GoSL) plus equipment for 6 Electoral Offenses Courts (EOCs) to operate from July 2012 – June 2013. The planned

budget for this outcome was USD 655 thousand; the budget grew with the AWP for 2012 to almost USD 1 million. Actual spending based on the Judiciary's requirements for the EOCs was substantially less; EBF funds of USD 423 thousand were used to support the formation of this judicial mechanism and to train staff and stakeholders.

Relevance

A working dispute resolution mechanism is widely recognized as important to efficient, fair electoral processes. The legal framework for elections in Sierra Leone places the responsibility for resolving electoral disputes on the court system. International and national election stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation and analyses of Sierra Leone for project design (the NAM and ProDoc) noted that the judicial system in the country was often slow to resolve disputes, and which threatened the timely conclusion of elections and raised risks of electoral violence. The ProDoc thus developed an approach to provide support to target the timely resolution of electoral disputes through modifications to the electoral system – the establishment of special Electoral Offenses Courts which would focus on elections-related issues. The ProDoc outlined an approach to provide the support needed by these courts to avoid potential bottlenecks. The approach emphasised timely decision making and the need to deliver accepted rulings across the country.

Effectiveness

The PMU provided the planned materials and funding to enable the formation and operation of the special EOCs. While project delivery was effective, the EOCs themselves were implemented in ways different from those originally envisioned. The original conception of the EOCs was that they would be distinct from the regular courts in the country. Instead, as implemented, many EOCs operated in regular courthouses with regular court personnel, including judges. This system may have enabled the establishment of the EOCs; however it did not provide the EOCs with the differentiation from the regular court system sought in the design.

Efficiency

The project delivered with some delays, caused by the delayed passage of the 2012 Elections Act. The training for Judges, Magistrates, Public Prosecutors, senior SLP leaders, and Senior Police Prosecutors was seen as efficient – once the framework for what the training should cover was clear following the passage of the law. The two-day training for 200 police prosecutors, police investigators, and law officers was led by Law Officers' Department headed by the Solicitor General and provided the basis for a clear, common understanding of the new Public Elections Act for security and justice providers. The training also clarified and trained in the procedures that would be used by the judiciary and SLP for the elections. PMU staff noted that the Judiciary was not forthcoming with programmatic reporting on the EOCs; this made it difficult for the project to report on activities and achievements.

No interviewee or document noted a focus on gender in the output; a stronger legal understanding and practices in elections however clearly support human rights. This area focused on human rights at its core.

Impact

Project support enabled the judiciary to form the six EOCs. Nevertheless, the EOCs proved slow in some key cases and was often not distinct from the regular judicial system. The EOC system reportedly handled many small cases quickly and efficiently, such as cases about individuals with duplicate voter registrations. However, a few key court cases went on long past the elections contrary to the intent of the EOCs and project support to them. These cases were the more consequential ones that centred on disputes over election outcomes for particular constituencies.

Sustainability

The sustainability of support to the EOCs is limited; the large personal role of the international consultant serving as the Registrar (not through the project) in 2012 at the time of delivery has limited the institutional memory and use of the assistance. The then registrar apparently did not delegate responsibilities or even share information with permanent staff of the courts. There is thus limited knowledge in the office of past support and limited ownership and use of the assistance and assets under the current Registrar.

Office of the National Security (ONS) and the Sierra Leone Police (SLP)

This output was led by UNIPSIL's Police and Security Unit and implemented by the project. Most project activities were implemented in 2012 for the elections themselves. After the elections, many aspects of this outcome were no longer implemented as not needed since a broader UNDP security sector reform project was a more appropriate vehicle for support to the sector. The planned budget for the activities in the output was just over USD 1 million. Actual expenditures from the project to support the output were USD 1.3 million, with only USD 57 thousand provided in 2013 and no resources provided in 2014.

Relevance

Security is widely recognized as essential for credible elections; electoral processes need to be carried out in an environment free from insecurity and fear. In Sierra Leone, the country's security institutions need training and resources to meet the needs for electoral security for voter registration, civic and voter education, party and candidate campaigns, and the administration of the elections themselves. The project design thus built in the need for resources and targeted capacity for electoral security; implementation of this design also required GoSL contributions. The ProDoc laid out an adequate, realistic plan for project support to enable the main security providers, the ONS and SLP, to provide support for the elections that was relevant given these goals.

Effectiveness

The electoral cycle project was able to provide training and resources to support the delivery of secure election processes, owned by Sierra Leone, by the ONS and SLP. The project was able to adjust the design in implementation, both in terms of what was planned and how it was delivered. This was especially important as planning processes got a late start with the late passage of the 2012 Elections Act. This provision had a direct effect on human rights by enabling political participation in the campaign and elections themselves.

The project also supported effective collaboration by electoral stakeholders on electoral security, both through ONS-led processes and at the project's SC meetings. Electoral stakeholders interviewed and project and other documents praised the coordination of the security sector done by the ONS for the elections, including the detailed reporting by ONS and SLP at SC meetings. UN Police Advisers led the determination of needs and opportunities, as well as decided how to meet them with project assistance. The PMU then executed these actions. To ensure that project support reached the individual SLP and other security providers in the field directly, the PMU directly handled the stipend payment process. Project and election observer reporting noted positively that trained security personnel were at polling stations throughout the country for the election.

Efficiency

The project was designed to provide targeted support to the ONS and SLP based on electoral security needs - not all the needs of these institutions. The ONS and SLP were unwilling to undertake the steps UNDP required to disburse funds directly to both institutions. Providing assistance thus required substantial work by the PMU to make direct payments. ONS and project staff interviewed noted that DIM and the use of and checking on GoSL funding for security provision led to some delays in providing funds and carrying out activities under the project. Given this DIM requirement, the PMU managed security sector funding efficiently and in line with established UNDP financial procedures.

The project may contribute to greater efficiencies in the SLP in the future, through project-support for SLP asset management capacity. The asset management system of the SLP developed with the support of the project may enable a more efficient system of provision of assistance to the SLP in the future. Support for ONS-led coordination of stakeholders for electoral security was seen as efficient. The Project and the United Nations Police (UNPOL) were not able, however, to get the ONS and SLP to provide M&E data and timely programme reporting back to UNDP.

Training-of-trainers in the activity included explicit attention to the security needs of women in electoral processes. Training also focused on human rights observance and improving SLP and other security providers' performance, which includes stronger observance of human rights.

Impact

While the impact of the output cannot be accurately measured, as there was no baseline data for “reduced incidences of electoral violence,” a key indicator of the output, interviews and documents make a plausible case for the significant contribution of the project to the successful provision of electoral security for BVR, the electoral campaign, and elections themselves. Interviewees and the documentary record of the project (as well as outside observers such as the international election observation missions) credit in part the security sector for the absence of violence around the 2012 elections. Project support was recognized as important in supporting stronger coordination between electoral stakeholders on security provision through the ONS as well as supporting the SLP’s capability to deliver security for key electoral events; the indicator “presence of SLP in all elections registration and polling centres nationwide” appears to have been largely met. The 2012 elections had little violence, in part due to the preparedness and presence of the security forces.

Sustainability

This aspect of the project was largely not designed for sustainability but rather to support the peaceful delivery of the elections. However, some activities contributed in modest ways towards sustainable processes, such as the process of discussing and revising the country’s doctrine for military support to civilian authorities, Military Aid to Civil Power (MACP), and the procurement and delivery of the asset management software and computer systems to the SLP. These activities were not taken to their conclusion but instead left to the ONS, SLP, and other projects, including those of UNIPSIL and the UNDP security sector reform project, to continue.

The more impactful support towards electoral security for 2012, the project’s contributions towards a better trained police force, may have some modest enduring effects but is not seen as sufficient to carry forward to future elections by the ONS, the SLP, or other electoral stakeholders. This is because the training programme was a short-term one-time event targeting the 2012 electoral framework; the specifics of the electoral framework are likely to be modified for the next national elections and the effects of a one-time training in 2012 would not carry over to the SLP forces for 2017 or 2018 polls. Another reason the outcome was not designed for sustainability was that other institutional support existed for ONS and SLP, initially through UNPOL and later through UNDP.

There is thus likely still a need for capacity building training and resources to support the national security providers for the next national elections. The model used in the electoral cycle project of supporting coordination, training, and capacity to deliver security for key electoral events is a solid, durable, and successful one that could and should be supported again (if international support to security is again found to be necessary for future elections). Analysis should consider supporting more extensive training-of-trainers (TOT) towards building sustainability in SLP training for elections going forward.

2.4 OUTCOME FOUR: CIVIL REGISTRATION

The fourth outcome was developed in 2012-2013 within the project, following the investment in BVR processes and technology. The outcome, “Strengthening the Civil Register to support NEC with a technically sound, credible and sustainable Voter Register,” aimed to support Sierra Leone move from a system where registration was done each electoral cycle and used only for voting to a system that used a national registry for a broader set of purposes, including elections. The outcome was built around turning the investment in BVR into supporting the development of a civil registry, which once developed, would then be used to extract the voters list from. The civil registry would have additional benefits beyond voting for Sierra Leone through its use to generate a broader national identity card that could be used for social service delivery, taxation, law enforcement, and other purposes.

The electoral cycle project provided USD 5.4 million in 2013 and USD 2.2 million in 2014 towards the output.

Relevance

The outcome was developed after the elections through discussion between donors, UNDP, and the national authorities about lessons learned from BVR as well as from advocacy work on civil registration from the leadership of the National Registration Secretariat, which had been tasked with developing a civil register. Interviews noted that key donors in particular sought a sustainable mechanism for VR in the country that would no longer require substantial international funding each electoral cycle for voter registration. VR is obviously important for electoral processes, as who can vote is needed for actual voting. Thus the component is relevant for the project and its main stakeholders, the NEC.

The outcome is also relevant to other GoSL institutions. The outcome developed an approach to strengthen the institutional capacity of key institutions for CR, including the provision of needed resources for a CR system, based on the needs identified by an October 2012 scoping study funded by the electoral cycle project. The other counterpart organisations in the outcome, the National Registration Secretariat (NRS) and National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT), previously had little to no assistance from donor-funded programmes.

The outcome was designed to complement existing approaches in the electoral cycle project. The idea was that the electoral cycle project could jump-start the process of creating a CR; it was recognized that the electoral cycle project would not be able to complete this process in the two years remaining in the project. But supporting a new outcome, with new institutions in a technical, complicated area, proved even more challenging; the indicators set out for the outcome were particularly over-optimistic (some of which implied the completion of the system under the project). The design of the outcome recognized that civil registration in this legal and institutional context was a challenging area so flexibility was built into the design to help manage the many uncertainties involved.

Effectiveness

The outcome was developed through the SC and a sub-committee formed by the SC specifically to coordinate the approach towards civil registration and the contributions of the electoral cycle project to CR. The project also supported the Technical Task Force for the Integrated National Civil Registry which was created to link and support the key institutions involved. The project was able to start but not finish the processes that are expected to lead to the development of a civil registry in the country. These processes also led the development of a UNDP project dedicated to civil registration, “Support to the integrated National Civil Registry in Sierra Leone 2015-2017,” that is intended to take the process to its conclusion.

The challenge is thus to evaluate the effectiveness of partial processes and a partial product for this outcome. The process of development was seen as effective in that all stakeholders were included in the SC and sub-committee. Project processes were seen to be less effective in developing a detailed, comprehensive plan – as well as funding for this plan – to take CR to its conclusions (which would include a working system to extract the VR from the registry as a critical need for sustainability in the electoral cycle project).

The project funded a scoping study on the feasibility of civil registration in 2012 and supported processes to link stakeholders as well as purchased 1.9 million cards in 2013 to be used eventually as registration documents. The project was then able to work more systematically in 2014 through the development of a roadmap for civil registration, a validation workshop for the roadmap, and a review of the legal framework and recommendations for change through an IC. The electoral cycle project also funded the upgrading of the NRS facilities as needed for the registry through servers, workstations, generator power, and connectivity plus the development of software needed for the system through another IC.

Efficiency

Evaluation fieldwork produced a mixed view of efficiency under this outcome. On the one hand, the use of the existing project, its connections, and EBF resources was seen by stakeholders as an efficient way to start working on CR. On the other hand, advancing civil registration, with voter registration embedded in it, without a complete, clear, costed plan for completion was recognized not to be efficient by some UNDP staff and donors. While the project funded a scoping study that was used to design the process of moving to a CR and the outcome itself, the project did not undertake a second study early on as recommended in the scoping study which would have developed a detailed plan – including a project plan to provide support – to take CR to its conclusion. The use of – or planned use of – systems designed for other purposes like BVR require substantial modification to potentially work for CR. This fact suggests that potential efficiencies may not be realized. In addition, these needed modifications may not be manageable in efficient ways. Progress towards the outcome has been slowed by funding issues, which and slowed further with the Ebola outbreak. Many planned activities in the 2014 annual work plan were not undertaken or not undertaken within the intended timeframe.

No interviewee or document noted explicit attention to gender in the development of the activity. UNDP leadership and management remained cognizant of human rights issues and that one of the uses of the civil registry, with the NRS located under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, would be for internal security. The primary purpose of project support in this outcome was to support civil registry development for future use as the base for a sustainable voter registry.

Impact

The final evaluation takes into account progress under the outcome through March 2015; the evaluator attempted to exclude progress since that time as under the civil registry project rather than the electoral cycle project.

The 2011-2014 electoral cycle project was able to successfully scope project, build and accelerate processes to link key institutions, provide TA to further technical progress, fund or provide key materials needed to develop the civil registry and cards that can serve as the eventual national civil registry document, and support the review of legislation and the development of laws needed for an effective, secure registry. The project supported efforts in this area did achieve results in 2014, with the approval by the Cabinet of a national policy on civil registration reform and the establishment of the National Civil Registry Authority (NCRA) to take this process to conclusion. The project also supported legal work towards the needed legislation: a data protection act and national civil registration law, which need to be approved by Parliament once sittings resume. Stakeholders particularly appreciated the TA for software development and IT systems which were seen as critical for the design of an integrated registry, as well as the servers and electrical power needed to hold (and back-up) the registry and voter registry.

There are still substantial challenges towards impact in this outcome; at the handover to the new project, the various databased of the GoSL still needed to be merged and de-duplicated, district offices needed to be transitioned from NEC to the NCRA and prepared for operation, key laws needed to be passed to enable registration, and additional identification cards had to be procured. Many of the activities towards outputs envisioned for 2014 were not conducted by the electoral cycle project and remain for the civil registration project.

Sustainability

One of the key reasons articulated by UNDP leaders, project management, and donors for transitioning to a civil register as the basis for the voter registry was sustainability; periodic voter registration exercises for each electoral cycle were seen as too expensive to be sustainable. In the election cycle project's lifespan, initially through end 2014 (and as extended through March 2015), the civil registry was not expected to be brought through to completion by the project. One of the main risks of supporting partial processes like the civil registry is to sustainability; like impact, the sustainability of the civil registration effort is yet to be determined.

2.5 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The ProDoc set out a management structure for coordination, the steering committee, and a structure for project implementation within UNDP as well as some targets for the structure. UNDP hired an experienced Chef Technical Advisor (CTA) to manage the project and other staff. In addition, sub-committees were envisioned and used for voter registration, and later for civil registration. Output 2.1 on civil society support was provided a civil society advisor international consultant through EU funding to help coordinate the partners in this output.

Relevance

A project management unit (PMU) is critical to management arrangements that mainly use a direct implementation modality (DIM) or substantially rely on DIM-like transfers as in the 2011-2014 Sierra Leone electoral cycle project. The design of the project was a challenging one to manage for several reasons. These challenges include the use of GoSL resources and other contributions outside of the project going to the same the IPs plus having UNIPSIL design and management within outcomes of the project itself. Several different sections of the UN Mission were integral to project implementation for different outputs.

At the time of the development of the project, interviews reported that UNDP/donor relations were poor. New UNDP leadership in the country office put substantial effort into engaging donor partners in the development of the project; several DPs noted at the outset that they had endeavoured to find other implementers to support the 2012 elections – or even “anyone but UNDP.” The frank, open, and collaborative engagement by UNDP country leadership was recognized to have swayed initially reluctant donor partners to use the EBF.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of project management was seen to have varied over the time of the project in interviews. This variation was seen both in PMU and broader UNDP management. Interviews lauded the strong Steering Committee mechanism and the ways UNDP and project management prepared for and used SC meetings to build consensus and support the electoral cycle project. The strong teamwork of the initial Country Director and first CTA were universally praised for developing this system and communicating effectively to support the management of the programme. The programme was a huge part of the UNDP portfolio, reportedly 75 percent of the funding for UNDP programming in 2012. Individual leaders were seen as critical in the project’s effectiveness; the 2011 and 2012 UNDP team of Country Director and CTA were seen as particularly effective; the leadership after the elections under the interim Country Director and next CTA was viewed as not as effective, either in technical work with IPs for the CTA or in relationship building with DPs by the UNDP leadership, which ran into challenges with donors in this period over the issues around the alleged PPRC corruption. UNDP communicated the PPRC fraud to DPs as soon as it was detected. UNDP arranged several meetings between DPs and the PPRC leadership which reached a set of recommendations for the PPRC on addressing this corruption issue.

The management structure in the ProDoc made it clear that the CTA was responsible for the implementation of all activities and responsible for day-to-day management and decision making for the programme. However, this was not the case for the areas where UNIPSIL had the lead in Outcomes Two and Three. The PMU faced notable issues with reporting by IPs. Issues with the quality of planning documents as well as reporting documents from IPs required substantial time and engagement by staff. These efforts were often not successful in improving the timeliness or quality of IP submissions to the project. These issues affected all IPs, but were particularly notable with partners in Outcome Two and the PPRC. These problems led to delays in work plan approval and corresponding delays in work plan execution by many IPs.

In some cases, particularly for UNIPSIL-led outputs, UNDP objections to the limited planning and reporting documents provided by IPs were overridden by UNIPSIL, which continued to emphasize the importance of programming for political and conflict-management reasons at a cost to the effective administration of the electoral cycle project. The PMU was not able to get consistent backing from senior management to require detailed narrative and financial reporting before dispersing further funds to some of these partners (such as the PPRC and judiciary). Neither project nor UNDP management appear to have been able to manage UNIPSIL effectively. The different emphases of UNDP and UNIPSIL based on the political mandate and staff of the Mission led to weaknesses in project implementation, particularly in Outcome Two with the PPRC and civil society partners which PMU and UNDP leaders were not able to effectively address. Different levels of appreciation for systematic procedures and processes between UNIPSIL and UNDP created broader space for disagreements between UNDP and IPs about project implementation. Then the corruption allegations and the investigation of some of the PPRC funding degraded the project's work with the PPRC and its partners, as well as damaged relationships between UNDP and DPs. After the corruption issues became public, UNDP commissioned audits of the project's funding. Audit findings that concluded under USD 200 thousand in a USD 45 million project should be repaid by the PPRC as a result of this corruption did not satisfy some donors who remained upset with UNDP. These DPs strongly felt that UNDP should have done more to manage the financial resources provided to the PPRC.

The project was able to procure all needed goods, services, and technical assistance through their own efforts and the use of the UNDP Procurement Support Office (PSO) for the large international procurements. The project complemented the off-shore PSO procurement process for sensitive electoral equipment like the BVR technology with support for key Sierra Leonean electoral stakeholders to observe the processes to build confidence in the professionalism and impartiality of these processes.

While the PMU was effective in its support for delivering the elections, the PMU was seen as less successful in supporting capacity building. Interviewees noted this issue was affected by the limited time before the elections. The CTA agreed to extend his term to support continuity in key processes as the Country Director moved on, which supported continued strong project implementation. However, the first CTA had no engagement in

the hiring process nor overlap with his successor, which may have contributed to the limited capacity delivery in the final years of the programme. The second CTA was also perceived as less qualified, less engaged, less proactive, and less effective by his counterparts at UNDP, implementing partners, and donors.

Efficiency

The PMU was a lean team for most of the electoral cycle project, with the CTA, an operations manager, and a finance associate the only full-time staff (later joined by an asset management specialist). This was seen by some interviewees as too lean a staff for a programme of this size and complexity. UNDP management were proud to have managed with such a small team and argued this was efficient. Other interviewees noted that the large number of IPs and difficult relationships, with the lead by UNIPSIL in security and with civil society, complicated project implementation and in the end compromised efficiency as limited IP capacity resulted in limited delivery by these IPs (including in financial and programme reporting). This complexity and the institutional set up was perceived as making it possible for a case like the PPRC corruption one to arise.

The electoral cycle project used the UNDP Procurement Support Office for large, international procurements. This was seen as an efficient practice.

The PMU was able to adjust the staffing efficiently through a late surge in ICs to support key electoral processes, particularly the tally and transmission of results, in 2012. This was an important, well-prepared, and managed exercise critical to the delivery of the elections.

The management and relationship building needed to develop and implement the project through the steering committees took substantial effort from the UNDP country office leadership. The UNDP leadership was sometimes able to implement this system efficiently and sometimes not as successfully.

Pressing time needs in the electoral cycle led sometimes to practices which were not the most efficient. While there was an understanding that there was a need for assessment first, capacity building second, then delivery of assistance through stronger capacity to address the needs identified in assessment, in some cases assessment was incomplete or capacity was not built. These aspects led to inefficiencies later as greater effort and more resources were required to address the identified needs.

Program implementation costs, both UNDP's General Management Service fees (USD 1.2 million) and PMU costs (USD 3.5 million), were seen as modest by UNDP. These costs combined were under 10 percent (9.76 percent) of project spending. These costs do not include the cost of UNIPSIL and BPF management, which were not calculated under the project.

Impact

The PMU was able to support critical processes for the electoral cycle. Substantial TA was needed to support the BVR with the NEC. The IC surge to support the tally and transmission process was critical to credible delivery of the 2012 elections.

Sierra Leone had also been unable to make progress towards civil registration on their own. The NRS had reportedly registered only 300,000 citizens through limited work in Freetown since the inception of the organisation. TA plus resources through the electoral cycle project were central to the development of IT systems for NEC and NRS to start building a system that could not only work as a civil register but also be used to extract a sustainable voters list from. While the processes of the project could not take the CR process to its conclusion, this push created momentum and a successor project which some CR stakeholders felt was likely to reach these impacts.

The electoral cycle project and PMU were less successful in supporting capacity development. This was the case for work with the NEC both before and post-election and with the PPRC, as well as in areas led by UNIPSIL (security and civil society). Project staff also appear to have had less influence in work with the judiciary, which was perceived to have contributed to less impact in this output.

Sustainability

The PMU was not meant to be sustainable. In fact, the PMU worked in the opposite way to encourage sustainability. This aspect of PMU operations was most notable in engagement with the NEC, when PMU staff and ICs consistently pushed for NEC leadership, which the project would then support, rather than substituting for NEC leadership and capacity.

The PMU however needed a full, capable team to manage towards more sustainable results. When the PMU was incomplete, such as without an operations manager, or had a less engaged and capable CTA, project processes and the sustainability of these processes declined. Shifts in staffing and issues with the handover of responsibilities, at the PMU level as well as at the level of UNDP country management, had important effects. This was particularly notable in the loss of momentum without the experienced first CTA in place and the deterioration in relationships with DPs after the departure of the initial Country Director.

3. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations follow from the analysis and consideration of the findings above. Some lessons and recommendations were also directly noted by key informants in the evaluation's fieldwork.

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

Electoral Institutions

The electoral cycle project was an essential partner to the NEC and was critical to the successful delivery of the 2012 elections, which were vital in the continuation of Sierra Leone's peaceful development. The project supported the successful delivery of the 2012 elections, including the new BVR system - but was able to provide only limited capacity building after the elections that was not sufficient for sustainability or the management of future elections independently by the NEC. The project was not able to support capacity development to a substantial degree prior to the elections. The NEC did not exhibit adequate planning and operational capacity to manage the complex national election on its own. This was particularly the case for the technical biometric voter registration, process. The NEC did not have other sources for technical support other than the UNDP project that were able to deliver assistance in a reliable way in this electoral cycle.

The PPRC, as envisioned in the laws of Sierra Leone, is a critical institution for the management of political competition in the country. While the project document laid out a comprehensive set of activities to build the legal status and operational capacity of the Commission to implement its responsibilities, the lack of action on legal reform and continued leadership and capacity issues at the PPRC contributed to the delivery of fewer activities than had been expected by the Project. Complex management arrangements, where the PPRC was supported as a beneficiary under this outcome (with a UNIPSIL lead in some outputs) and UNIPSIL leadership for Outcome Two, which used the PPRC as a key IP and provided the PPRC with PBF funding which was handled differently than EBF resources, complicated implementation. After corruption issues involving PBF funding in Outcome Two were brought to light by the Commission's leadership following the elections, the PPRC received even less support. Limited UNDP engagement combined with limited PPRC capacity to produce limited results in delivery through the project and capacity enhancement for the Commission and its partners. The lack of legal reform and continued capacity weaknesses continue to impede the PPRC from delivering on its wide mandate.

Public Confidence

Project administration of the UNIPSIL-led Outcome Two and largely BPF-funded Non-State Actors project provided support to a wide-ranging set of civil society organisations which was important in encouraging a more inclusive political system as well non-violence in electoral processes. Many activities had the PPRC as an IP which had the potential to increase the activity, connections, and status of the Commission through its work with key stakeholders like the political parties. The NSA project however was

developed based on political goals and managed with an essentially non-evaluable approach, without baselines or targets, for the diverse activities supported under the outcome. The outcome focused more on non-violence than participation, which some civil society organisations found misguided. Administering this component, with these management lacunae and problematic partners and mechanisms, led to problems for UNDP in delivery that had a broader negative influence on the electoral cycle project, the PPRC, and UNDP's relationships with DPs. However, the activities are widely seen to have contributed in important ways to the most peaceful elections in Sierra Leone's history.

Conflict Management

Support for conflict management and security in electoral processes is important in Sierra Leone due to the country's recent civil war, strong social cleavages linked to conflict, and continued polarisation. However, the project's work with the Judiciary was not able to create an electoral justice system distinct from the regular court system as intended. Modest support from the project to the courts was unsurprisingly insufficient to change the operations of the judiciary or public perceptions of judicial processes.

Support to the main security providers, the ONS and SLP, was led by UNIPSIL and implemented by UNDP. The electoral cycle project was able to work closely with technical leadership by UNPOL staff to implement a conventional approach to supporting electoral security which worked well to train trainers who in turn trained security providers as well as successfully provided food and fuel to these trained SLP and other public safety staff to support their deployment to secure registration, electoral campaigns, and the polling stations themselves. The project administered this component with impressive attention to detail, as neither organisation had undergone the needed vetting for NIM to be used.

Civil Registration

Project support for the development of a unified civil registry, which could be used to extract the voter registry from, was developed in mid-stream as UNDP and donors sought ways to make voter registration more sustainable. The electoral cycle project scoped the activity and supported early development for handoff to successor assistance project. The effort would have benefitted from a more comprehensive approach from outset that built a costed, operational plan to take civil registration to a successful conclusion. The future success of the civil registration effort remains an open question. A working, coordinated civil registry is needed for the NEC to have a continuous voters register and process – or a back-up plan is needed - for the next national elections.

Project Management

While the project was developed and managed in accordance with the principles of the electoral cycle approach, project assistance needed to start earlier in Sierra Leone to build capacity prior to the elections, which could then be used in the elections, and finally developed further afterwards. The project and country office's management changed over time, which led to variation in the individual experience, capacity, and orientation of key managers at both levels, which made a tremendous difference in project implementation.

The lean project team was able to manage many aspects of the project efficiently, but ultimately was not able to manage UNIPSIL and key implementing partners, which then led to issues with project donors. The project may have needed stronger PMU, with a larger role in quality control and capacity building with partners, to avoid problems. UNDP was not effective enough in communicating with donors when there were problems, including corruption issues, with the PPRC. UNDP needed to develop, maintain, and utilize stronger partnerships to address the kinds of challenges that arose in the project, some of which were anticipated *ex-ante*.

3.2 LESSONS LEARNED

Findings and conclusions from the evaluation's interviews and review of documents suggest lessons for electoral cycle projects, key stakeholders, and UNDP. As with the conclusions, lessons are grouped by project outcomes.

Electoral Institutions

Electoral cycle projects should endeavour to start early, with capacity building and detailed, comprehensive operational planning with EMB partners, to increase the effectiveness of these partners, make support more efficient, and increase the sustainability of assistance through greater use of national partners. One of the ways that these outcomes may be stimulated is to begin support under the electoral cycle more than a year before an election to allow more time for capacity building.

Electoral cycle projects need build relationships to consistently and credibly deliver what is often seen as “bad news” to implementing and development partners. Projects should develop ways to test partner capacity and processes to build consensus on capacity needs and ways to support them. Projects should consider building and institutionalizing technical platforms for EMBs and their partners to meet on a regular basis in a structured way to discuss and address technical issues.

Electoral cycle projects should continue to build-in the capacity to surge resources and international consultants on short notice to support critical, time sensitive processes in elections – particularly for ones that place the election at substantial risk, such as the incomplete and unclear planning for the tally and transmission process in the election.

Public Confidence

While the UNDP can administer programming to reach diverse CSO community, UNDP should consider whether this ambitious reach can be implemented with adequate controls. Risks in this case were recognized by the programme and UNDP management but were not effectively managed. UNDP implementation to support UNIPSIL-led programming, based on implementing partners with limited capacity and limited capacity to manage and monitor on the part of UNIPSIL, can have counter-productive effects beyond the outcome itself for UNDP.

Conflict Management

Limited project ties to stakeholders made these particular stakeholders limited partners. For electoral projects, a judiciary activity with a more limited scope may be sufficient to support electoral justice.

Project support to ONS and SLP as service providers for electoral security was done successfully. Project support can successfully approach security providers not as partners but as providers of support for key outputs, like security. It is important to manage the distribution of funding to security service providers to directly reach those that provide the security at polling stations, as was done in 2012 under the project.

Civil Registration

The outcome supporting the development of a civil registry was added to the electoral cycle project after the elections. The unexpected addition contributed to the more ambiguous results overall for the project. Additions to projects should build for sustainability through the development of a comprehensive, detailed, complete and fully-costed plan to reach the outcome's goals from the outset of the addition.

Project Management

Complicated, large projects need strong staff and larger staff structures to support sustained technical and PMU engagement with key partners and large numbers of diverse activities with different partners.

Project development of a strong SC mechanism at right level is important in politicized areas of assistance such as election support. The electoral cycle project benefitted from a strong investment in the Steering Committee. Partnerships which can be built and maintained through SC processes are critical to successes in project activities and progress with partners.

UNDP can be caught in middle of disputes in project implementation as an IP itself, working to support other UN organisations “working as one.” Controversies, once developed like the PPRC corruption case, may prove difficult to move past with development partners.

Project management needs to invest substantial time and resources for working with implementing partners – and potentially their partners that are the end beneficiaries of project supported activities - on their reporting and planning documents. These processes should start long before the submission of new workplans under the project; work plans need to have adequate levels of financial and programmatic detail to garner support from DPs.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions based on the main findings accumulated in the evaluation's fieldwork lead to recommendations relevant to UNDP programming, assistance to Sierra Leone, and for electoral cycle projects around the world. Of course, decision making on UNDP programming, assistance to Sierra Leone, and electoral cycle projects involve many more inputs than just this evaluation. In particular, decisions on what to support and how to deliver assistance in the future depend on strategic choices about the goals of assistance given any particular context, informed by resource availability.

One such key strategic question about goals is whether, or under what conditions, election cycle projects should focus on the administration of elections and instead when the emphasis should be on supporting broader improvements to political processes, which includes electoral administration. This strategic question is particularly relevant to UNDP for Sierra Leone based on the experience working with the PPRC and its stakeholders in the 2011-2014 electoral cycle project.

The recommendations are organized through the outcomes of the project. Recommendations are typically framed as “should consider” to encourage gathering additional information and developing deliberative processes as part of the development of future assistance projects in the country.

Electoral Institutions

UNDP should explore and consider the development of an electoral cycle project to support Sierra Leone in the preparations and conduct of the complicated elections anticipated in 2017 or 2018. Uncertainties and difficulties in the country have been compounded by the EVD outbreak and restrictions on political and governmental activities, which not only delayed project-supported processes under the 2011-2014 electoral cycle project, but also have impeded preparations for electoral processes by all stakeholders, the NEC included.

The NEC requires additional support for the next elections because the NEC does not yet have the resources or tested, full capacity to administer national elections. Findings and conclusions from the evaluation, based on past performance, suggest that the NEC does yet have adequate planning and operational capacity to manage complex national election processes on its own. This is particularly the case for voter registration, which now relies on the future development of the civil registry that is still in process. The NEC does not have other sources for technical support that have a proven record of delivery. And the GoSL has grave resource capacity limits, especially in the wake of the economic slump and revenue decline caused by Ebola. Any support to the NEC in the future should target building a resilient institution and sustainability throughout the project's work. A future project should consider locating the CTA at NEC as part of strengthening ties and collaboration.

The PPRC still requires substantial assistance to revise and meet its mandate; the institution remains a crucial for strengthening and improving peaceful electoral

competition in the country. However, the limited results achieved under the past electoral cycle project suggest that assistance should be conditioned on legal and institutional reforms that might enable greater effectiveness on the part of the PPRC. While the PPRC should be supported in the future, UNDP, electoral stakeholders, and development partners should evaluate whether this support should be a separate process from assistance to the NEC and elections.

Public Confidence

Although concerns about violence in electoral processes in Sierra Leone remain, any future public confidence support should consider focusing on more than non-violence; the country would benefit from more civic and voter education, which could be developed and delivered through civil society, the NCD, the NEC and PPRC; support provided with and through these organizations would have added benefits of developing national capacity towards sustainability in the future.

As with the 2011-2014 electoral cycle project, assistance to civil society is needed to support their engagement with and oversight of electoral and political processes. This support should target CSO coalitions that focus on elections, like NEW. Coalition participation in project processes and oversight of national institutions like the NEC and PPRC benefits UNDP, national institutions, and supports civil society development more generally as well as electoral processes in a particular electoral cycle.

Conflict Management

The practice of training and supporting security provision for electoral processes through the ONS by the SLP and other GoSL institutions by projects was effective in 2012 and should be used again as needed for the next national election. An assessment of security risks should inform the decision making about whether risks are high enough to warrant this investment.

Support for the judiciary in this electoral cycle did not suggest that there was a clear value to supporting separate EOCs for future elections; however the judiciary will still need refresher and new training in electoral law, as revised legislation is expected before the polls.

Civil Registration

Sierra Leone needs a sustainable method for voter registration. UNDP should continue to support the civil registration process in the country. UNDP should continue to search for DPs to support the CR project for several reasons, including that it is critical to future elections, since the civil registry is needed for the extraction of the voters list by the NEC. Another alternative is to build support for civil registration into the development of a future electoral cycle project.

Project Management

Electoral cycle projects should try to build a longer time frame into the project's development for capacity development in key partner institutions, and start on capacity support long before elections with EMBs.

UNDP should invest in strong PMU for both technical matters and management of project/partners, particularly when there are highly political partners or large numbers of low-capacity partners, such as local CSOs. A strong PMU can be used to meet one of the project's own recommendations - a regular schedule of coordination workshops at the technical level with IPs and beneficiaries (2014 Annual Report, p. 18)

UNDP project and country office leadership should continue to work to build high-level partnerships with national counterparts and DPs. UNDP should make this investment with partners and DPs, in part to be clear and credible in identifying and addressing issues in project development and implementation going forward.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Terms of Reference, Final Evaluation, Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011-2014

1. Overview:

1.1 Project Background:

The Project “Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone” (hereafter referred to as “the Project”) was formulated based on broad consultations held with the Government of Sierra Leone and a wide range of Donors, Development Partners and Civil Society in Sierra Leone. In formulating the Project, emphasis was on previous experiences that emerged from lessons learned from previous electoral cycles; and the UN Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) that addressed the political and technical context for holding the 2012 elections. Essentially, the Project was formulated based on the key principles of national ownership of the electoral process, sustainability, cost effectiveness, capacity development to build professional institutions rather than replace capacity, timeliness of interventions, use of a coordinated approach, identification of risks and a mitigation strategy from the outset, and application of lessons learned from previous electoral cycle.

The Project budget was approximately USD 45 million covering a period of four (4) years from 2011 till 2014. The Project funds were managed through a multi donor trust fund to support institutional development and thereafter election management of the key fundamental institutions notably: the National Electoral Commission (NEC); Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC), District Monitoring Committees (DMCs), Sierra Leone Police (SLP)/ Chiefdom Police/Fire Force, Prisons, Office of the National Statistics (ONS), Judiciary, Independent Media Commission (IMC), National Commission for Democracy (NCD), Human Rights Commission for Sierra Leone (HRCSL), All Political Parties Youth Association (APPYA), Media, Inter Religious Council, and Arts for Peace and Musicians, among others. The Electoral Offences Court (EOC) focused on pre-election offences and petitions as well as campaigns and registration.

1.2 Project Interventions:

The Project supported the Presidential Elections; Parliamentary Elections; Local by-elections; and follow up (e.g. boundary delimitation post-election). The Project further led to the initial preparatory activities for the establishment of a Civil Registration System in Sierra Leone.

The Project focused on three key areas notably:

- I. **Institutional Strengthening:** enhancing the institutional and management capacity of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and Political Party Registration Commission

- (PPRC) through the improvement of the electoral administration as a whole including among key strategic areas of assistance, legal reform, strategic planning, voter registration, institutional strengthening, results management systems, regional networking, electoral dispute resolution, and management of electoral stakeholders.
- II. **Inclusive Participation:** expanding levels of electoral and democratic awareness and participation prior to the next general and local elections particularly for underrepresented and disadvantaged segments of society (in particular women, youths and children living with disabilities); and working through political and other stakeholders such as Political Parties, Civil Society and the Media; reducing the level of political tension; and promoting a more conciliatory and consultative political and electoral process.
 - III. **Conflict management and electoral security:** improving the access to and administration of electoral disputes. Strengthening capacity of Office of the National Security (ONS) and Sierra Leone Police (SLP) to ensure peaceful elections.

2. Project Management and Coordination:

The Project was directly implemented (under Direct Implementation Modality (DIM)) by UNDP Sierra Leone in consultation with program beneficiaries and program partners and under the oversight of a Project Steering Committee, which was the overall decision making body. The Project steering committee comprised of Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), National Elections Committee (NEC), Political Parties Registration Committee (PPRC), National Electoral Watch (NEW) representative, Donors, United Nations and other stakeholders. Other coordination mechanisms included: the sub-committee for the oversight of voter registration, Civil Society Organisations (CSO) forum, and the Program Management Unit.

2.1 Financial Arrangements:

Because the Project was multi-donor supported, the Project was resourced through a purpose-specific basket fund modality where partners operationalised their respective contributions to the basket mechanism through third party cost sharing arrangements or trust fund arrangements. The main purpose was to ensure effective coordination among contributing parties as well as reduction in transaction costs through harmonised financial and narrative reporting.

3. Objectives of the Evaluation:

The Government of Sierra Leone in collaboration with UNDP and its Donors and Development Partners have identified a critical need to assess the impact of the “Support to the Electoral Cycle

in Sierra Leone” Project; and produce recommendations for future electoral assistance programs. The evaluation is expected to improve the effectiveness of potential subsequent electoral assistance programs supported by UNDP and its donor partners in strengthening electoral systems and process in Sierra Leone. The evaluation is further expected to draw lessons learned from the electoral process and management in Sierra Leone. This feedback will be fundamental in providing guidance towards organising future elections in a more effective, efficient and sustainable manner.

With a total Project budget of approximately US\$45,000,000, UNDP, Donors and Development Partners would specifically like to assess challenges faced and attempts made to solve them; what value the project has added to the electoral process in Sierra Leone and the relevance of the strategy used in the delivery.

3.1 *Specific Objectives:*

Specifically, the evaluation aims to accomplish the following:

- a) Review the performance of the Project in achieving the outputs as per the Project Document and their contributions to outcome level goals;
- b) Identify factors, which facilitated or hindered the achievement of results, both in terms of the external environment and those internal to the NEC, PPRC, DMCs, SLP, ONS, IMC, NCD, HRCSL, APPYA, NEW, e.t.c and document lessons learned at various implementation stages. This should include but not be limited to assessing the strengths and weaknesses in Project design, management, coordination, human resource, and financial resources;
- c) Assess the appropriateness of the Project strategy including the Project institutional/management arrangements and the basket fund modality to reach the intended outputs and outcomes;
- d) Establish the extent to which the approach and implementation of the Project contributes to sustainable electoral management in Sierra Leone;
- e) Define the extent to which the Project addressed cross cutting issues including gender, human rights and conflict prevention and management
- f) Make clear and focused recommendations that may be required for enhancing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of a future electoral assistance programme.

3.2 *Scope of Evaluation:*

In assessing the Project, the evaluation will take into consideration:

Regarding the validity of the Design and Relevance: the extent to which the Project activities matched the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor. The key questions will include:

- Did the Project respond to the real needs of the beneficiaries? Were the planned project objectives and intended results (i.e. outputs and outcomes) relevant and realistic to the situation and needs on the ground? Were the problems and needs adequately analysed?
- How well did the Project design take into account local efforts and make use of existing capacity to address issues? Did the Project's original design fill an existing gap that other ongoing interventions were not addressing?
- Were the objectives of the Project clear, realistic and likely to be achieved within the established time schedule and with the allocated resources (including human resources)?
- Was the Project design logical and coherent in terms of the roles, capacities and commitment of stakeholders to realistically achieve the planned outcomes?
- How appropriate and useful were the indicators described in the Project document for monitoring and measuring results? Were the means of verifications for the indicators appropriate?
- To what extent were external factors and assumptions identified at the time of design?
- Was the Project designed in a flexible way to respond to changes / needs that could occur during the implementation?
- Was the level of stakeholder commitment sufficient to foster constituents' involvement in promoting conflict sensitive, gender balanced and human rights based approaches?
- Was the strategy for sustainability of impact defined clearly at the design stage of the Project? If so, what was the methodology / approach taken appropriate to the context?

Recommend specific objectives that should be addressed in future if the project was continued
Regarding Achievements and Implementation and Development Effectiveness: the extent to which the Project activities have attained its objectives.

- What were the development results (i.e. against planned outputs and outcomes) of interventions, taking into account the institutional development of the local and relevant national partners?
- Which aspects of the Project had the greatest achievements? What were the supporting factors? What are the main lessons learned from the partnership strategies and what are the possibilities of replication and scaling-up? How can the Project build or expand on achievements?

- In which areas does the Project have the least achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can they be overcome?
- To what extent have interventions addressed gender and Human Rights issues?
- How effective was the collaboration between the participating organizations and what has been the added value of this collaboration?
- How have stakeholders been involved in Project implementation? How effective has the Project been in establishing ownership especially with reference to the three components of the Project

Regarding Effectiveness of management arrangements and efficiency of resource use: Efficiency will measure the Project outputs -- qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs. Key questions will include:

- Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc) been allocated strategically to achieve the relevant outputs and outcomes? Have resources been used efficiently?
- Were Project funds and activities delivered in a timely manner?
- Were management capacities adequate?
- Assess the criteria and governance aspects related to the selection of beneficiaries and partners institutions, including NGOs.
- Did the Project receive adequate political, technical and administrative support from its local and national partners?
- How has the role of UNDP added value to the project? If found relevant, how and in what areas should it be improved?
- Has relevant gender expertise and Human rights approaches programming been sought? Have available gender mainstreaming tools been adapted and utilized? Have any Human Right's programming initiation or toolkit been introduced to local planners?
- How effectively did the Project management monitor Project performance and results?
- What has been the quality of documentation and dissemination of knowledge within the Project?

3.3 Impact and Sustainability of the Project:

In assessing the impact and sustainability of the Project, the evaluation will look at the positive and negative changes produced by the Project's development interventions, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This will involve the main impacts and effects resulting from the Project's activities on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The

focus will be on both intended and unintended results and will also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of economic, political and financial conditions. On sustainability the Project will measure whether the benefits of the Project's activities will likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.

Some of the key questions will include:

- To what extent did the Project make a significant contribution to the stabilization of Sierra Leone and democracy and durable development of electoral institutions?
- How effectively has the Project built necessary long-lasting capacity of electoral bodies at national and local levels to plan, initiate, implement and monitor within the context of a country in transition and evolving socio-economic environment and fluid political contexts?
- Are these institutions more enabled to function independently because of capacity building of UNDP or not?
- To what extent were sustainability considerations taken into account in the execution and conduct of the Project's activities? Was there an exit strategy and, if so, what steps have been taken to ensure sustainability and to what extent the exit strategy was successfully implemented and why?
- Are the Project results, achievements and benefits likely to be durable? Are these anchored in national institutions and can the partners maintain them financially at the end of the Project?
- Can the Project approach and results be replicated and scaled up by national partners?
Assess sustainability of the Project outcome and its long term impact, and how sustainability can be strengthened.

4. Methodology of the Assignment:

Based on UNDP guidelines for evaluations, and in consultations with UNDP Sierra Leone, the evaluation will be inclusive and participatory, involving all principal stakeholders into the analysis. The evaluation will consider the social, political and economic context which affects the overall performance of the outcome achievements. During the evaluation, the consultant is expected to apply the following approaches for data collection and analysis.

- Desk review of relevant documents including progress reports and any records of the various opinion surveys conducted during the life of the Project;
- Key informative interviews with the NEC and other key electoral bodies and UNDP Senior Management and Project Staff;

- Briefing and debriefing sessions with the former Project Steering Committee
- Interviews with partners and stakeholders, government officials, service providers including media houses, CSO partners, political party officials, the NEC Commissioners and staff, Political Parties Registration Committee (PPRC), National Electoral Watch (NEW), Development Partners (within the basket and those outside the basket), strategic partners (those providing electoral support outside the basket), experts on governance reforms, among others.
- Interviews with key Project stakeholders and partners in elections and civic education e.g. National Commission for Democracy (NCD), Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL), PPRC's District Monitoring Committees etc. (as deemed necessary)

5. Deliverables:

The consultant is expected to deliver the following outputs:

- Inception report on proposed evaluation methodology, work plan and proposed structure of the report
- A draft evaluation report
- Final report, including a 2-3 page executive summary, and with evidence based conclusions on each of the evaluation objectives, as outlined above and lessons learned and key recommendations for future electoral support programmes in Sierra Leone. Annexes including among others the Terms of Reference for the evaluation as well as methodology and list of questions used during the interviews and list of key informants
- The consultant shall present the draft report at a wrap up meeting with UNDP and NEC representatives, to validate the report.
- The evaluators shall present their final report following this meeting after incorporation of feedback at validation meeting with NEC and UNDP and possible subsequent amendments.

6. Implementation Arrangements and Reporting Relationships:

A detailed evaluation program will be developed by the NEC, PPRC, DMCs, SLP, ONS, IMC, NCD, HRCSL, APPYA together with UNDP on the basis of proposed evaluation methodology and work plan developed by the consultants during the inception phase. The consultants shall be responsible for setting up meetings with various stakeholders including the various officials of NEC, PPRC, DMCs, SLP, ONS, IMC, HRCSL, APPYA, NEW, etc

UNDP will share with the consultant key Project materials before the start of the field work. The consultant will review the documents prior to the commencement of the field work. The NEC and UNDP shall brief the consultant, prior to signing the contract, on the objectives, purpose and output of the evaluation. An oral briefing by the consultant on the proposed work plan and evaluation methodology will be done and approved prior to the commencement of the evaluation process. The NEC and UNDP will provide guidance in identifying, contacting and arranging for discussions and meetings with stakeholders.

The consultant will report to the Project Steering Committee comprising of representatives of the main EBF partners and the newly arrived Governance Team Leader in UNDP. The Consultant will submit three reports at the end of the assignment to: the Project Steering Committee, UNDP Country Director; Chair of the NEC;

7. Skills and Experience of the Consultant:

One international consultant (Team leader):

- Advanced university degree in political science, international development and or related field
- At least 10 years of work experience in electoral technical assistance and management
- Sound knowledge and understanding of the specifics and developments on electoral reforms in Sierra Leone, would be an advantage
- Previous experience as a team leader in conducting electoral assistance evaluations
- Fluency in English
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Excellent writing skills and proven ability to produce quality and analytical reports within the shortest period of time
- Immediate availability for the indicated period

Specifically, the team leader will perform the following tasks:

- Lead and manage the review mission
- Design the detailed scope and methodology (including the methods of data collection and analysis) for the report;
- Decide the division of labour within the team

- Conduct an analysis of the outcome, outputs and partnership strategy (as per the scope of the review described above) for the report;
- Contribute to and ensure overall quality of the outputs and final report.
- Take over responsibility for the quality and timely submission of the review reports to the Project Steering Committee; Development Partners

One national consultant:

- Advanced university degree in political science, international development or related field
- At least seven years work experience in the areas related to electoral reform and or good governance in Sierra Leone
- Sound knowledge and understanding of politics and the specifics and developments in electoral reforms in Sierra Leone
- Previous experience working on democracy related programs in Nepal
- Fluency in English and strong ability to write in English.

She/he will perform the following tasks:

- Review documents
- Provide contextual knowledge and analysis of Sierra Leone's electoral reforms and good governance
- Participate in the design of the review methodology
- Data collection
- Assessment of indicators' baselines
- Actively participate in conducting the analysis of the outcomes, outputs and targets (as per the scope of the evaluation described above), as agreed with the team leader
- Draft related parts of the review report; and
- Assist the team leader in finalising the report through incorporating suggestions received on the draft and in relation to the assigned sections.

8. Timeframe:

The detailed schedule of the evaluation and length of the assignment will be discussed with the Consultant prior to the assignment. The estimated duration of the Consultants' assignment is up to 30 working days. Desk review and inception (1 week); Field Work (3-4 weeks); Preliminary Report (1 week); Validation of Preliminary Report and Feedback from key stakeholders (1 week); Final Report (1 week).

Annex 2: List of Documents Reviewed

Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone Project Documents

Project Document: Support to the Electoral Cycle 2011-2014

n.d.. Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011-2014: 2011 Annual Progress Report

n.d.. Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011-2014: 2012 Annual Progress Report

n.d.. Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011-2014: 2013 Annual Progress Report

n.d.. Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011-2014: 2014 Annual Progress Report

Other Project Produced Documents

n.d.. Cost benefit analysis of Combining Civil and Voter Registration: Advantages and Limitations,

June 24, 2014. Final Report on Capacity Assessment and Organizational Review of the National Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone.

Esam Ismail. 28 January 2015. Handover Note (CTA, Elections).

Faye, Cheikh. December 2013. "Outcome Evaluation of Support to Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011-2014: Final Report."

Audit Reports

UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations. 26 June 2014. "Audit of UNDP Sierra Leone Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone (Directly Implemented Project, Output No. 77588)." Report No. 1326.

B&C Services Consulting. 23 May 2014. "United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone (Output No. 00077588): Final Audit Report for Year Ended 31 December 2013."

B&C Services Consulting. 23 May 2014. "United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone (Output No. 00077588): Final Audit Report for Year Ended 31 December 2012."

Moore Stephens. 7 February 2013. "United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Audit Report and Management Letter: Financial Audit of the Project 'Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone (2011-2014)'."

Other UNDP Documents

2008. "Support to the electoral reform and the National Electoral Commission 2008-2011: Project document." Update.

http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/documents/projects/SLE/00049276_Project_document-v2.pdf

United Nations Documents

PEACEBUILDING FUND (PBF). n.d. "FINAL PROGRAMME NARRATIVE REPORT: Promoting non-violent, free and credible elections through enhanced participation of non-state actors - REPORTING PERIOD: FROM OCTOBER 2010 TO DECEMBER 2013.

United Nations Security Council. 17 March 2014. "Final Report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone." S/2014/192.

NEC Documents (via <http://www.nec-sierraleone.org/index.html>)

Guiding Principles

Vision Statement

Mission Statement

Organogram http://www.nec-sierraleone.org/index_files/organogram.jpg

Annual Report 2014

Annual Report 2013

Annual Report 2012

Annual Report 2011

n.d. (2015). Discussion Paper on Challenges to the Electoral Cycle (2015-2019) and the Way Forward.

2015. Strategic Plan 2015-2019. Draft

Documents of the Government of Sierra Leone

NEC Act of 2002

Public Elections Act, 2012 http://www.nec-sierraleone.org/index_files/Legal/ABRIDGEMENT%20OF%20THE%20PUBLIC%20ELECTIONS%20ACT%202012.pdf

Electoral Laws Act 2007

Electoral Laws Act 2002

Political Parties Act

The Constitution of Sierra Leone Amendment Act

The Sierra Leone Constitution (1991)

National Policy on Civil Registration Reform in Sierra Leone. n.d.

A Bill Entitled The National Civil Registration Act, 2015 (Draft?). n.d.

PPRC Documents (via <http://www.pprcsierraleone.org/>)

Political Parties Code of Conduct, <http://www.pprcsierraleone.org/ct-menu-item-21/ct-menu-item-25>

18 October 2012, Public Notice,

<http://www.pprcsierraleone.org/docs/Public%20Notice%2018th%20October%202012.pdf>

Other Documents

African Union Elections Observation Mission. “Elections Observation Mission Report: Sierra Leone.” 2012.

<http://pa.au.int/en/sites/default/files/African%20Union%20Elections%20Observation%20Report%20Sierra%20Leone%202012.pdf>

Commonwealth Secretariat. Sierra Leone National and Local Council Elections 2012

Commonwealth Observer Group Final Report.

<http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/project/documents/Sierra%20Leone%20National%20and%20Local%20Council%20Elections%202012%20Commonwealth%20Observer%20Group%20Final%20Report.pdf>

European Union Election Observation Mission. “Sierra Leone: Final Report – Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Council Elections 17 November 2012.” 2012.

The Carter Center. “Observing Sierra Leone’s November 2012 National Elections: Final Report.” 2012.

https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/sierra-leone-final-101613.pdf

Annex 3: List of Interviews

UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Mr. Sudipto Murkerjee, Country Director, Sierra Leone
Ms. Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator (RC) and UNDP Resident Representative, Malawi
(former Country Director Sierra Leone)
Ms. Annette Nalwoga, Team Leader, Governance
Mr. Edward Kamara, Governance Focal Point
Mr. Niall McCann, Lead Electoral Advisor, Bureau of Policy and Programme Support

United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Mission in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL)

Mr. Patrick Buse, Political Affairs Officer, United Nations Office for West Africa (former Civil Affairs Officer, Non-State Actor Programme Coordinator)
Ms. Janice McClean, former UN Police (UNPOL) Adviser

Support to the Electoral Cycle 2011-2014 Project Former Management, Staff, and Consultants

Dr. Arain A. Aamir, acting Chief of Staff, United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI),
Director, UN Integrated Electoral Assistance, UN Principal Electoral Advisor (Former Chief
Technical Advisor)
Ms. Gloria Thomas, UNDP Sierra Leone, former PMU Operations staff
Ms. Illuminate Maerere, UNDP Sierra Leone, former PMU Operations Manager
Mr. Steven Jalloh, UNDP Sierra Leone, former PMU Operations staff
Mr. Jacques Zahles, former Printing Advisor/ International Consultant
Mr. Frick Oliver, former ICT Advisor/International Consultant
Mr. Michel Chajes, former ICT Advisor/International Consultant
Mr. Matthew Jenkins, former Regional Advisor/International Consultant

GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE (GoSL)

National Electoral Commission (NEC)

Board of Commissioners

Mr. Mohamed N'fah-Alie Conteh, Chief Electoral Commissioner/Chairperson
Ms. Augusta Bockarie, Commissioner
Ms. Miatta French, Commissioner
Mr. Macksood Gibril-Sesay, Commissioner
Dr. Christiana Thorpe (former Chief Electoral Commissioner/Chairperson)

Administrative Secretariat

Mr. William Davies, Executive Secretary (Former Director of Finance and Administration)
Mr. Sheku Johnny, Assistant Executive Secretary (Former District Chief)
Mr. Isaac Curtis-Hooke, Acting Director of Operations (Former Regional Chief
Director of Administration and Finance)
Mr. Tamba T. Tormy, Director of Human Resource and External Relations
Mr. Victor E. W. Samuels, Director of Internal Audit
Ms. Gladys Nancy John, Acting Director of Legal Affairs, Research and Documentation (Former
Chief of Legal Affairs, former Voter Education and Training Officer)
Mr. Edmond S. Alpha, Director of Training, Capacity Building, Voter Education and Procedures
(Former District Electoral Officer)

Mr. Albert Massaquoi, Chief of Outreach
Mr. Sylvester Tucker, Chief of Finance
Mr. Solomon Villa, Chief of Information Technology and Voters' Roll
Mr. Raymond George, Chief of Training, Voter Education, and Procedures

Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC)

Mr. M.E. Tolla Thompson, Chair (former Justice, Supreme Court)
Ms. Zainab Umu Moseray, Acting Registrar
Ms. Josephine Lebbie, Acting Mediation and Programs Manager
Mr. Yussif Kamara, ICT
Mr. Lucien Momoh, Outreach Officer and Spokesperson

Office of National Security

Mr. Abdullai Caulker, Director, Administration and Financial Management
Mr. Solomon Caulker, Director, Serious Organised Crime Coordination
Mr. Francis Keili, Director of Research and Planning

Sierra Leone Police

Mr. Al-Shek Kamara, Assistant Inspector General, Direction of Operations, Operational Support Unit

Judiciary

Mr. Stephen Mansary, Acting Master Registrar

National Registration Secretariat (NRS)

Mr. Foday Kamara, Registrar (former Acting Deputy Registrar)
Dr. Max Sesay, former Chief Registrar, Head of the NRS Secretariat

DONORS

United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID)

Ms. Samina Bhatia, Governance Advisor
Ms. Lucy Hayes, Senior Governance Advisor, Malawi (Former Governance Advisor, Sierra Leone)

European Union

Mr. Tom Ashwanden, European Union External Action Service (EEAS), Chief of Governance, Congo (Former EEAS Chief of Governance, Sierra Leone)
Mr. Sven Ruesch, EEAS Chief of Governance, Sierra Leone

Embassy of the Republic of Ireland/Irish Aid

Ms. Sinead Walsh, Ambassador
Mr. James Callaghan, Irish Aid
Mr. Gibril Kargbo, Programme Manager, Irish Aid

Civil Society Organisations

Ms. Macella Samba Sesay, Chair, Campaign for Good Governance (CGG); Chair, National Election Watch (NEW)
Mr. James Lahai, Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU)
Mr. Joseph Jimmy Sankaituah, Country Director, Search for Common Ground

Mr. Ngolo Katta, Centre for Coordination of Youth Activities (CCYA)
Ms. Christiana Baur, Sierra Leone Adult Education Alliance (SLADEA)
Mr. Mohamed Kholipha Koroma, NEW
Mr. Davidson A. Kuyateh, SLTU
Mr. Abbas Kamara, Deputy Chair, All Political Parties Youth Association (APPYA)
Ms. Augusta James-Teima, Secretary General, All Political Parties Women's Association (APPWA)