

Evaluation of the European Commission (EC) – United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Partnership in Electoral Assistance and the Joint EC-UNDP Task Force on Electoral Assistance

Draft Report¹ - February 2010

Contents	Page
Executive Summary	2
Chapter 1 – Background to the Evaluation	11
Chapter 2 – Background and Evolution of the EC-UNDP Partnership in Electoral Assistance and the Joint EC-UNDP Task Force in Electoral Assistance	15
Chapter 3 – Achievements of the EC-UNDP Partnership in Electoral Assistance and the Joint EC-UNDP Task Force on Electoral Assistance	23
Chapter 4 – Inter-Institutional Relations	44
Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Recommendations	50

¹ **Style Guide – 1)** As this evaluation report was written by European experts, the spelling of words such as “programme,” “centre,” etc., follows the European style (even when quoting from original documents using American spelling). **2)** The Delegations of the European Commission are, since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009, officially titled Delegations of the European Union. For the sake of clarity, they are referred to as EU Delegations throughout the report, even when speaking in the (pre-Lisbon) past tense. Unfortunately this can be somewhat confusing, as the European Union Delegations expend funds programmed by the European Commission. EC funding therefore refers to funding, through EuropeAid, which is from the Commission’s development policy actions. **3)** The ‘\$’ sign refers to US Dollars unless otherwise specified. **4)** The terms EuropeAid and its monicker AIDCO are used interchangeably. **5)** The terms “EC-funded, UNDP-implemented electoral assistance project” and “UNDP-managed basket fund with EC contribution” are also used interchangeably.

Executive Summary

The EC and UNDP significantly increased their cooperation in providing electoral assistance in 2004 following the signing of a Strategic Partnership Agreement between the two organisations. A huge (€165m)² project in support of the 2004-2006 electoral processes in Democratic Republic of Congo was followed by the signing of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Electoral Assistance Programmes and Projects in April 2006. The Joint EC-UNDP Task Force on Electoral Assistance started developing from January 2007 and was formally endorsed with the signing of revised Operational Guidelines in December 2008. Foreseeing an expansion in both the scope and institutional architecture of UNDP electoral assistance with the commencement of the UNDP-implemented, Spanish Government-funded 2009-2011 Global Programme on Electoral Cycle Support (\$49.8m), the Joint Task Force, in collaboration with the main partners (such as International IDEA) and relevant services of the EC and UNDP, conducted a SWOT analysis in the first half of 2009, one of the outcomes of which was a decision to commission an evaluation of the work of both the Partnership and the Joint Task Force. The findings of this evaluation, carried out over a 3-week period by two external electoral consultants in both Brussels and New York, should feed into the 2010-2013 Strategic Plan of the Joint Task Force and the 2010 Operational Plan of the Joint Task Force.

Since the EC-UNDP Partnership formally commenced in 2004, there has been a huge increase in the amount of EC financial support for UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects. In the nine years from 1995-2003, €84.8m was channelled to UNDP (average €9.4m per year) in 17 countries. In the 2004-2006 period, this figure rose to €350.5m in 28 countries (of which €165m was committed to one country, DR Congo). This represents a yearly average of €116.8m, or a 1,142% increase in the yearly average over the 1995-2003 period. In the 2007-2009 period, €196.8m of funds were channelled from the EC to UNDP in 25 countries, representing a yearly average of some €65.6m. A further €61.1m worth of projects are being discussed between the EC and UNDP as potential collaborations for 2010 in 10 countries, as well as a €6.1m regional project for the African Lusophone countries and Timor-Leste. Although the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) region remains the priority region of both the Partnership and the Joint Task Force, a significant minority of the 2004-2009 funds (€159.6m, or 29.2%) were committed to 10 Middle East, former Soviet bloc and Asian countries.³

Attempting to determine the exact “leverage value” of the Joint Task Force, in terms of whether a lesser amount of EC funds would have been channelled to UNDP in the event that the Task Force was *not* created, is not entirely relevant, given that the Partnership, and the Joint Task Force that followed it, were established precisely to smooth both the operational challenges for project implementation between two very different organisations, and in anticipation of and as a means to “lubricate” a large increase in funding. Nevertheless, we believe it is safe to conclude that, on top of a repositioning of the importance of electoral assistance work as part of the wider support to democratic governance in the development aid policy of the European Union, that the communication channels, level of trust and expertise that the Joint Task Force has brought to the EC-UNDP Partnership has *itself*

² Of EC support to a UNDP-managed basket fund totalling USD235m.

³ Indonesia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, The Palestinian Authority, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Georgia and Moldova.

facilitated not only policy harmonisation (such as in devising, with other partners, the “electoral cycle approach”) but also a significant increase in the EC funding of UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects.

In spite of the success of the Joint Task Force in terms of mobilising resources and expediting the *approval* and *commencement* of electoral assistance projects (through assisting the EC and UNDP at country level and HQ level with finalisation of the project documents and assisting them through the EC and UNDP institutional programming machines), there remain significant challenges in the management of the projects during the implementation phase that require a level of follow-up (from either the Joint Task Force Coordination Unit at UNDP Brussels,⁴ EuropeAid, the UNDP Bureau of Development Policy,⁵ the UNDP Procurement Support Office in Copenhagen⁶ or the UN Department of Political Affairs’ Electoral Assistance Division⁷) that appears to be currently lacking to the level required. In the case of the Joint Task Force, this is primarily due to resource constraints, as well as the constant need to focus on new projects in other beneficiary countries and, as per its mandate as set out in the EC-UNDP Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Electoral Assistance Programmes and Projects, its engagement in the development of further expertise, knowledge products and training curricula. This lack of follow up should be addressed, to some degree, by the deployment of increased UNDP human resources under the GPECS, with the positioning of Electoral Assistance Specialists, Regional Electoral Advisors and Electoral Procurement Advisors in Brussels, Bangkok, Johannesburg, Copenhagen and Dakar (also to become UNDP members of the Joint Task Force). In addition, EU Delegations should also engage external consultants, where necessary, to liaise with both country level implementation staff, and the new GPECS Advisors. These specialists, advisors and external consultants would be deployed on continuous follow-up missions in order to provide assistance on overcoming both implementation problems and the refocusing of the project, where necessary.

The main implementation problems that the experts would focus on would include addressing communication issues between the EU Delegations and the UNDP Country Offices, which, on the basis of the views expressed by interlocutors in the course of this research, is a recurring source of tension that centres around certain aspects of UNDP’s performance in implementing the projects, primarily (but not exclusively) in the financial reporting field. What is considered by EC interlocutors as the often poor financial reporting of the UNDP management teams, compounded by the tendency of UNDP to set up their ATLAS reporting and programme management system in a manner that is not conducive to the type of reporting that the EU Delegations require and which the Operational Guidelines require them to provide, appears to fuel a genuine issue of differences in perception, at country level, as to the level to which the EU Delegation should be involved (or not) in the day-to-day monitoring *and management* of the project. It would appear that the Operational Guidelines are not always known to or implemented by UNDP project management staff at country level. For their part, the EU Delegations often lack the human resources to engage operationally, and thus their influence appears to refocus itself on efforts to extract progress reports strictly according to the parameters of the signed project documents, often

⁴ Hereafter referred to as the “JTF Coordination Unit.”

⁵ Hereafter referred to as “BDP.”

⁶ Hereafter referred to as “PSO.”

⁷ Hereafter referred to as “DPA/EAD.”

problematic in such a fast-paced and political field as elections, which are so vulnerable to “external implementation shocks” and where needs constantly appear and change during the course of an electoral process.

An additional problem is the tendency, under the DEX modality, for UNDP not to extend the capacity building objective to the area of budget control, donor liaison and procurement, which has an effect of building artificial boundaries between the electoral advisors that work on a daily basis with the electoral management bodies, and the programme advisors whose work is primarily with the UNDP Country Office. This can lead to the neglect, on the part of the latter group, of their relationship with the electoral management bodies. This regularly creates a feeling, on the part of electoral management bodies, that they are not as involved on matters of budget and procurement as they should be, frustrations that are fuelled back to the EU Delegations and other donors in Steering Committee and other fora, further creating a perception, among the EU Delegations, that UNDP is underperforming in its project management role. The standard model for implementation should see the Electoral Assistance Team/Programme Management Unit staff responsible for procurement, budgeting and donor liaison guided by the same capacity-building objective as other advisors, and where the principles of DEX implementation can be protected by retaining *final* decision-making power on budgetary matters with the UNDP Country Office.

The Joint Task Force, along with other international partners (including International IDEA,⁸ the International Organisation of Migration, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Organisation of American States and tapping into resources from the ACE Electoral Practitioners Network⁹ and the BRIDGE Programme,¹⁰) has also been extremely active in organising training events for electoral practitioners, electoral management bodies, relevant staff from both the EC and UNDP, and other international partners in the field of electoral assistance. In spite of the recent move towards distance learning and thematic training (with the successful holding of relevant training in the area of the role of information technology in electoral processes as well as a planned training in elections and conflict management in March 2010), the joint trainings would benefit from a fresh revamp centred on two tranches: continuing the five day training for the module on effective electoral assistance once a year, and making the thematic seminars much more interactive, with less participants, less presentations and more group work based on exercises. The trainings should also be “compartmentalised” not only in terms of the themes of the training, but also in terms of the target groups. At present the five days trainings on effective electoral assistance have more of a “conference” feel, where there are excellent networking opportunities, than real learning

⁸ The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (www.idea.int) is a Stockholm-based electoral and democratic governance knowledge-based support organisation that aims to provide knowledge to democracy builders, provide policy development and analysis and support democratic reform.

⁹ The ACE Electoral Practitioners’ Network (www.aceproject.org), is an online electoral knowledge facility that promotes credible and effective electoral processes. ACE was established in 1998 as the Administration and Cost of Elections Project by IDEA, IFES and UNDESA. ACE is now a collaborative effort between nine organisations: IDEA, EISA, Elections Canada, the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico (IFE), IFES, UNDESA, UNDP and the UNEAD. The European Commission is an ex-officio member.

¹⁰ The Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections Programme (www.bridge-project.org) is a modular professional development programme with a focus on electoral processes, that was founded in 1999 by 5 partners: UN EAD, International IDEA, the Australian Election Commission, UNDP and IFES. It trains electoral administrators, over the course of a series of modules and training events, on international best practice in electoral administration.

possibilities, given, among other factors, the high numbers of participants. Although the conference/networking element is a success in terms of building a more inter-linked electoral practitioner community, and should continue in the form of a yearly conference, there is a clear need for “back to basics” targeted training in different areas for different target groups: training on FAFA implementation, the EC-UNDP partnership, the Operational Guidelines, project reporting and project management for EU Delegation and UNDP Country Office staff; training on electoral budgeting, donor liaison and procurement for electoral management bodies; and, of course, thematic training for electoral experts and electoral management bodies along the lines of the recent ICT training for electoral experts.

The huge growth of EC support for UNDP-managed projects, and the parallel growth of the both the Joint Task Force itself and the scope of its work, has brought to the surface institutional issues within both UNDP itself (primarily between UNDP Brussels and BDP in New York), and between UNDP and EAD/DPA, that have been exacerbated by both the onset of the GPECS programme, and by the fact that the European Commission in Brussels would appear content with dealing almost exclusively with UNDP Brussels in the implementation of the Partnership. There is a perception within both EAD/DPA and BDP that the success of the Joint Task Force in mobilising resources has both a) fostered such a close relationship with the European Commission that could have the effect of associating UN electoral assistance work too closely with one donor, and b) resulted in the Joint Task Force developing “mission creep” in moving ahead with knowledge producing initiatives that should, in their view, be the preserve of the UN’s policy-driving and repository-of-best-practice arms – BDP and EAD.

The Operational Guidelines, however, clearly give the Joint Task Force “licence” to engage in lessons learned activity that inevitably leads to the development of knowledge products and training initiatives to the point where the Joint Task Force (in which, paradoxically, BDP sits) is considered by some (particularly by the European Commission, arguably UNDP’s main policy partner in the electoral area) to be as legitimate a developer of electoral institutional knowledge as both BDP itself and DPA/EAD, which, in the view of both bodies, is an encroachment upon their role. This tension is likely to increase with the onset of the knowledge-producing GPECS Programme, whose programme management team is based in Brussels at the insistence of its donor. The other occasional “flash point” between the JTF Coordination Unit and BDP/EAD is the deployment of JTF Joint Formulation Missions close to the deployment of Needs Assessment/Formulation Missions by EAD (as chief UN Focal Point) and BDP. This, unfortunately, reflects two realities: the European Commission will not, on many occasions, finally commit to funding an electoral assistance project with UNDP as implementing partner without a Joint Formulation Mission from the JTF Coordination Unit (as indicated in the Operational Guidelines); it would appear that the JTF Joint Formulation Missions are often required due to a lack of coordination and goodwill at country-level between the EU Delegation and the UNDP Country Office. And secondly, the deployment of Joint Formulation Missions close to the deployment of EAD/BDP Needs Assessment/Formulation Missions would appear (as it has been argued to us in the course of this evaluation) to have more to do with the under-resourcing of EAD, than with any overstepping of responsibilities on the part of the Coordinating Unit of the Joint Task Force in Brussels.

The implementation challenges at country level, arguably not fully appreciated in UNDP due to a lack of human resources (pre-GPECS) for follow-up and “energy loss” in disagreeing on

the role and mandate of the JTF Coordination Unit, are not insignificant. Unless addressed, they threaten not necessarily the future of the Partnership, but certainly its scope, as the European Commission, with the successful implementation of electoral assistance projects in some countries without UNDP (either with different implementing partners, new procedures allowing for direct funding of electoral management bodies, or the possibility for EU Member States to manage basket funds on behalf of the EC), is likely to continue to source different implementing partners, in spite of the significant cost increases in doing so, as it seeks a more direct and visible policy and implementation role. This will likely benefit the European Commission, lead to a potential loss of visibility, funding, programming and implementation expertise within UNDP, and arguably have a neutral effect on electoral management bodies.

Key recommendations:

1. Greater effort must be focused on ensuring that electoral assistance projects implemented by UNDP and financed primarily by the EC are implemented in a manner as consistent as possible with the signed Contribution Agreements. In order to achieve this, it is necessary for more regular follow-up of projects to take place beyond the design and formulation phase. Deployment of greater EC resources (in Brasilia, Ghana and Zimbabwe but also in the form of a greater engagement by external consultants by the EU Delegations themselves) and UNDP resources (in the form of regional GPECS advisors), should contribute to greater follow-up at country level. The nature of the follow-up missions should be to review implementation as per the signed Contribution Agreements, to re-focus the projects where necessary (not only in day-to-day activities but in the programming documents also), to make alterations to the agreed performance indicators, to thrash out progressing reporting difficulties, and to create a fora for the EU Delegation and UNDP, outside of the Steering Committee, to discuss implementation challenges.
2. All electoral assistance advisors engaged by UNDP on electoral assistance projects with EC-funding should be provided with a copy of, and briefed on, the Operational Guidelines, preferably in a joint EU Delegation-UNDP Country Office presentation facilitated by the Joint Task Force, either in country or during face to face training or specifically dedicated regional trainings.
3. Both EU Delegation Task Managers and UNDP Country Office Programme Officers with respective responsibility for the electoral assistance project, should undergo day-long training sessions on each other's reporting systems as they pertain to the electoral assistance project and also to the FAFA and the Operational Guidelines.
4. All Project Steering and Technical Committees should study, and discuss, the Operational Guidelines during one of the first Steering or Technical Committee meetings. Other donors should be invited to also participate in the discussion.
5. In order to ensure that capacity-building agenda is enshrined throughout the electoral assistance project, the Programme Management Unit for each electoral assistance project implemented under the DEX modality, regardless of the size of the electoral assistance team, should be headed by a Chief Technical Advisor/Programme

Manager, but where both positions are deployed, the Chief Technical Advisor should have overall management responsibility.¹¹ For the duration of the project, all electoral staff whose positions are funded by the electoral basket fund should report primarily to the Chief Technical Advisor, and through him/her, to the UNDP Country Director. All PMU procurement and budget execution staff should be evaluated against the capacity-building objectives of the project.

6. As a matter of policy, all electoral assistance project staff of the PMU or advisors, should be embedded within the electoral management body or, if not possible, as close to the EMB as to facilitate daily contact. A twinning system targeting capacity development should be considered as a standard approach.
7. All UNDP-contracted electoral staff with responsibility for budget execution, as well as progress and financial reporting, should have either experience of implementing EC-funded projects at a senior management level, or, where not available, undergo full training on EC financial reporting procedures as part of their induction process (including the FAFA, the joint EC-UN reporting and visibility guidelines, etc.)
8. Recognising the political sensitivities of electoral assistance projects in the political and social development of beneficiary states, EU Delegations, and UNDP Country Offices, should endeavour to ensure, wherever possible, that Task Managers and Programme Advisors assigned the electoral assistance project brief are of a level of seniority in age and experience suitable for engaging with senior government officials and senior members of electoral management bodies.
9. The relevant EC and UNDP services, including the JTF Coordination Unit, BDP, EAD/DPA, and the GPECS programme management team, should maintain detailed databases on all electoral assistance projects funded and implemented across all years. These database should contain, at the very least, data on the a) the value of the final UNDP ProDoc, b) the value of the EC contribution indicated in the Contribution Agreement signed by the EC and UNDP, c) the value and source of all other funds from other donors, d) data (where available), on non-basket fund assistance provided to the electoral management bodies or civil society by other unilateral donors, e) the total amount of funds finally raised during the course of the project and their source, f) the total amount of funds expended under the project by the end date of the project's implementation, g) the name of the Chief Technical Advisor/Project Manager, and, where feasible, h) data on performance under the agreed performance indicators for the project.
10. The successful joint trainings in effective electoral assistance should continue but in the following format. An annual 5-day conference on Effective Electoral Assistance of the EC-UNDP Partnership in Electoral Assistance should be hosted each year, in Brussels, in November, by the Joint Task Force. Invitees should continue to include

¹¹ This may represent a change in the current arrangements, where, according to the *UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide*, "the PMU Manager will head the PMU" (pg. 116) although the Guide also states that "...it may be advisable...for there to be a Chief Technical Advisor **supported by a Project Manager**" (pg. 65).

representatives of electoral management bodies, EU Delegations, UNDP Country Offices and UNDP electoral assistance teams that are involved in the design, formulation and implementation of electoral assistance over the calendar year. Joint Task Force members/Coordination Unit staff, as well as senior staff of BDP, the DPA EAD, GPECS Advisors and staff, and Brussels-based EC and UNDP staff, should be invited. The agenda for the Conference should allow for reflection on implementation achievements and challenges at country level that can be extrapolated to serve as lessons learned for all projects, as well as presentations on future developments.

11. One/two other thematic joint trainings on effective electoral assistance should also be hosted within each year, along the lines of the recently-held training on the use of ICT in electoral processes. One of these thematic trainings should focus exclusively on the FAFA, project design, formulation, implementation and reporting, and be held exclusively for EU Delegation and UNDP Country Office staff. Where possible, these trainings could be organised on a regional basis, using the UNDP Regional Centres and GPECS Electoral Advisors as hosts. The other training could address a thematic issue (e.g. linking electoral assistance with parliamentary development support and other tranches of democratic governance interventions, the technical, legal and political issues surrounding future linking of voter registration, civil registration, census conducting and population movement control, etc). These trainings should, as a target audience, include representatives of electoral management bodies, civil registration authorities, etc.
12. The successful introduction of the e-learning module on effective electoral assistance should be built upon. Plans to implement elearning modules on “the FAFA applied to electoral assistance,” “elections and technology” and “elections and conflict management” are to be commended. Scope exists to enhance the e-learning experience by introducing, in association with IDEA and the ACE Practitioners Network, a similar e-learning DVD/online resource dedicated entirely to exercises/scenarios on, e.g. the design of electoral operational plans, the design of electoral management bodies, appropriate electoral systems for post-conflict societies, scenarios for registering voters, etc. Initially, these modules could be produced without requiring recourse to human resources to grade exams, etc. Eventually, however, through the engagement of appropriate educational institutions (with potential funding from GPECS), scope exists to introduce elements of qualitative questioning/open-ended answers into both the existing module and future modules.
13. As part of a wide scale impact assessment of the projects funded by the EC in the context of the EC-UNDP Partnership, which should be funded and carried out in the latter half of 2010 under the auspices of the EC, the issue of the nature of the electoral assistance projects funded should be addressed against the goals and policy of the electoral cycle approach. In terms of the projects funded since the commencement of the Partnership, for example, has there been enough focus, within the electoral cycle, on legal reform? Capacity-building of electoral management bodies in terms of, for example, standardised IT training, financial management,

reporting and HR policy?¹² These issues could also be addressed in a global Ten-year Review of UNDP Electoral Assistance (along the lines of the evaluation published in 2000).

14. Scope exists to link the provision of electoral assistance with the acceptance, by the beneficiary country, of a project of parliamentary assistance in the EU Country Strategy Paper and the UNDP Country Programme Action Plan. Similarly, support to electoral dispute resolution bodies, either where they are specifically established for the purposes of an electoral event, or permanently established, could benefit from greater support as part of the electoral cycle approach. In this context the collaboration and synergies between the Joint Task Force, the global, regional and country-level components of GPECS and the UNDP Global Programme on Parliamentary Strengthening is to be welcomed.
15. Electoral assistance projects that fund technological innovations need to ensure that adequate resources are provided within the project to advise EC/UNDP/electoral management bodies on anticipating the political challenges of implementing such systems. In this light, the production of the upcoming “Operational Paper of the Joint Task Force in collaboration with International IDEA on the Procurement Aspects of ICTs in Electoral Processes: the Specific Case of Voter Registration” is to be welcomed. Also to be commended is the planned collaboration between the EC, UNDP and IDEA for the production of a handbook on Civil and Voter Registration.
16. The first post-GPECS review of the Operational Guidelines, scheduled for late 2010, need to address the fundamental differences in perception between BDP, UNDP Brussels and DPA/EAD on whether the Guidelines themselves “push” the JTF Coordination Unit into engaging in activity that BDP feels that is its preserve, and how the Guidelines will interact with GPECS, which institutionalises and strengthens further the Joint Task Force. The debate must be tempered by realism, however. The EC is UNDP’s largest and most reliable donor in the electoral assistance area and there could be an increased pivotal role that the EC-UNDP Partnership, and the Joint Task Force, could play in the context of the EU Lisbon Treaty, where greater synergies between the EC, EU Council and EU Member States is demanded in external actions, especially development cooperation. Attempts to “pull-back” the work of the Joint Task Force and its Coordination Unit from what the Operational Guidelines allow will likely lead to the EU moving more towards implementation of electoral assistance projects with other implementing partners. A yearly dedicated meeting between the EC, BDP, the JTF Coordination unit, the GPECS programme management team and EAD/DPA on the specific operationalisation of the EC-UNDP Partnership on Electoral Assistance, as well as monthly coordination teleconferences, should be formalised. This could contribute to smoothing the misunderstandings related to the EC development cooperation mechanisms and electoral assistance and to the role of JTF Coordination Unit vis a vis BDP (also part of the Joint Task Force) and EAD. Regional thematic seminars dedicated to electoral assistance between EU Delegation Ambassadors and UNDP Country Directors

¹² These issues will be discussed at an OECD DAC conference on international electoral support to be held in Paris on 1 March, 2010, with the support of the Joint Task Force, DFID, International IDEA, and EAD/DPA.

should be piloted (along the lines of the high level review of the EC UNDP Cooperation in the ECOWAS region in December 2008 in Dakar).

DRAFT

Chapter 1 – Background to the Evaluation

In the first half of 2009, the Joint EC-UNDP Task Force on Electoral Assistance decided to conduct a SWOT Analysis (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats*), in the context of:

- the operational lessons learned from the first five years of intensive collaboration through the Partnership and the Joint Task Force;
- the ongoing financial support received by the Task Force from core EC/UNDP funds, and;
- a number of external developments:
 - the commencement of the \$49.8m UNDP-implemented Global Programme on Electoral Cycle Support, funded 99% by the Spanish Government, almost half of which (from a resource perspective) will be coordinated by the Joint Task Force (primarily the \$21m country level component);¹³
 - the approval of a regional project for the African Lusophone countries plus Timor Leste (PALOP/TL) that gives the Joint Task Force an important support role in its implementation (a Programme Management Unit for the project will be based in Guinea-Bissau serving all the PALOP TL countries);¹⁴
 - continued funding for the Joint Task Force-managed Global Training Platform on Electoral Assistance¹⁵ from GPECS (via Spain and CIDA, Canadian International Development Agency) and the European Commission.

As part of the SWOT outcomes, and in order to fully appreciate the possibilities and challenges lying ahead, it was determined to carry out an external operational assessment of both the EC-UNDP Partnership in Electoral Assistance, the Joint EC-UNDP Task Force on Electoral Assistance, and, at the same time, engage the evaluators to contribute to the finalisation of the 2010 Operational Plan and the 2010-2012 Strategic Plan of the Joint Task Force.

¹³ The Global Programme on Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS) is a 3-year, \$49.8m programme funded through an initial donation of €10m from the Government of Spain (expected to rise to €30m) (as well as a \$300,000 donation by the Canadian Government), the overall objective of which is “enhance the credibility, transparency, effectiveness and sustainability of electoral institutions and processes, with a particular emphasis on capacity development, south-south exchanges, inclusive participation and women’s empowerment.” More on GPECS and how it will interact with the JTF is included throughout the report.

¹⁴ Funded by the European Commission.

¹⁵ The European Commission, UNDP and International IDEA created, within the Joint Donors’ Competence Development Network (Train4Dev), a Subgroup on Effective Electoral Assistance (SEEA), building on the existing EC-UNDP-IDEA training on effective electoral assistance. This developed into a “Global Training Platform” that encompass the development and delivery of face-to-face, e-learning and blended training modules for the donor community but also for electoral management bodies, universities, practitioners and local stakeholders of electoral processes. Other members of the Global Training Platform include the Canadian International Development Agency, Spain and the Organisation of American States (OAS).

The evaluation was commissioned by the JTF Coordination Unit, with the joint selection of experts carried out in collaboration with EuropeAid and BDP. Field research for the evaluation was conducted in Brussels during the period 23 November 2009 – 12 December 2009 (15 work days) by Adolfo Cayuso-Martinez (Electoral Expert) and Niall McCann (Evaluation Expert). A 2-working-day field trip to New York, to both the Electoral Assistance Division in the Department of Political Affairs in UN HQ, as well as to the Bureau of Development Policy in UNDP HQ, was conducted by Adolfo Cayuso-Martinez from 8-10 December. This draft report is submitted eight weeks after the completion of the field research.

1.1 Evaluation objectives

The objectives of the evaluation, as determined by the Terms of Reference (attached as Annex 1) were:

- to make an overall independent assessment of the past performance of the EC-UNDP Partnership on Electoral Assistance and the EC-UNDP JTF on Electoral Assistance with particular attention to the impact upon EC-UNDP cooperation in the field of electoral assistance as well as the JTF efforts in regards 1) operational guidance, 2) liaison and interaction and 3) training and information;
- to identify key lessons learned and propose practical recommendations in order to further facilitate EC-UNDP collaboration in the field as well as to promote the work carried out by the JTF;
- to contribute to the development of the JTF strategic plan for the period 2009-2012;
- to contribute to the development of the JTF operational plan for the period 2009-2012.

1.2 Methodology

The evaluation was conducted with reference to the principles and guidelines of evaluations of the EC and UNDP as spelt out in two key texts, the EC's "*Evaluation Methods for the European Union's External Assistance*"¹⁶ and UNDP's "*Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results*."¹⁷ We have attempted to evaluate the Partnership and the Joint Task Force according to the five OECD/DAC evaluation criteria,¹⁸ as the Terms of Reference demand, of:

- Relevance: An assessment of the overall and specific objectives against undertaken activities of the Partnership/JTF;
- Efficiency: Assessment of the activities against the results of the Partnership/JTF;
- Effectiveness: Assessment of the results against the overall and specific objectives of the Partnership/JTF;

¹⁶ European Communities (2006), *Evaluation Methods for the European Union's External Assistance – Methodological Bases for Evaluation, Volume 1*, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

¹⁷ UNDP (2009), *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results*, New York, www.undp.org/eo/handbook.

¹⁸ The Development Assistance Committee of the OECD have developed 5 basic evaluation criteria that have become the standard for evaluations of socio-economic development programmes. More information is available at www.oecd.org/evaluation.

- **Impact:** Assessment of the Partnership/JTF outcomes on the environment of the Partnership/JTF;
- **Sustainability:** Assessment of the likelihood of the benefits produced by the Partnership/JTF to flow after specific activities have come to an end.

We have, however, incorporated these evaluation criteria into our overall analysis, rather than specifically addressing them. The evaluation was also requested, by the Terms of Reference, to look at two further evaluation criteria (which *have* been directly addressed):

- **Design of the JTF:** Assessment of the internal logic/coherence of the Partnership/JTF;
- **Costs:** Assessment of the use of resources against overall/specific objectives, activities and results

In terms of methodology, the evaluation was limited in its ability to generate primary evaluation data, due to the extremely short timeframe for the evaluation (15 days). As a result, the primary methodology tools employed were:

- **Review of existing documentation** – key texts governing the work of the Joint Task Force were consulted, including:
 - the MoU of the Strategic Partnership Agreement;
 - the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Electoral Assistance Programmes and Projects (original 2006 version as well as 2008 revision);
 - the JTF SWOT analysis report;
 - a small number of specific, country-level project documents including mission reports, Contribution Agreements and project monitoring/evaluation reports, etc.;
 - training materials (including the online/DVD e-learning Training Course on Effective Electoral Assistance), and training evaluation reports;
 - other knowledge products, etc.
- **Interviews with key personnel** – key stakeholders in the work of the Task Force were interviewed either in person or by telephone, during the period 26 November – 18 December, including:
 - “members”¹⁹ of the JTF, both EC staff, and staff of UNDP (Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP Brussels, the UNDP Procurement Support Office, and the UNDP-implemented Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening);
 - staff of the Coordination Unit of the Joint Task Force at UNDP Brussels;
 - key officials of UNDP and EC in Brussels responsible for establishing the Partnership and the Task Force;
 - staff of the UN Department of Political Affairs’ Electoral Assistance Division;

¹⁹ There is no formal “membership” of the JTF. See Section on *Design of the Joint Task Force: Assessment of the internal logic/coherence of the Partnership/Joint Task Force* below.

- staff of other electoral support organisations with whom the JTF liaises, interacts and cooperates on joint activities, including the EU NEEDS project,²⁰ International IDEA, the ACE Project, and staff of other partners within the Global Training Platform on Effective Electoral Assistance.
- Staff of the Government of Spain responsible for the GPECS;
- DFID staff presently carrying out an evaluation of DFID electoral assistance.

A full list of stakeholders consulted is in Annex 2.

- **Questionnaire on perception of the Partnership and the work of the Joint Task Force** – a questionnaire was sent to:

- EU Delegations and UNDP Country Offices²¹ around the world that have been involved in the formulation/implementation of UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects with EC contributions;
- All attendees of the JTF-IDEA training/workshop events.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to:

- gauge the level of knowledge among beneficiaries of the existence and the scope of activities of the Joint Task Force;
- gauge the potential for future demand for the services of the Joint Task Force;
- gauge the perception of both the Partnership and the work of the Joint Task Force in terms of its ability to meet the needs of those beneficiaries that have availed of its services.

By 6 February, 9 EU Delegations (approx. 20%), 14 UNDP Country Offices (approx. 31%) and 94 trainees (approx. 14.5%) had responded to and completed the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is attached as Annex 3.

²⁰ The EU NEEDS Project is the training forum for all EU Election Observation Mission observers, including both core team members and observers delegated to the Missions from the EU member states.

²¹ Separate (but similar) questionnaires were sent to the EU Delegations and the UNDP Country Offices, with questions tailored to their individual needs.

Chapter 2 – Background and Evolution of the EC-UNDP Partnership in Electoral Assistance and the Joint Task Force in Electoral Assistance

In the eleven years since 1999, a series of agreements between the European Commission and the United Nations has allowed for greater cooperation between the EC and UNDP in a number of sectors. In 1999, an *Agreement between the United Nations and the European Community on the Principles Applying to the Financing or Co-Financing by the Community of Programmes and Projects Administered by the United Nations* was signed which specified the principles and financial procedures applying to EC-financed programmes implemented by the UN. The 2001 Communication from the European Commission, *Building an Effective Partnership with the UN in the Fields of Development and Humanitarian Affairs*,²² developed a strategy for further cooperation with the UN. The 2003 *Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA)*²³ provided the (currently applicable) legal framework (and replaced the previous arrangements with the regards to administrative and financial procedures) that allow for EC funding of UN-implemented programmes.

In terms of cooperation between the EC and specific UN organisations, the EC signed 6 Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPA) with members of the UN family in 2004, one of which was with UNDP.²⁴ The specific objectives of the Strategic Partnership Agreement were to:

- to foster close collaboration on common policy approaches, and to ensure a more strategic framework for cooperation at all levels between the European Commission and the UNDP;
- to facilitate the joint identification of programmes in the areas covered by the partnership;
- to enhance knowledge sharing with a view to fostering improved co-ordination and synergies in the field, and to help support best practice; and
- to build on each others' comparative advantage, particularly to advance development effectiveness of the actions of both institutions.

One of the three focus areas of the EC-UNDP Strategic Partnership Agreement, which was expected to bring harmonisation, complementarity and financial cooperation between the two institutions, was governance (including elections, parliament and governance indicators).²⁵ The expected results of the Partnership, according to the MoU of the Strategic Partnership Agreement, are “*greater harmonisation, coordination and complementarity of policy approaches, planning and implementation. The process will likewise ensure a more strategic and structured policy framework for cooperation, for shared analysis, for exchange*”

²² COM(2001)231 final, 2.5.2001.

²³ Signed on 29 April 2003

²⁴ The Memorandum of Understanding that accompanied the EC-UNDP SPA (section 5 and 6) stated the objectives of the Partnership, which were to “*mutually benefit, develop and structure EC-UNDP cooperation in areas of common concern and decide to work together towards the shared goal of establishing the solid foundations for peace and recovery from crisis and to promote the Millennium Development Goals, particularly, the fight against poverty.*”

²⁵ The other two focus areas were conflict prevention and post conflict reconstruction.

of information and for the identification of complementary interventions and programmes as well as value added of each organisation."²⁶

Although EC-UNDP cooperation in the field of electoral assistance first commenced in 1995, the 2003 FAFA and the 2004 Strategic Partnership Agreement allowed for the most significant EC-funded electoral assistance project implemented by UNDP, the €165m support to the 2004-2006 electoral process in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The DRC experience pushed the two organisations to reflect on how to improve operationally their collaboration on electoral assistance. EC contributions to UNDP managed basket funds was considered, at the time, as the best practice to follow.²⁷

Between end 2004 and April 2006, reflecting the increase in EC support and funding to UNDP-implemented electoral projects and foreseeing significant further increases, the EC and UNDP drafted and signed the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Electoral Assistance Programmes and Projects*. These Operational Guidelines outlined practical measures for the strengthening and the facilitation of the already established cooperation between the two institutions, within the framework of the 2003 FAFA.²⁸ Included in the Guidelines, on top of measures to facilitate greater support for country-level initiatives, was agreement for the parties to "*collaborate on new or existing initiatives and networks for the production of knowledge products and services for the support of electoral processes*" as well as to undertake "*studies of mutual interest.*"²⁹

Nine months later, in January 2007, a Joint EC-UNDP Task Force on Electoral Assistance was initiated as a means to "operationalise" both the EC-UNDP partnership and the Operational Guidelines. Although the Task Force commenced activity in early 2007, the Task Force itself was not *formally* established until the 2006 Operational Guidelines were reviewed in 2008 (the 2006 Guidelines included a commitment to review after two years in the light of operational experience).

The 2008 Guidelines defined the aim of the JTF, which was to "*increase the overall efficiency and adherence of the projects to the common EC-UNDP strategic approach.*" The focus of the JTF was defined as the "*identification, formulation, implementation support and monitoring of all the EC-UNDP projects of electoral assistance whenever needed and demanded by EC Delegations and/or UNDP Country Offices.*" Reflecting the intent to develop the JTF as a knowledge base for future interventions, the Guidelines went on to state that "*the lessons learned are consolidated and codified so that they can effectively feed into the implementation of the new electoral assistance projects, into the joint EC-UNDP training on Effective Electoral Assistance, and into the Knowledge Practitioners' Network of the ACE project.*" The Guidelines acknowledged that the JTF "*has designed and will*

²⁶ From the Memorandum of Understanding on the Strategic Partnership Agreement, section 9

²⁷ The €165m support committed to the DR Congo electoral process in 2004-2005 remains to date the largest single contribution of the EC to a UNDP-implemented electoral assistance project. Nevertheless, significant multi-million euro commitments had earlier been made to Mozambique (€29m in 1997-1999), as well as numerous contributions between €5m-€10m (e.g. €7m to Indonesia in 1999, €9m to Cote d'Ivoire in 2000) in the 1999-2003 period.

²⁸ The Guidelines "only intend to clarify certain implementation aspects (of the FAFA) which are of particular relevance to electoral assistance."

²⁹ This was very much in the spirit of the specific objectives of the SPA, which included an intention to "enhance knowledge sharing with a view to fostering improved co-ordination and synergies in the field, and to help support best practice," from the MoU to the SPA, section 8.

continue to manage the website dedicated to the EC-UNDP partnership on electoral assistance presenting the common approaches, the activities carried out, the lessons learned and the tools and methodologies available.”

The Joint Task Force itself has interpreted both the objectives of the EC UNDP Strategic Partnership Agreement and the Operational Guidelines to further develop its own objectives. It states its overall objective is to “*contribute to deepening democracy through the delivery of effective electoral assistance and support to associated areas that directly or indirectly affect the quality of electoral processes and overall democratisation by the promotion of the implementation of the principles of ownership, harmonization and effectiveness laid out in the 2005 Paris Declaration and 2008 Accra Agenda for Action.*”³⁰ The specific objectives of the JTF are grouped into three distinct areas, with their own respective expected results and activities to achieve those results:

- **Operational Guidance:** To support and collaborate with relevant EC and UNDP services at HQ and field level with particular reference to contributing to ownership, alignment, harmonization, focus on results and mutual accountability throughout of electoral assistance programmes and projects throughout the identification, formulation, implementation and evaluation phases;
- **Liaison and Interaction:** To liaise and interact with relevant EU/EC and UN/UNDP services and collaborating partners and networks such as International IDEA, the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, bilateral donor agencies and international/regional organizations working in the field of electoral assistance; and
- **Training and Information:** To contribute to knowledge dissemination through the delivery of trainings on effective electoral assistance and related areas, the development of content and dissemination of information to EU/EC and UN/UNDP services at HQ and field levels and to our collaborating partner agencies and organizations.

The expected results of the JTF, according to the JTF’s own documents,³¹ are:

- Better and more timely formulation, implementation and monitoring of projects;
- Improved mutual EC-UNDP understanding and knowledge of the respective policies and procedures on electoral assistance;
- At the country-level:
 - positive policy development regarding electoral processes;
 - an improved situation regarding adherence to international standards and norms;
 - strengthened national capacity in electoral administration;
- Professional development of EC and UNDP staff and improved knowledge of the institutional aspects of electoral assistance projects and principles of effective electoral assistance;
- Cross-fertilisation of projects through appropriate dissemination and application of best practices and lessons learnt;

³⁰ Taken from the Terms of Reference for this evaluation.

³¹ Taken from the Terms of Reference of this evaluation.

- Improved homogeneity and harmonisation of project design activities within the overall EC/UNDP strategic approach;
- Higher visibility of operations and in particular of the input from the EC;
- Development of operational tools and knowledge content to support staff;
- Increased communication and exchange of information among EC/UNDP and to the outside world, namely through the website of the Joint Task Force and other publications;
- Consolidation of networking relations with other actors in electoral assistance;
- Coordination and synergies reinforced between EU Election Observation Missions and electoral assistance activities.

This evaluation finds both the expected results and the specific objectives of the Joint Task Force, as elaborated by the Joint Task Force, to be consistent with:

- a) the specific mandate assigned to it by the EC and UNDP in the revised Operational Guidelines, and;
- b) the wider spirit of the Guidelines, in which both the EC and UNDP acknowledge that *“the EC-UNDP partnership can be of increasing value...due to a history of sector experience, lessons learned and a mutual understanding of each other’s approaches and capacities, and that each partner sees the other as a policy partner and provider of content...”*³² and;
- c) the objectives of the Strategic Partnership Agreement, which calls for *“close collaboration on common policy approaches...a more strategic framework for cooperation...between the European Commission and the UNDP...(and)...to enhance knowledge sharing...and to help support best practice.”*

In spite of reassurances from certain interlocutors within UNDP that the relationship is harmonised and working well, however, certain tensions have arisen between both the UN Department of Political Affairs’ Electoral Assistance Division, UNDP’s Bureau of Development Policy and UNDP Brussels, about the role, objectives and activities of the Joint Task Force that centre around a concern that the JTF Coordination Unit has been engaging in activities that overstep its mandate. We address this issue in Chapter 4 – Inter-Institutional Relations.

2.1 Design of the Joint Task Force: Assessment of the internal logic/coherence of the Partnership/Joint Task Force

As noted above, prior to the establishment of the Joint Task Force, the day-to-day implementation of the Partnership rested with the Governance, Security, Human Rights and Gender Unit (Unit E4) in the Quality Support Directorate (Directorate E) of EuropeAid (AIDCO E4), the offices of the Programme Advisor/Senior Advisor in UNDP Brussels office (reporting to the Director of the UNDP Brussels office), and the Electoral Advisor at BDP.³³ As it currently stands, and since the move of the Senior Electoral Assistance Advisor (SEEA) from his previous position in AIDCO E4 to UNDP, day to day management of the JTF Coordination Unit rests with the SEEA, managing a team of EC-funded, UNDP-contracted

³² From the Preamble to the revised Operational Guidelines.

³³ The Brussels office of UNDP operates under the direction of the Partnerships Bureau, one of the four UNDP Bureau, the other three being Development Policy; Management; and Crisis Prevention and Recovery.

consultants, operating, since September 2009, from a premises rented by (but separate from) the UNDP Brussels office. This office hosts both the JTF Coordination Unit, the Global Programme on Parliamentary Strengthening, and, from early 2010, the GPECS programme management team.³⁴ Funding for the Coordination Unit comes from UNDP funds.³⁵

Up to recently, two EC staff from AIDCO E4 (including the replacement for the current UNDP SEEA) represented the day-to-day liaison and implementation arm of the EC within the Joint Task Force. The close physical location of the AIDCO offices to the JTF Coordination Unit office, as well as the exceptionally good working and personal relations enjoyed by the Brussels-based EC and UNDP staff working within the JTF, has resulted in close (more or less daily) contact, both in person and by electronic means, between the key Brussels-based Joint Task Force implementation personnel. This has led to significant synergies and has helped to engender a true working Partnership in Brussels.

The informality of the daily communications is mirrored in the Task Force's structure and way of working; although the Operational Guidelines indicate that the "*Joint Task Force is composed of the relevant EC and UNDP staff and advisors dealing with electoral assistance at HQ level and external experts recruited by UNDP after consultation with the EC,*" the reality is that the daily operations are implemented by the JTF Coordination Unit with the full support of AIDCO E4. The Joint Task Force also does not enjoy a "membership" as such, with the website of the Partnership³⁶ hosting a page that includes 17 individuals, assumed to be the Task Force "members:"

- Nine UNDP staff members based in Brussels, of whom:
 - One is a full-time staff member (ALD contract, the SEEA, reporting to the UNDP Brussels Director) and three are junior consultants of the Task Force (on SSA contracts);
 - One is an intern working full-time with the Task Force;³⁷
 - One is a UNDP Brussels senior staff member (based at UNDP Brussels HQ reporting to the UNDP Brussels Director and the Director of the Regional Bureau of Africa);
 - Two are full-time staff of the Global Programme on Parliamentary Strengthening (GPPS) and one is a GPPS consultant;
- Two European Commission staff members from the Governance, Security, Human Rights and Gender Unit of EuropeAid (AIDCO E4),
- Two external consultants providing e-learning and graphic design expertise (on UNDP Brussels Special Service Agreement contracts) as required;
- One (former) EC-contracted IT consultant that was, until December 2009, located in the Task Force premises and now hired on the same consultancy based by UNDP Brussels;
- One UNDP BDP staff member based in New York;

³⁴ For 12 months and until December 2009, a full-time IT consultant, financed by the European Commission, was also working from the Joint task Force rented premises. The same consultant has now been hired by UNDP Brussels office.

³⁵ Although a number of the JTF Coordination Unit staff are funded through the EC contribution to the Global Training Platform.

³⁶ www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org

³⁷ Another intern works full-time with the Task Force but who does not appear as a Task Force "member" on the website.

- One UNDP BDP staff member based in Mexico City;
- One UNDP PSO staff member based in Copenhagen.

A number of these “members” (including the two EuropeAid staff and the BDP staff) work only part-time on Joint task Force activities.

A number of issues arise from the Task Force “membership” profile:

- a) Although the Task Force can be assumed to enjoy a nominal “membership,” there are no formal rights, roles and responsibilities of members (apart from the individual terms of reference the staff and consultants to the JTF Coordination Unit have). There are no rules of procedure that govern the Task Force members, nor indeed is there any mechanism to determine how one becomes a member, or forfeits their membership, or is replaced: the other members of the Task Force work in a rather informal mechanism following the specific dedicated lines included in the Operational Guidelines. The JTF membership do not meet on a formal basis in full complement. Although the regular contact between the key members in Brussels ensures good communication, the Task Force would benefit significantly from:
 - a. having a formal structure of responsibilities/rules of procedure for members outside of the JTF Coordination Unit/AIDCO E4 (with annual meetings of the Task Force in its full complement), and;
 - b. having a review of its membership to i) include more senior EC and UNDP staff members (to whom the current Task Force members report), and ii) exclude some of the current (more junior) members, without the adequate policy expertise.

Both of these developments would allow all members of the Task Force, at a senior level as well as the operational level, to:

- review and agree both the planned 2010-2013 Joint Task Force Strategic Plan, the 2010 Joint Task Force Operational Plan, and activities for the coming period;
 - address communication and policy differences within UNDP Brussels, BDP and EAD/DPA that currently threaten to distract key staff from improving the implementation, in particular, of country-level electoral assistance projects, which, if unchecked, threaten to affect the future growth or stability of the Partnership. This evaluation returns to this issue in Chapter 4.
- b) Both of the EC staff members of the Task Force have recently left their full-time position in Brussels and have been relocated to the EU Delegations in Brazil and Ghana respectively. Although both staff positions are being replaced in Brussels (the two replacements have been identified and bring significant field and Brussels experience to the work of the Task Force, and they will both take up membership of the Task Force), this development nonetheless represents a potential loss of institutional memory for the EC’s component of the Joint Task Force in Brussels (which will be addressed through different means, notably by the possibility to

develop a EC network of electoral expertise including headquarters staff and staff placed in EU delegations).

- c) The “membership” of the Joint Task Force is extremely “UNDP top heavy.” Although the point was made by interlocutors during the course of the evaluation that the “power of the punch” that the two EC Task Force members have brought to the Task Force (as well as the oversight function that the Head of Unit of AIDCO E4 maintains on the work of the Task Force) far outweighs their relative small number, it would, as already stated, be beneficial for the EC to add to its membership of the Joint Task Force. It is recommended to maintain membership of the Task Force for the departed staff, as well as to implement the planned membership of the Task Force for another AIDCO staff member with significant experience in implementing electoral assistance projects and overseeing the management of EU Election Observation Missions from her new post in the EU Delegation in Zimbabwe. These are steps in the right direction. The Brazil, Ghana and Zimbabwe-based EC staff could adopt a regional consultative role for the Joint Task Force, for Latin America/Caribbean, West Africa and Southern/East Africa respectively. Scope exists for liaison between these staff and the regionally-based UNDP/GPECS electoral advisors (who will also become UNDP members of the Joint Task Force, in Bangkok, Dakar and Johannesburg) once they are appointed.
- d) Some members of the Task Force would appear to be members in name only, who, on a day to day basis, do not contribute to the work of the Task Force and whose membership is by virtue of their position in other branches of UNDP. Indeed, there are serious differences in understanding, between some members of the Task Force, as to what the role of the Task Force should be.³⁸ It was suggested to this evaluation that a revision of the Operational Guidelines late in 2010 may be requested by UNDP, an option that may not be welcomed by the EC given the difficulties in arriving to an agreeable text in the two (to date) incarnations of the Guidelines.
- e) Finally, it is clear that there are a small number of key personnel of the Task Force that drive the process forward. Central to the work of the Task Force is the UNDP Senior Electoral Assistance Advisor, who significantly tasks the full-time contract staff (and external consultants) available to him,³⁹ and the two AIDCO E4 members from the EC who are, in effect, the EC element of not only the Task Force, but the Partnership also (closely managed by the Head of AIDCO E4). They are the quality control link that ensures, along with the SEEA, that country-level projects can move through the approval chain towards the eventual EC-UNDP Contribution Agreements. Without the SEEA (and to a lesser extent his counterparts in AIDCO E4), it is not difficult to envisage the work of the Joint Task Force being seriously

³⁸ This was euphemistically described in the SWOT analysis as “Mixed messages coming from the UN system as per the role of the Joint Task Force.” See chapter 4 below.

³⁹ The contract staff and consultants are engaged primarily (with the exception of the IT consultant) on the activities of the Task Force related to Liaison and Interaction, and Training and Information (primarily training events, training materials and other knowledge products).

hampered, with a potentially concomitant serious knock-on effect of the Partnership.⁴⁰

With such key roles in the work of both the Partnership, and in particular, the JTF Coordination Unit, centred in the hands of a number of key personnel, steps should be taken to anticipate the consequences should, for whatever reason, these key staff, including the SEEA, move from their post.⁴¹ As already noted, both of the two key AIDCO E4 members have departed their posts in Brussels, and steps have been made to maintain their membership of the Joint Task Force. Measures should be put in place to ensure that their replacements receive as thorough a handover briefing as possible from the outgoing staff. Another measure (already mentioned) would be the holding, on an at least annual basis (possibly six-monthly), meetings of the Partnership and Joint Task Force, in its full complement, and to include the future GPECS advisors. The first such annual meeting of the Task Force could agree a Rules of Procedure document that governs the activities of Task Force members as *members*.

⁴⁰ The IT Consultant has, in the last year in particular, played an increasingly critical role, particularly in advising on IT matters in country-level projects that envisage a large, technology-heavy voter/civil registration component, elements that are appearing more regularly as part of the envisaged activities of the country-level projects.

⁴¹ A “threat” noted in the JTF SWOT analysis: “(The JTF is)...vulnerable in case of sudden and large staff turnover within EC-UN key members and structures that support the work of the JTF at AIDCO E4, UNDP Brussels, BDP and UNDP PSO Copenhagen.”

Chapter 3 – Achievements of the EC-UNDP Partnership in Electoral Assistance and the Joint EC-UNDP Task Force on Electoral Assistance

The May 2008 *Evaluation of the European Commission's External Cooperation with Partner Countries Through the Organisations of the UN Family*⁴² noted that specific agreements between the Commission and the UN such as the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Electoral Assistance Programmes and Projects have “*permitted a deepening of the partnership based on an accumulation of knowledge and on identification of good practices to promote and difficulties to avoid. They offer the basis for markedly improved effectiveness in joint future operations.*”⁴³ The evaluation noted that the Guidelines “*are more concrete than the Strategic Partnership Agreement, provide clear guidance, and clarify many issues.*”

The EC and UNDP conducted a first review of the 2004 Strategic Partnership Agreement in December 2007, where “*the joint task force approach to cooperation around electoral assistance was highlighted by both parties as a best practice of the partnership that should be replicated in other areas.*”⁴⁵

The High-level EC-UNDP Dialogue on Africa event in 2008, agreed to during the review of the SPA in December 2007, noted that “*electoral assistance and the EC-UNDP Partnership in this area were highlighted as a governance best practice.*”⁴⁶ Trainees that have participated in any of the Joint EC-UNDP-IDEA Trainings on Effective Electoral Assistance (see below), which include EMB staff from beneficiary countries, EC and UNDP HQ and field staff, electoral experts and advisors, have a “positive” or “very positive” perception of the EC-UNDP Partnership in 89.1% of cases. In 88.2% of cases they believe that “*the EC and UNDP are natural partners in democratic governance and partnership in electoral assistance is a strategic advantage for both organisations,*” and in 86% of cases they believe that “*EC-UNDP cooperation in the field of electoral assistance is in the spirit of the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness with regards to enhanced donor cooperation.*”

No view expressed to the evaluators over the course of the evaluation by non-country-level actors, either within the EC, UNDP or other international partners, challenges these positive comments.⁴⁷

Under the Operational Guidelines, one of the “Key Components” of the Partnership is the Joint Task Force. The JTF engages in the following activities, implemented under each of the three specific objectives of the Joint Task Force, the performance of which are dealt with in turn.

⁴² Commissioned by the Common Evaluation Unit of EuropeAid, DG Development and DG External Relations (RELEX) and carried out by the Belgian consultants *Aide a la Decision Economique*.

⁴³ Pg. 28.

⁴⁴ Another example given was an agreement between EuropeAid and the World Food Programme on food aid and food security.

⁴⁵ “6 December 2007 – Strategic Partnership Agreement between the European Commission and UNDP” on http://www.undp.org/eu/undp_brussels_recent_events.shtml

⁴⁶ http://www.ec-undpelectoralassistance.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=86&Itemid=102

⁴⁷ It is clear that at country-level, however, there are differing views. See “Implementation Challenges” below.

3.1 Performance of the Partnership and the Joint Task Force – Training and Information

Activities implemented under the Training and Information function include

- Developing the content and being primary organiser of the sessions of the Joint EC-UNDP-IDEA Trainings on Effective Electoral Assistance;
- Liaising with the NEEDS project for the delivery of electoral assistance sessions within the training of Core Team and Long/Short Term observers of EU Election Observation Missions;
- Developing operational tools to support staff (templates);
- Liaising with UNDP (primarily BDP) and the relevant EC services for the development of information and dissemination of products on electoral assistance (leaflets, publications);
- Increasing the amount of joint activities, including joint meetings with partners and specialized think-tanks;
- Collaborating on initiatives and networks for the development of knowledge products and services for the support of electoral processes, such as the Electoral Practitioners Network within the ACE project, and;
- Undertaking studies and publications on issues of mutual interest, such as those on the synergies between civil and voter registration; on the increased use of ICTs in electoral processes, on the issues of conflict and security and elections; on disadvantaged groups and elections or on the support to regional and local elections.

The primary activity in this area are the eight Joint Trainings on Effective Electoral Assistance events have been implemented from 2006-2009.⁴⁸ This training has brought together over 350:

- EC and UNDP HQ and country level staff;
- Senior staff of electoral management bodies;
- Electoral experts working on technical assistance projects (often funded by the Operational Guidance component of the Partnership).

The trainings, initially designed as more of a “programming” training, to assist staff from both EU Delegations and UNDP Country Offices on programming, design and progress reporting mechanisms, have evolved over time. Over the last two years, the Joint Trainings have focused on much more than programming and reporting matters and have taken on much less of a ‘training’ element and have developed more of a conference feel. This is not a criticism; the trainings have been evaluated extremely positively by participants. The recent Training on the Use of ICT in Electoral Processes was evaluated as “good” or “very good” almost universally by participants, with regards to Usefulness (100%), Content (100%) and the standard of Presentations (91.7%). The trainings have also represented excellent networking possibilities, a point also repeatedly made in the evaluations.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the

⁴⁸ In Brussels (2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009), in Ghana (2009), in Milan and Moputo (2007). The next thematic trainings, on Electoral Conflict and Violence, shall take place in Barcelona in March 2009.

⁴⁹ Participants in the recent ICT Training answered, overall, that the course “*was very useful....good content and design...easy to use....very interesting, gives the opportunity to meet new people, new rules, examples of democracy...course intense and useful...a very thought provoking workshop on electoral assistance that helps*

recent branch into thematic training, with the successful holding of the ICT Training, has suggested that there is significant value added in holding such events that address and allow discussion fora for “cutting edge” issues such as ICT use and the planned Barcelona (March 2010) training in Elections and Conflict Management.

There would also appear to be significant benefit in adopting the planned “back to basics” approach to some of the training events, that address, in particular, the challenges that arise in the Operational Guidance activities, particularly related to FAFA rules, progress and financial reporting and joint visibility guidelines.

Two different strands of the Joint Training should continue, therefore; one strand related to basic programming, monitoring and reporting training, primarily for EC and UNDP staff (but also potentially for senior electoral management body staff that are engaged with electoral assistance projects at Steering Committee level); and the other strand related to thematic training, along the lines of the recent ICT training, where new developments and new challenges related to best practice implementation of projects are concerned.

In 2009, the Joint Task Force also developed an e-learning DVD/online resource that distilled much of the content of the previous Joint Trainings, and allows all students that want to complete the training to engage in over 15 hours of study. The design of the e-learning training course, which requires students to complete a series of multiple choice questions in order to receive accreditation for completing the course, is such that there is no real human resource requirement on the part of the Joint Task Force to grade the student exams. The correct completion of the multiple choice questions (which must be completed within three months of enrolment of the course) automatically generates an instruction to the Task Force staff to issue the certificate to the successful student. The resource went “live” in October 2009, with 15 students completing the course to date, although another 183 students are in the process of completing it. A further 31 students completed the training course online/by DVD prior to completing an intensive 40 hour in-person training course in the Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale (ISPI) in Milan in October 2009, in which some of the issues explored in the online course were debated and expanded, along with some other group and exercise work. At the end of the course, the students received an Advanced Diploma in Effective Electoral Assistance from ISPI.

The various training courses organised by the Joint Task Force, in association with IDEA, represent a serious commitment on the part of the EC, UNDP and IDEA to develop respected and credible professional development qualifications for electoral assistance practitioners and administrations, alongside the BRIDGE programme, and their efforts should be applauded. The focus of much of the online/DVD e-learning training course, for example, as well as a recurring element in the Joint Trainings, has been focus on “who does what” in the EC and UNDP institutional architectures in electoral assistance. This fills a gap not covered by other electoral processes training facilities such as the ACE Electoral Practitioners Network.

nations, especially African countries, informed choices when considering the inclusion of ICTs in electoral process...very good and useful exchanges with colleagues of various backgrounds...” There were some recommendations made as to how to improve future trainings, including fewer presentations, a point consistently made in the evaluations of many of the recent Trainings.

There is one element of electoral administration training that would appear to be missing in the current array of training possibilities available to electoral practitioners, however; training that is purely exercise and scenario-based, where trainees would be faced with a series of electoral scenarios that require solutions. With no lectures or presentations, trainees, on either an individual or group basis, would be asked to consider how they, as electoral administrators, would address a number of different scenarios, from a number of different perspectives. Scenarios could be presented, for example, for electoral management bodies, asked to implement an election under restricting circumstances; for legislators, asked to design more inclusive electoral systems; for civil society bodies, asked to design voter education strategies in divided societies, and for EC-UNDP officials, asked to design electoral assistance projects that prioritise capacity-building in certain areas over others. Some of these scenarios were introduced during the Milan 2009 training and should be expanded. Consultations should take place between ACE, IDEA, DPA/EAD, BDP, GPECS and the Joint Task Force to find the most suitable forum for piloting such training.⁵⁰ (The foreseen creation of an Academic Network within GPECS is to be commended and may be a suitable forum.)

3.2 Performance of the Partnership and the Joint Task Force – Liaison and Interaction

Activities that the Joint Task Force says are implemented under the Liaison and Interaction function include:

- Liaising with UNDP (primarily BDP) and the relevant EC services for monitoring and assessing EC UNDP electoral assistance projects;
- Collaborating on initiatives and networks for the development of knowledge products and services for the support of electoral processes, such as the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network;
- Collaborating with the EC, UNDP, UNDP/A/EAD and IDEA on the definition of performance indicators for electoral assistance projects;
- Liaising with the EC, UNDP/BDP and UNDP/A/EAD for the EC/UN internal rosters of electoral administration/assistance experts;
- Reinforcing synergies and complementarity between Electoral Observation and Electoral Assistance activities; and
- Facilitating the communication and interactions between EC and UN services at HQ and field levels.

In truth, some of these activities; *'liaising with UNDP and the relevant EC services for monitoring and assessing EC UNDP electoral assistance projects,'* and *'facilitating the*

⁵⁰ Examples include: "You are the Executive Secretary of an EMB in a country with 10m voters, where the voter register is drawn automatically from the civil register at the time of elections. Due to recent budget cuts, your EMB was reduced to only 50 full-time staff. The President has died in office and you are asked to make a presentation to Parliament on the steps required to carry out an election to elect her successor within 60 days." Another example would be: "A recent Act of Parliament has introduced a quota of 3/140 seats for the Clarki ethnic minority, as part of a deal to get the Clarkis to agree to a Barosso Head of Government. The Clarkis and the Barossos experience very tense relations in isolated parts of the country. As part of a presentation to Parliament, outline the steps that you, as Chairman of the EMB charged with administering elections, will take in order to implement the new Act, particularly with regards to the issues of a) which voters should be allowed to vote for the Clarki representatives, and b) how would propose to distribute the 3 seats across the country's electoral constituencies."

communication and interactions between EC and UN services at HQ and field levels' belong more appropriately in the Operational Guidance category (see below).

Regarding the rosters of experts, EAD manages an electoral experts roster since 1992 as specifically mandated as per the 1991 General Assembly resolution establishing the Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs as the chief UN focal point for electoral activities. It is standard practice that when electoral advisor positions are envisaged as part of an electoral assistance project, EAD is contacted by the UNDP Country Office and asked to submit CVs for the Country Office to peruse and prioritise. This is often done with the local EMB, and, since the entry into force of the Operational Guidelines, with the EU Delegation and other donors contribution to the UNDP managed basket fund, as the 2008 version of the Guidelines specifically allow for. There have allegedly been occasions, however, when local UNDP Country Offices have not been enthusiastic in agreeing to this element of the Operational Guidelines. Although ideally consensus would be reached on the proposed candidates, there have also been occasions when the EU Delegation have vetoed the UNDP Country Office's preferred choice of candidate in favour of another on the list of candidates proposed by EAD.⁵¹ There have also been occasions where the UNDP Country Office has resisting involving the EU Delegations (or other contributors to the basket fund) in the joint selection of experts.

The EC has also, on rare occasion, expressed to some UNDP interlocutors the view that they do not wish to see certain advisors proposed by EAD engaged for future EC-funded projects. In general, however, the system whereby EAD proposes candidates for the Country Office and the EU Delegation to jointly, with the EMB, approve, seems to work well. Recently, UNDP have begun to directly advertise some key international electoral advisor positions.⁵² This is primarily in cases where a long-term project is identified well in advance, and where the recruited staff will be engaged on UN FTA staff contracts, rather than on the more usual Special Service Agreement consultant contracts.⁵³ Although it is expected that EAD is part of the selection panel for positions that are advertised by UNDP, it is unclear what would happen in cases where EAD, following a review of candidates that applied, would wish to propose candidates that had not applied for a position.

⁵¹ For example, in Sierra Leone in 2008.

⁵² For example, the 2009-2010 EC-funded, UNDP-implemented project in Tanzania.

⁵³ There are widely different experiences for some UNDP electoral advisor consultants on SSA contracts according to the Country Office recruiting them and the size of the project involved, which make some missions more attractive to consultants than others, and which can affect the desire of some experienced consultants to join a project (thus, ultimately, influencing the calibre of expert deployed). In some of the larger projects (e.g. Sierra Leone), where large commitments of funds from donors such as the EC require the establishment of a full-time Project Management Unit, SSA advisors sometimes have access to UN-marked project vehicles, are located within the UNDP office, have full access to office facilities including computers, telephones, etc., have access to on-site UN Health Clinics, carry UNDP-logo business cards and are generally considered, to all intents and purposes, to be UN "staff," both by the local authorities and, unofficially, by the Country Office itself. In other countries (e.g. Kenya), particularly where the project is smaller and there is no full-time PMU, SSA consultants travel in-country by their own means, are not provided with office equipment or telephones, are not briefed on security matters, are not provided with UNDP-logo business cards and are even discouraged from advertising themselves as "UNDP." Although SSA contract holders are compensated to a degree that should adequately assist in meeting costs in *some* of these areas, there are three areas, in particular, where SSA consultants should reasonably expect to receive full logistical support from the UNDP Country Office: a) access to UN health facilities (even at a subsidised cost), where they exist; b) inclusion in UN security and evacuation plans, where developed, and c) pro-active support in the matter of securing visa extensions or residency visas, where required.

Regarding the complementarity between electoral assistance and election observation projects, there are scope for greater synergies between EU EOMs and EC-funded electoral assistance projects implemented by UNDP. Current practice is that EU EOMs do not discuss or share findings or draft recommendations with EC-funded electoral assistance projects prior to the release of the EOM's Final Report. This is policy that is grounded in a belief that to discuss the draft recommendations with UNDP staff (or, as in the case of Lebanon in 2009, with EC staff directly implementing an electoral assistance project), would be to compromise the independence of the EOM. The result is sometimes findings and recommendations from EOMs – particularly in the electoral operations area that many electoral technical assistance advisors excel in – that are out of step with what the technical advisors themselves experience, and who would often be in a position to advise on the credibility of a finding or the “implementability” of a proposed recommendation prior to their publication. Although EOMs are fully entitled to make recommendations as they see fit, and to their credit, the AIDCO and RELEX services in the European Commission involved in managing and implementing the EOMs engage in the organisation of regular fora⁵⁴ where these matters are debated, the issue of the sometimes “disconnect” between electoral observation and electoral assistance is often as a result of an unofficial policy to prevent EU observers from meeting (formally at least) EU-funded electoral assistance providers due to a view, arguably simplistic, that to both observe and fund an election represents a conflict of interest.

The issue is further compounded by the fact that many experienced election observers do not come from an electoral assistance background. Similarly, many electoral assistance experts do not have significant election observation backgrounds. There would appear to be significant amount of work for experienced observers with the EU, OSCE/ODIHR, The Carter Center and the National Democratic Institute for some observers to restrict the majority of their electoral work to observation – and likewise, experienced electoral assistance experts tend to accept longer term positions with the UN family, IFES, the EC and OSCE so as to engage in little amounts of observation. A more thorough “mixing” of some of the respective strengths of both class of election experts – generally speaking, law/media/political analysis for observers, and operations/procedures/logistics/procurement for electoral assistance experts – would benefit both strands of electoral work and would lead to the design and implementation of more fully rounded projects in both areas. Again, to the credit of the RELEX and AIDCO services in the European Commission involved in managing and implementing the EOMs, they are constantly open to the idea of establishing greater linkages in this area and for EOMs and technical advisors to work more closely together. Methods to promote such moves would include recruiters in the two respective areas valuing the experiences of candidates from the “other” field as much as they value experience from their “own” field when assessing applications. Other moves could include joint training initiatives with an equal number of experienced practitioners from both strands of electoral assistance.

Addressing the remaining activity areas, there is some overlap between the Liaison and Interaction work of the Joint Task Force and the Training and Information work. Both represent (primarily) the “non-country-level” work of the Partnership and the Joint Task Force. Both are involved in developing knowledge products, liaising with knowledge-

⁵⁴ For example, the large, 400+ delegates 3-day EU Observers Forum for country focal points, Core Team members, Long Term Observers and Short Term Observers from EU EOMs held in Brussels in December 2009.

generating bodies such as IDEA and the ACE Project. An example is the (soon to be published) paper on *Procurement Aspects of Introducing ICT solutions in Electoral Processes: the Specific Case of Voter Registration* that is being published as part of the *ACE Focus On...* series and also as a joint ACE/IDEA/Joint Task Force Operational Paper, advance drafts of which suggest it will be of benefit to electoral management bodies, electoral practitioners, and both the policy-driving and programming arms of the UN and EC systems.

A recent innovation of both the Partnership and the GPECS programme has been the decision to seat the JTF Coordination Unit staff alongside the staff of the Global Programme on Parliamentary Strengthening. There are many reasons why endeavouring to create closer linkages between electoral assistance and parliamentary assistance is a positive development for international democratic governance partners. Primarily, it would appear like an opportunity lost for international democratic governance assistance providers to focus enormous political and financial capital attempting to build the capacity of an electoral management body to organise credible elections, if the elected body then proceeds to underperform in terms of its obligations towards the citizenry due to lack of capacity. In the years in which the EC has committed hundreds of millions of Euros towards electoral assistance projects, it has also committed approximately 200m euro⁵⁵ (since 2000) on parliamentary support programmes. It is natural that such a serious commitment should require closer liaison between the two forms of assistance designers (EU Delegations and UNDP Country Offices) on the ground, and GPECS envisages much closer liaison.

Another achievement of the Partnership and the Joint Task Force (along with BDP and International IDEA) in the area of liaison and interaction has been the definition of the “electoral cycle approach” now consistently applied in projects (and also, e.g. in BRIDGE trainings) in the field and disseminated via joint training initiatives, the joint website, and publications including the 2007 UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide, the 2006 EC Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance, etc. The electoral cycle aims to point international and national partners in the field of electoral assistance beyond providing *election* assistance towards providing *electoral* assistance. Specifically it aims to demonstrate that much of the success or otherwise of an individual election is due to the background work done in the inter-election years, in terms of capacity building of the electoral administration, work on the legal framework, etc.

Since the cycle was adopted, however, there has not been a systematic review of the impact of the electoral cycle approach. It would appear EU Delegations and UNDP Country Offices have been influenced by the cycle approach.⁵⁶ However, evidence would suggest that there are still quite a number of electoral assistance projects that commence very late in the process, close to an election date, due to a number of reasons; political crises/incumbents dying or leaving office early, late requests presented by EMBs or partners countries to EAD for Needs Assessment Missions, late appointment of the EMB themselves, etc. Scope exists for both the EC and UNDP, to both individually undertake a fundamental review of their electoral assistance activities (in the form of a Ten-year Review along the lines of the 2000

⁵⁵ Unofficial figures.

⁵⁶ The GPECS ProDoc states that “in 2007, for the first time ever, a majority of those countries (the countries receiving annual UNDP electoral support) reported that the requested and delivered assistance focused on the inter-election period rather than support to an election per se.” (pg. 6).

review, in the case of UNDP), to include analysis of the types of assistance provided vis a vis the electoral cycle, among other issues such as attempting to address value for money considerations (see Conclusions and Recommendations).

3.3 Performance of the Partnership and the Joint Task Force – Operational Guidance:

Activities under the Operational Guidance Key Component include:

- Supporting the relevant EC and UNDP services at HQ and field levels in the drafting of Project Identification Fiches and Financial Proposals, EC-UNDP Contribution Agreements and UNDP Project Documents (including definition of operational procedures, selection of necessary personnel/contractors, and resource mobilization for the project);
- Ensuring contractual compliance with EC-UNDP Contribution Agreements in the electoral assistance fields;
- Collaborating with UNDP Procurement Support Office/UNOPS for procurement-related issues and in particular for the drafting process of technical specifications of the required electoral items and equipment;
- Developing model terms of reference for commonly required services; and
- Developing model terms of reference for Joint Formulation Missions in terms of budgeting, risks assessments and planning.

In practice, “Operational Guidance” represents the country–level work of the Partnership and the Task Force. A quick summary of how the country-level work is implemented is below.

3.3.1 Designing and implementing a UNDP-implemented electoral assistance project with the contribution of the European Commission – how it works

All countries with a European Union Delegation that qualify for development assistance draft a Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme, usually covering a period from 5 to 7 years. A number of geographic funding instruments can be utilised to fund electoral assistance projects, but currently, the primary fund is the 10th European Development Fund (EDF), used to assist the 79 ACP countries.⁵⁷ In recent times the Instrument for Stability, a rapid procedure funding instrument used in crisis situations, has also been used to fund electoral assistance projects (but due to its nature as a crisis response fund, IfS funding would not be programmed in the Country Strategy Paper).⁵⁸

The CSP sets out the strategy and priority areas for the Delegation, in association with the national government, for the multi-year period covered by the CSP. Within the CSP, activity in the electoral area is usually envisaged where elections are scheduled, and where it is foreseen that electoral assistance may be required.

UNDP Country Offices also prepare their programmes to assist the country in implementing the UNDP Country Programme Action Plan. In much the same way as the Country Strategy

⁵⁷ The other geographical funding instruments are the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI, used to assist the 47 countries in Latin American and Asia, as well as the Republic of South Africa), the 17 neighbourhood countries eligible for funding under the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI), and the Pre-Accession Instrument, for the EU membership candidate countries and the potential candidate countries (Turkey and the Western Balkans).

⁵⁸ Including the EUR4m project of electoral assistance funded in Lebanon in 2009-2010.

Paper is drafted, the CPAP is agreed with the host government to reflect the joint priorities of both parties in implementing activities to allow the host country reach the Millennium Development Goals.

Projects to implement the priorities as spelt out in the Country Strategy Paper are not all programmed at the start of the CSP period. Each year, the EU Delegation will prioritise what projects need to commence before others, according to a number of factors. In the case of electoral assistance, projects need to be programmed well in advance of any election date.⁵⁹

The first stage in the process of formulating an electoral assistance project in the EC chain of approval is the drafting of the Project Identification Fiche, which sets out, well in advance of the action, the intention to implement a project. The Delegation (in close collaboration with the partner country and often with the support of AIDCO E4), drafts the Project Identification Fiche and forwards it to the AIDCO E4 Unit for comment and editing before submission to the Quality Support Group. The Directorate for Operations Quality Support co-manages (with the relevant Geographical Director in AIDCO) the Quality Support Groups that are responsible for giving final approval from EuropeAid that formulation for the project can commence.

After the QSG has approved the PIF, the Project Action Fiche will be drafted and refined over the following months. The PAF will outline not only the activities and indicative budget, but will also detail the implementation mechanism. For electoral assistance projects foreseen for implementation by the Delegation, the two electoral expert officials from the AIDCO E4 unit (the, to date, two EC members of the Joint Task Force), will often assist the Delegation in guiding the project through the Quality Support Group process, particularly in the phase from the evolution from the PIF to the PAF.

In order to refine the PAF in order to ensure smooth passage through the QSG mechanism, on site visits to the country in question by the technical experts of the E4 unit are often required. The purpose of the on-site visits is to assist the Delegation in finalising the exact scope, activities and budget of the project with the electoral management body, and to help the Delegation decide on the implementing partner.⁶⁰ Although these visits are often carried out by the EC members of the Joint Task Force, they cannot be said to represent a Joint Formulation Mission unless there is UNDP participation in the Mission, often times represented by members of the JTF Coordination Unit. UNDP will not participate in such a mission, however, unless there has first been a Needs Assessment Mission from DPA/EAD, as per the 1991 General Assembly resolution⁶¹ establishing EAD, which establishes the Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs as the chief UN focal point for electoral activities and which gives him/her, through EAD, the authority to provide “green light” for UN involvement in electoral assistance.

⁵⁹ With the adoption of the electoral cycle approach, both EU Delegations and UNDP Country Offices are being encouraged to anticipate projects that look well beyond electoral events towards longer term capacity-building and empowerment of national electoral management bodies.

⁶⁰ It may be that the Delegation decides on a different implementing partner, other than UNDP, such as with the 4m euro Electoral Assistance Project in Lebanon in 2009-2010, implemented by a private sector company, who recruited 4 long-term international experts and 4 short-term international experts as per the terms of reference developed by the EU Delegation with the assistance of AIDCO E4. Of the 8 experts involved in the implementation of the project, 5 had previous UNDP electoral assistance implementation experience.

⁶¹ A/RES/46/137, 75th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, December 17, 1991.

It is generally the practice that if the Joint Task Force participates in a Joint Formulation Mission, then UNDP is most likely to be the EC's implementing partner. The Joint Formulation Mission also can contribute considerably to the drafting of the Contribution Agreement with UNDP, and to the finalisation of the UNDP ProDoc, elections budget and project budget. With the final approval of the PAF by the QSG in Brussels, the green light can be given to the signing of an agreement between the Head of Delegation and the host government's National Authorising Officer (usually the Minister for Foreign Affairs or his/her designate) and the Contribution Agreement with UNDP. The Contribution Agreement will include at least three/four Annexes: the General Conditions, the Special Conditions, the ProDoc, and the budget. Only when the Contribution Agreement is signed can the project commence. The CA will include details of membership and regularity of Steering Committee meetings, and will also clearly establish the reporting mechanisms. The project will often commence with the establishment, by UNDP, of a special Programme Management Unit or Technical Assistance Team, which will, on a day-to-day basis, implement the project.

3.4 Financial contributions of the European Commission to UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects

Since the Partnership formally commenced in 2004, there has been a huge increase in the amount of EC financial support for UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects. Table 1 below shows the total amount of funds contributed by the EC to UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects in the 1995-2003 period.

Table 1 – EC Contributions to UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects, 1995-2003

Year	Countries	TOTALS of EC contribution
2003	Afghanistan, Cambodia, Georgia, Rwanda	12,666,236 €
2002	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nigeria, Yemen	7,735,000 €
2001	Cambodia, Chad, Comoros, Timor-Leste	7,808,538 €
2000	Cote d'Ivoire, Guyana, Suriname	12,200,000 €
1999	Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Mozambique, Timor-Leste	34,740,000 €
1997	Comoros, Mozambique	9,475,000 €
1995	Comoros, Equatorial Guinea	175,915 €
		84,800,689 €

In the nine years from 1995-2003, €84.8m was channelled to UNDP (average €9.4m per year) in 17 countries. Table 2 shows the increase in funding that took place in the three years from 2004 to 2006, with the commencement of the Partnership in 2004.

Table 2 – EC Contributions to UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects, 2004-2006

Year	Countries	TOTALS of EC contribution
2006	Afghanistan, Benin, Comoros, The Gambia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Zambia	66,437,500 €
2005	Afghanistan, Cote d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Suriname, Togo, The Palestinian Authority, Yemen	149,888,399 €
2004	Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Comoros, DR Congo, Ghana, Indonesia, Malawi, Niger	134,205,803 €
		350,531,702 €

In the 2004-2006 period, the amount of the EC contributions rose to €350.5m in 28 countries, or a 313% increase over the 1995-2003 figures (of which €165m was committed to one country, DR Congo, in 2005-2006, for the first post-conflict national-level elections in 2006). Leaving out DR Congo, this represents a yearly average of €61.9.⁶² Including DR Congo, the rise in yearly commitments over the previous period was 1,142%.

Table 3 shows the value of the EC contributions in the 2007-2009 period.

Table 3 – EC Contributions to UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects, 2007-2009

Year	Countries	TOTALS of EC Contributions
2009	Afghanistan, Benin, Comoros, Haiti, Moldova, Bolivia, Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Georgia, Sudan, Zambia, Togo	97,785,423 €
2008	Zambia, Cote d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Yemen	38,488,921 €
2007	Bangladesh, Comoros, Fiji, Guinea, Iraq, Kenya, Timor Leste, Togo, Zambia, Zimbabwe	60,484,618 €
		196,758,962 €

⁶² Including DR Congo, the yearly average rises to €116.8m.

Nearly €197m of funds were channelled from the EC to UNDP in 25 countries, representing a yearly average of €65.6m. Table 4 shows the potential contributions that could be materialised if agreement is reached among the relevant EU Delegations and UNDP Country Offices in 2010.⁶³ Note that these are only the currently envisaged projects, and scope exists for an increase or decrease in the number of projects.⁶⁴

Table 4 – 2010 EC Contributions to UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects 2010

Year	Countries	TOTALS of EC Contributions
2010	Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Niger, Sierra Leone, Tanzania	61,050,000 €
2010	Regional PALOP Programme (Timor-Leste, Cape Verde Islands, Mozambique, Angola, Sao Tome and Principe, Guinea-Bissau)	6,100,000 €
		67,150,000 €

Table 4 shows a further commitment of some €61m worth of projects are in the formulation phase in early 2010 in 10 countries, as well as a €6.1m regional project for the African Lusophone countries and Timor-Leste.

Although the ACP region remains the priority of both the Partnership and the Joint Task Force, almost a third (29.9%) of the 2004-2009 funds (€159.6m) were committed to 10 Middle East, former Soviet Union and Asian countries.⁶⁵

This massive increase in EU funding has contributed to electoral assistance work representing a total of 8% of all UNDP programme activity across all sectors in the 2004-2007 period.⁶⁶

⁶³ At time of writing.

⁶⁴ Although projects are mostly envisaged well in advance due to knowledge, at country level, of the electoral cycle and when new elections are scheduled and their subsequent inclusion in both the EU Delegations' Country Strategy Papers and the UNDP Country Offices' Country Programme Action Plans, there is often a need to programme funds at short notice, due to unexpected elections (following the deaths of incumbents, etc.). The EU's Instrument for Stability is a flexible programming fund is sometimes called upon for funding in such cases.

⁶⁵ Indonesia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, the Palestinian Authority, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Georgia and Moldova.

⁶⁶ *Democratic Governance Reader – A Reference for UNDP Practitioners*, published by UNDP Bureau for Development Policy and Bureau of Management, November 2009, pg. 93.

3.5 Place of EC funding in the “funding hierarchy” of UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects

It is highly pertinent to examine the “relative strength” of EU funding to the overall amount of funds that UNDP is able to mobilise for the projects designed. Table 5 examines the relative contributions of both the EC, and the EU member states, to the final amount of funds raised by UNDP during the implementation of the electoral assistance projects for 2007-2009.⁶⁷

Table 5 – Contributions of both the EC and the EU member states to UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects 2007-2009

Year	Proposed project budget (indicated in the Contribution Agreement)	Actual budget mobilized	EC Contribution	EC cont. %	EU member states contribution	EU member states cont. %	EC + EU Member States contribution %
2009	279,262,644 €	204,922,082 €	97,785,423 €	47.72 %	38,326,322 €	19%	66.42%
2008	167,367,711 €	72,818,543 €	38,488,921 €	52.86 %	16,573,661 €	23%	75.62%
2007	134,098,685 €	90,745,135 €	60,484,618 €	66.7%	25,245,726 €	27.8%	94.5%
Total	580,729,040 €	368,485,760 €	196,758,962 €	53.4%	80,145,709 €	21.8%	75.1%

Two significant conclusions can be drawn from the above figures. Firstly, it would appear that UNDP is, on average, managing to successfully raise approximately 62.7% of the funds identified in the Contribution Agreements.⁶⁸ The figures vary from 73.3% of funds raised in 2009 to only 43.5% of funds raised in 2008.⁶⁹ The question of why so much UNDP programmed activity goes unfunded is beyond the scope of this evaluation (possibly to be addressed by a Ten-year Review of UNDP Electoral Assistance in the latter half of 2010, 10 years after the 2000 evaluation?) These data do prompt the question, however, of whether activities get “sacrificed” midway during implementation, as a result of lack of funding, and, given the basket fund implementation modality, whether the donors that have already

⁶⁷ Figures from Joint Task Force Coordination Unit, January 13, 2010.

⁶⁸ An example of non-programmed activity is the final ProDoc for the 2008-2010 *Strengthening Electoral Processes in Lebanon* project, to which the EC did not commit. Although the total budget approved in the ProDoc is \$4.28m, the project had only raised \$2.7m by September 2009. In some instances a larger amount of funding than what is necessary to implement fully the project is raised. In Sierra Leone, a December 2009 Joint Formulation Mission of the Joint Task Force was deployed in order to assist UNDP, the EU Delegation and other donors to design an “interim” project to programme the \$1.8m left over from the 2008 project. A further point here is that due to the “basket fund” modality of implementation, funds are not earmarked for particular items or budget lines. Subsequently, in the rare cases where funds are left over, it is not possible to identify which donors funds are left over.

⁶⁹ UNDP design projects with a scope and proposed level of activity on the basis of the needs it identifies with national and other stakeholders. Such a significant programming of activity that, in the end, goes unfunded, is beyond the scope of this evaluation, but is worthy of a separate study. It is possible, for example, that such shortfalls could be explained by national funds that are committed by host partner governments that are not forthcoming.

contributed their funds to a basket fund see some of the activity they have agreed to fund go unimplemented because of either a “reneging” on commitments to fund by either other donors or by the national authorities. While *that* question is not beyond the scope of this evaluation, the time to address it is. What can be stated is that from an EC-UNDP Partnership perspective, this evaluation is unaware of any cases where the EC has reneged on an agreement to contribute to a UNDP-managed basket fund once the Contribution Agreements have been signed.

Secondly, it would appear that the European Commission finances over half (53.4%) of the UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects, and, when the contributions of EU member states to the basket funds are included, the countries of the European Union, including the European Commission, finance three-quarters (75.1%) of the UNDP-implemented projects (although the relative EC/EU contributions have reduced since 2007).

This fact cannot be ignored when discussing the issue of the importance of the European Commission to UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects, an issue we return to in the next chapter. Not only is it the largest funding partner, the EC would also appear to be the most reliable funding partner.

From the evidence collected during the course of this evaluation, there would appear to be challenges and difficulties during the course of the implementation of the country-level projects that result in the EU Delegations and the UNDP Country offices having differing views as to the success (or otherwise) of the country-level work. Prior to addressing these issues, however, it is important to address the issue of the overall “cost” of the Partnership and the Task Force, which demonstrates graphically how overwhelmingly the Partnership concentrates its resources on country-level work. This is an important context in which to examine the issues in the Inter-Institutional Relations.

3.6 Costs: Assessment of the use of resources against overall/specific objectives, activities and results of the Partnership and Joint Task Force

Given the extremely tight timeframe for this evaluation, it has not been possible to engage in any in-depth analysis of unit costs,⁷⁰ comparative programme cost, etc.,⁷¹ or any attempted econometric analysis of the counterfactual (what would have happened in terms of EC support for UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects in the event that the Partnership, and the Joint Task Force that followed it, were not created).

Some very basic analysis is possible, however, which allows us to make conclusions on the use of resources while implementing the activities of the Partnership and the Joint Task Force against the objectives, activities and results.

In terms of the allocation of resources to activities, however, of the three “key components” of the work of the Joint Task Force, “Operational Guidance” represents the vast majority of the funds expended. From 2004-2010⁷² (the duration of the lifespan of the Partnership), the EC has allocated approximately €614.4m of funds to UNDP-implemented projects at individual country level, in 45 countries. This demonstrates the commitment of the European

⁷⁰ For example, universal costs per voter in projects supported, etc.

⁷¹ For example, comparative costs of other programmes in the area of democratic governance or other developmental spheres.

⁷² Figures for 2010 include what is currently envisaged as potential implementation through UNDP.

Commission to the Partnership.⁷³ From core resources, from the data available for 2007-2009, UNDP has committed a further \$9.45m from its own resources.⁷⁴

The amount of funds committed to the other “key components” of the work of the Joint Task Force – Training and Information, and Liaison and Interaction – is less clear. The EC made a €950,000 contribution to the ACE Electoral Practitioners’ Network in 2008, as well as contributions of €66,484 in 2008 and €67,250 in 2009 to the Global Training Platform. The GTP funding funds the joint IDEA-JTF Trainings in Effective Electoral Assistance.⁷⁵

The very large amount of country level funding committed by the Commission to the Partnership contrasts sharply with the low administrative cost of maintaining the Partnership and the Joint Task Force itself.⁷⁶ These costs include:

- The two EC staff (from AIDCO E4, working part time on Joint Task Force activities) and the UNDP contract staff (including the SEEA) based in the JTF Coordination Unit offices that work full-time on Partnership and Joint Task Force activity;
- The costs of the Joint Formulation Missions that Joint Task Force staff participate in;
- The funding of the IT consultant in the Joint Task Force;
- Other costs related to participation in conferences, the research for and the publication of papers such as the joint JTF/IDEA/ACE “*Focus On....Procurement Aspects of Introducing ICT Solutions in Electoral Processes*” paper;
- The costs of the Global Training Platform, including the Joint EC-UNDP-IDEA Joint Trainings on Effective Electoral Assistance;
- The office costs of the JTF Coordination Unit.

There are, of course, many other personnel, including Task Force members, that work on Task Force activity, but whose costs should only be applied on an in-kind basis, as the proportion of their time they dedicate to Partnership/Task Force varies across each individual and at different times.

Nevertheless, on the basis of limited data and using simple calculations, this evaluation estimates that it is safe to assume that:

- a) Of the three “Key Components” of Partnership/Joint Task Force activity, “Operational Guidance” – or individual-country-level work – probably represents *at least 97%* of all activity funded by the Partnership since 2004, even when all of the training, liaison, knowledge production and networking activities are included;
- b) The administrative cost of maintaining the Partnership/Joint Task Force, in terms of rents, salaries, travel costs, and the other office costs outlined above, etc., (not including in-kind contributions) probably represents *significantly less than 1%* of the

⁷³ Where this positions the EC in terms of global support for electoral assistance is, again due to time constraints, not clear.

⁷⁴ Figures from the Joint Task Force, 18 December 2009.

⁷⁵ The GTP funding funds some of the UNDP Joint Task Force full-time staff contracts, and has subsequently, in effect, indirectly represented “core” funding of the EC to the Joint Task Force, as those staff do not work exclusively on Global Training Platform training events.

⁷⁶ This was noted as both a strength of the JTF in the SWOT analysis: “Positive ratio between costs of JTF and results” and an opportunity: “Stable financial and/or in kind resources for the JTF for at least the next 3 years via GPCES (Spain) and Global Training Platform (EC, CIDA, IOM and OAS).”

cost of the contributions of the European Commission to the “Operational Guidance” activities.

This is not flippant analysis. Although the *exact* accuracy of the figures may be questionable, the context and the conclusion is clear. Individual country-level electoral assistance projects overwhelmingly dominate the work of the EC-UNDP Partnership in Electoral Assistance in terms of resources consumed, and, regardless of even possible huge increases in the future in the financial support towards networking, liaison, training and knowledge production activity under GPECS or through other channels, it is likely to remain so. We return to this issue in Chapter 4. In terms of resources allocated by the Joint Task Force members, the Operational Guidance work arguably comprises at least 70/80%% of the work of the JTF Coordination Unit, and up to 90% of the work of the EC members of the Task Force

3.7 Difficulties faced in the implementation of electoral assistance projects

As noted previously, there are differences in the views of field staff from the EU Delegations and the UNDP Country Offices on the success of the Partnership at country level. As receivers of funds, it is possibly to be expected that UNDP country offices would have more positive views. For example, 92.9% of the Country Offices that responded either “agree” or “strongly agree” that “*the EC and UNDP are natural partners in democratic governance and partnership in electoral assistance is a strategic advantage for both organisations.*” For EU Delegations that responded to our survey, the figure is 55.5%. Similarly, only 55.5% of EU Delegations had a “positive” or “very positive” perception of the EC-UNDP Partnership in Electoral Assistance, compared with 92.9% of UNDP Country Offices. A clue as to why there is much less enthusiasm from the EU Delegations appears in the answer to the question “*in general, what have been your experiences in implementing your project with EC funds?*,” where 69.3% of UNDP Country Offices had a “positive” or “very positive” experience. On the EU side, only 44.4% of respondents reported a “positive” or “very positive” experience.

Why these differences in perception? There are clearly a number of implementation challenges and difficulties that are faced during the implementation of the EC-funded, UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects, which, the evidence suggests, stem from a number of factors:

1. Electoral assistance projects, as described by the Project Identification Fiches and eventual ProDocs and Contribution Agreements, are often, by necessity, finalised before the electoral assistance teams arrive on the ground (sometimes months later), and, sometimes, more importantly, before senior staff in the electoral management body are in place, or before a final elections budget has been drafted or submitted to the national funding agency (usually Treasury or the Finance Ministry). As such, and in spite of the efforts of the Joint Task Force (and the UN EAD Needs Assessment Missions), the programming documents that come out of the NAMs of EAD and the JTF Joint Formulation Missions, including the ProDoc and the eventual Contribution Agreement, are sometimes drafted with anticipated areas of support, which are often altered – sometimes significantly – once the key personnel are in place. Sometimes the true needs only present themselves once the project has commenced activity. The arrival of the Programme Management Unit/Electoral Assistance Teams, and the commencement of implementation of activities, often throw up issues that were not

envisaged at the time of the project design. It is the Contribution Agreement, however, that the UNDP team get monitored against by the EU Delegation and other donors.

2. Other difficulties surround the thorny issue of progress reporting and visibility. In such technically complex and politically fast-moving realms as elections, a realm in which deadlines often cannot be missed, PMUs can often seem focused, first and foremost, on getting the job done, to the detriment of their responsibilities to report to donors on progress in the project's implementation.
3. Furthermore, the DEX modality, by retaining the procurement and budgetary execution function in the hands of UNDP, tends to occasionally exclude electoral management bodies in the overall donor liaison/budget discussion. A further exclusion of national stakeholders takes place due to the manner in which national funding, which often complements the donor funds in the electoral basket fund, is applied to the overall electoral budget. Due to the complexities of cost-sharing, and the sometimes unreliability of national funds to materialise, particularly towards the start of a process, what tends to happen is that UNDP agrees with the electoral management body which of the budget lines, from the final elections budget (where one exists), the national funds will support. This invariably includes all national staff salaries, plus other running costs of pre-existing EMB commitments (e.g. rent of regional offices, etc.). The following consequences tend to occur:
 - a) Although often frustrated at a lack of involvement in the management and execution of donor funds, the electoral management body tends to view UNDP as fully responsible alone for reporting to the donors (and themselves, in the Steering Committee) on the donor funds;
 - b) The electoral management bodies have no incentive to "reign in costs" on the items being procured with donor funds from the electoral basket;
 - c) A detailed electoral budget is often not available until after the project has been up and running for a number of months (or sometimes not at all). The Contribution Agreement, however, is "logged" since the start of the project, and indicators have been set according to the budget fields agreed in the CA. Once the election timetable truly commences, however, and once a detailed elections budget has been agreed that shows national funding lines included, etc., the EMB, and the technical assistance team, tend to work mostly according to the elections budget.
4. In the event where an overall elections budget does not materialise, either due to a) a lack of resources/time/capacity in the EMB to produce it, or b) a desire, on the part of the EMB, not to make the budget available to the donors (or indeed any other non-EMB stakeholders), there often develops a lack of clarity of how much resources the electoral management body actually *needs* from the donors, and what activity/items, requested from donors, that the national authorities could arguably fund themselves. A long period of uncertainty may develop, characterised by continuous new funding requests from the EMB (attempting to determine the extent of the donor resources

that could be maximised), and repeated transmission to the donors, from UNDP, of the “updated” figures/activity. This can lead to a sometimes unfair perception, in cases where communications between UNDP and the EU Delegation and other donors may not be as desired, that UNDP, through no fault of its own, is not quite “in tune” with the EMB it is funded to assist.

5. There are larger political factors to consider also. UNDP technical assistance teams sometimes find themselves in situations where the capacity of the local electoral management bodies is low. For their part, the EU and the wider international community in any given country, are almost universally anxious that electoral events are held to the highest international standards possible. Technical assistance teams are sometimes faced with a dilemma that in order to try to “ensure” credible elections, they must sacrifice, to a certain degree, the capacity-building agenda,⁷⁷ by relying on their own expertise. The temptation to pursue an “implementation” rather than an “advisory” role is, on occasion, acceded to out of concerns, by the technical advisors, that the electoral management body *itself* may be compromised, to some degree, in its desire to hold credible elections.⁷⁸ Another reason for the tendency to implement, rather than advise, is the late commencement of projects, following late requests for assistance, something the Operational Guidelines themselves note.⁷⁹
6. Another issue is UNDP’s ATLAS electronic project management and financial reporting tool. Notoriously complex, and requiring detailed training and time allocation in order to enter and clear all payments, there is a tendency for UNDP to enter the electoral budget, as detailed in the Contribution Agreement, with different budget lines, more suited to what ATLAS demands. Furthermore, payments need to go through numerous steps in order to be recorded by ATLAS, meaning that at the time of Steering Committee meetings, when donors require up to date expenditure data, the figures available from ATLAS may not, at the time, accurately reflect the reality of what has been spent. Noting that the donors, including the EU, demand reporting along the lines of what is outlined in the CA, and up to date, PMUs have, on some occasions in the past, tended to also keep another set of accounts, for the purposes of financial reporting to the Steering Committees, with all the additional difficulties

⁷⁷ This is a particularly common issue in the issue of electoral data management and IT. In many ACP countries, local capacity for complex database management (i.e. designing and establishing data centres for the processing of multi-million-field voter registration databases, allocating voters to polling stations, processing elections results, etc.) requires a level of IT expertise that is either not available on the local market, or is available only at a remuneration scale that renders the salaries offered by publicly-funded electoral management bodies non-competitive. And many (if not all) donors have strict rules preventing the funding of national staff salaries due to sustainability concerns.

⁷⁸ In the 2007 Parliamentary and Presidential elections in Sierra Leone, which led to the first peaceful transition of power since the country’s independence in 1961 following the victory of the All Peoples’ Congress in both the Parliamentary and Presidential elections (with the election of President Ernest Bai Koroma), two of the five Commissioners on the National Electoral Commission, as well as the Executive Secretary of the Commission, the Director of Administration and Finance, the Chief of Logistics, as well as other Secretariat staff, were suspected of acting in a highly partial manner towards the outgoing government of the Sierra Leone Peoples’ Party. Both Commissioners boycotted the final results announcement. All of these officials, including both Commissioners, were replaced shortly after the elections.

⁷⁹ “The sensitivity of electoral assistance...as well as the frequently complex environment in which it takes place, often means receiving a late request for assistance from the local authorities.”

and time pressures that that entails. The result tends to be dissatisfaction, on the part of the donors, including the EU, with UNDP's reporting systems, a fact reflected in our survey, where 75% of EU Delegations responding claim that "*UNDP reporting on project implementation*" is the "*greatest challenge in the design, formulation and implementation of the project.*" For their part, 61.5% of UNDP Country Offices that responded, reported that "*reporting on project implementation to the EU Delegation*" is the greatest challenge they face in the design, formulation and implementation of the project.

7. The relationship of the electoral experts (often gathered under an "electoral assistance team" or a "Programme Management Unit")⁸⁰ to the UNDP Country Office can be another source of tension. UNDP respondents to our survey state that in 50% of case, the Programme Management Unit (in whose charge the procurement and budget execution task lies) report to the chief electoral expert, often titled the Chief Technical Advisor, of the project, who in turn reports to the UNDP Country Director. In the other 50% of cases, however, the PMU report directly to the Country Director and are not considered part of the electoral assistance team. This is arguably a direct contravention of the Operational Guidelines themselves.⁸¹ It is an issue that requires clarity, as the UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide appears to contradict itself when stating who is the "head" of the electoral assistance project.⁸² As if to drive home the point, 37% of our UNDP survey respondents stated that the procurement function was "part of the technical assistance team" and another 27% said procurement was "under the PMU." It would appear from this evidence, and other field examples, that the PMUs are sometimes separate from the Technical Assistance teams and working to different reporting channels.⁸³ A consequence of this is that the PMU can then consider itself not to be bound by the capacity-building agenda, due to its primary role (procurement and budget execution) in implementing the DEX modality. This has the effect of excluding the electoral management bodies from having a hands-on role in procurement and budget execution, alienating them from UNDP, and creating a cause for discontent which is filtered back to the donors through the Steering Committee and other fora. It is to be assumed from the Operational Guidelines that all personnel from UNDP working on electoral assistance projects, including budget execution and procurement staff, are bound by the capacity-building agenda.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ The Operational Guidelines use both terms, unfortunately only the latter is referred to in the 2007 UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide.

⁸¹ "Preferably, a Technical Assistance team [taking the form of a PMU - programme management unit - or a small group of advisors] should be established...."

⁸² *UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide*, (pg. 116): "*the PMU Manager will head the PMU*" whereas "*...it may be advisable...for there to be a Chief Technical Advisor supported by a Project Manager*" (pg. 65).

⁸³ One respondent to the survey asked "Clarification: Chief Electoral Officer or Chief Technical Advisor or Chief Technical Expert? In my experience, each institution brings in its "chief". AS for the UNDP PMU, it reported to the Project Manager (and UNDP CTA) who in turn reported to the Country Director and (matrix!!) to the UN Chief Electoral Officer. Easy!" In Sierra Leone in 2007, the PMU worked out of a separate premises from the Technical Assistance team.

⁸⁴ "All projects will adopt a sustainable approach to promote local ownership by enhancing the domestic capacity to administer electoral processes and consolidate developments in democratisation."

To summarise, the EU Delegation respondents to our survey, in 44.4% of cases, agreed that EC-UNDP partnership in electoral assistance “*can create a large international element in an electoral process that can undermine national ownership.*” (The corresponding figure for UNDP Country Offices was 28.5%). Some responses to our survey, from EU Delegations, elaborate the frustrations during the implementation of the projects:

- a) “*National ownership is undermined by UNDP procurement rules, a massive UNDP TA component that focuses on doing the job rather than on a transfer of skill, no sensitisation to cost-effective, local sustainable interventions, no effective inclusion of local institutions into the project dynamics (project design, cost-effective budget, fund raising, planning, reporting against indicators).*”
- b) “*The EC/UNDP partnership is creating a sort of monopoly de facto which is not justified in terms of efficiency/effectiveness of the UNDP intervention which is not cost-effective and country tailored.*”
- c) “*UNDP measures its performance in terms of budget consumption instead of results delivery approach. Furthermore while the EC has a long-term vision which aims to build the capacity building of the local electoral institutions, UNDP showed evident weaknesses in providing effective and sustainable capacity building support to the local EMBs.*”

Regardless of the validity or otherwise of these concerns (and accusations), it is fair to ask whether the lessons learned from these implementation difficulties are being addressed adequately in either the JTF Coordination Unit, BDP or EAD. Although individual evaluations of projects (particularly the larger ones) are commissioned,⁸⁵ a) the very expression of such implementation difficulties by EU staff, and other interlocutors, and b) the recent examples of the EU Delegations contracting other implementing partners to implement their electoral assistance project,⁸⁶ would appear to suggest that the difficulties are not being addressed to the level required and possible pre-emptive solutions fed into the design of new projects.

Given the demand on the Task Force (both AIDCO E4 and UNDP) to provide assistance for the formulation of new projects and the smoothing of the projects through the approval phase, there is a constant need to focus on new projects, and subsequently a lack of proper follow-up with projects once they have entered the implementation phase (there is also, it is reported by some interlocutors, a certain resistance from some UNDP Country Offices to follow up missions from the JTF once the contribution from agreement with the EC is signed); a “weakness” of the Partnership and the JTF noted in the SWOT analysis: “*Limited human and financial resources to follow up on ongoing operations leading to a ‘fire-fighting’ approach when problems eventually emerge at field level*” and “*Inadequate possibilities to monitor take stock of and integrate lessons learned into the formulation of new projects and programmes.*” There would appear little doubt that the lack of adequate follow-up represents a gap in the Operational Guidance work of the Partnership and the Task Force. Scope exists for a greater focus on the implementation challenges to projects once they commence, and this could be addressed in three ways:

⁸⁵ For example, the recent evaluation of the UNDP ELECT project in Afghanistan, carried out by 4 external experts commissioned by UNDP within weeks of the flawed elections.

⁸⁶ For example the contracting of a private sector company (Transtec) to implement the €4m project in Lebanon in 2009 and the contracting of DRI to implement the parliamentary oversight of the Election Commission project in Pakistan in 2010.

- a) Implementation of the GPECS country-level component to allow for the new Regional GPECS Electoral Advisors and Electoral Procurement Specialist to follow implementation of projects more closely once they commence with a view to “stepping in” to address implementation challenges as they surface;
- b) The engagement, by the EU Delegations themselves, of external experts with close links to the JTF Coordination Unit, the GPECS advisors, BDP and EAD. They would be deployed on follow-up missions that would address communication and implementation challenges, addressing reporting issues, and arrange for the refocusing of the project wherever necessary, and;
- c) the inclusion in knowledge products developed by the Joint Task Force of individual case studies that focus specifically on **implementation challenges that are likely to be faced in other projects**, with suggested solutions.

DRAFT

Chapter 4 – Inter-Institutional Relations

At the global level, there are differences in perception between UNDPA/EAD, UNDP BDP and the JTF Coordination Unit/UNDP Brussels on where the latter “fits in” and the limits to what implementation of its mandate should be. Although some Brussels-based interlocutors argued that the differences were “internal cuisine” and of minor concern to the overall direction of the Partnership, the reality appears more serious. “New York” (including BDP, a member of the Joint Task Force) appears to have some concerns with the JTF Coordination Unit/UNDP Brussels that require addressing. And the concerns appear to be focused around the following:

1. The entry into knowledge-producing activity encroaches onto the policy development role that is the preserve of both EAD and BDP and such knowledge-production also creates a “knowledge bank” of best practice in project implementation that should be the preserve of EAD and BDP within the UN;
2. Deployment of Joint Formulation Missions of the Joint Task Force, sometimes in a timeframe shortly after the deployment of a Needs Assessment/Formulation Mission of EAD/BDP, undercuts EAD and may unwittingly associate the UN too closely with one donor, thus violating the independence of the UN.

Both of these tensions have been exacerbated by the decision to base the new GPECS project – a BDP-managed project but its various components implemented by different UNDP bureau, including by UNDP Brussels - in Brussels rather than New York, at the insistence of its donor (the Government of Spain), due to the need to coordinate the GPECS activity with the activity of the Joint Task Force (approximately half the budget of GPECS, some \$21m, is earmarked for country-level support to be coordinated by the Joint Task Force). It seems the GPECS project has become the “tipping point” in this debate, where the knowledge-production element and country-level work of the GPECS, and the likelihood that many interlocutors will eventually view GPECS and the Joint Task Force as one and the same project,⁸⁷ has led to a concern that the JTF Coordination Unit may become a genuine “rival” to BDP and EAD as the UN’s “fountain of knowledge” on electoral expertise,

⁸⁷ The liaison between the GPECS and the Joint Task Force at country level will be of such a degree as to almost represent a merger. The ProDpc states that *“the GPECS will support the work of the Joint Task Force to ensure that country and, in some cases, regional-level projects designed through the country window of the GPECS benefit from the early collaboration of other potential partners such as donors to this Programme. GPECS will support the regionalization of the work of the Task Force through expanding the reach of the JTF with additional staff and consultants based in the Brussels UN/UNDP office. A closer coordination and harmonized cooperation between the JTF and the GPECS advisors in the regional centres would also strengthen the JTF work. Due to the expertise that the JTF has acquired during the last years in the above mentioned focus areas (resource mobilization, operational support, training activities) as well as in the guidance for formulation and implementation of projects and programmes and having in mind the overall benefits to national electoral processes from performance of JTF, the GPECS will deliver the electoral cycle support at the national level drawing on the expertise of the JTF...The Country Component will be coordinated by the Senior Electoral Assistance Advisor (who is also the Coordinator of the Joint EC-UNDP Task Force, including the relevant work of the HQ Policy Specialists and Procurement Specialists.”*

something both BDP and EAD vehemently oppose, and something, they argue, its mandate does not allow for.

Deployment of Joint Formulation Missions of the Joint Task Force

The deployment of an EAD/BDP Needs Assessment/Formulation Mission, and a Joint EC UNDP Formulation Mission of the Joint Task Force, often in a timeframe very close to each other, would appear unfortunate but also inevitable for EC resource mobilisation. Although there have only been 14 Joint Formulation Missions of the Task Force across the 25 countries that have benefitted from EC funding in the 2007-2009 period, and they are always deployed only upon the request of EU Delegations (and/or UNDP Country Offices) on the ground, this is a serious concern of EAD and BDP. Although we appreciate the sensitivities of both EAD and BDP in this regard, there is a reality with regards to “operationalising” the eventual projects with EC contributions that cannot be avoided: the EU Delegations, in approximately 70% of cases, appear not ready to make a final commitment of funding without a mission from the Joint Task Force. And without EC funding, it would appear, from the figures demonstrated in Table 5 above, that many UNDP projects would not be viable, or at least would be viable only with significantly reduced activity. Joint Formulation Missions of the Joint Task Force in these cases, therefore, would almost appear to have the same weight operationally as EAD’s focal point mandate has legally: without it there is no project.⁸⁸

The other part of this concern is that the deployment of EAD/BDP Needs Assessment/Formulation Missions either with (which the Operational Guidelines allow for) or close to a JTF Joint Formulation Mission can compromise the independence of the UN by seeming to associate the UN too closely with one donor. In spite of being allowed for under the Operational Guidelines, deployment of a joint EAD NAM/JTF Joint Formulation Mission, carried out twice (in Guinea and Yemen) in 2007, appears to now be off the agenda for the foreseeable future at the insistence of EAD, for this very reason.⁸⁹

This evaluation, however, is not convinced that the presence of a multi-lateral donor such as the European Union (often represented by UNDP) in a Joint Formulation Mission of the JTF close to the deployment of an EAD/BDP Needs Assessment/Formulation Mission, or even as part of that Needs Assessment Mission, *always* compromises the independence of the UN, for one primary reason: in most (if not all) cases, the national stakeholders are already aware that the EU Delegation has funds earmarked for electoral assistance through the Country Strategy Paper, and that UNDP is a possible, or likely, implementing partner. Any concerns that the national stakeholders may have about any potential political agendas of the EU as funders will have surfaced once it becomes known that the EU Delegation has EC funds ready to commit for electoral assistance. The possible presence of EC officials in the EAD NAM should not necessarily further fuel any such concerns. Furthermore, in terms of financing for Joint Formulation Missions, the AIDCO E4 staff have to compete with other staff from their Unit for funds for field missions, which often means that they are unable to participate in the missions, instead giving the blessing of the Commission to the UNDP

⁸⁸ Notable exceptions to this exist. Following the decision of the EC Delegation not to contribute to the UNDP-managed basket fund for the 2009-2010 electoral assistance project in Lebanon, UNDP managed to raise (to date) \$2.7m of the \$4.2m ProDoc from EU member states, Canada and the GPECS project.

⁸⁹ A potential scenario that illuminates these concerns was offered to the evaluators during the course of the interviews conducted: “If we (EAD) went into Georgia to do an NAM with the Russians (as donors), how would that look?”

SEEA or other staff of the JTF Coordination Unit from Brussels to act on behalf of the Task Force. In some cases, therefore, the “donor” mission is actually, in practical terms in terms of personnel, a UNDP mission.

It is beyond the remit of this evaluation to address the DPA/EAD policy of declining to engage in Joint Formulation Missions with the Joint Task Force. Nevertheless the deployment of both EAD NAMs and JTF Joint Formulation Missions, particularly in cases where the EU Delegation appears committed to engaging UNDP as its implementing partners, often in timeframes close to each other, is unfortunate. This matter should be further reviewed during the next revision of the Operational Guidelines scheduled for 2010.

Given the pressures that donors are under to finalise project design documents, however, and given the often regular insistence, on the part of the local EU Delegation, that a Joint Formulation Mission of the Joint Task Force takes place before they will make a final commitment to commit funding, prompts the question of whether the EAD Needs Assessment Missions, deployed primarily to determine whether the UN system should support involvement in an electoral assistance project, which in most cases is to be implemented with donor funds, are always being deployed in timeframes that are conducive to harmonious liaison with donors.⁹⁰ The sometimes late (in the eyes of the EU Delegations) deployment of EAD NAMs would appear, it has been argued during the course of this evaluation, to be related to an under-resourcing of EAD.⁹¹ The deployment of Joint Formulation Missions in close proximity to the EAD NAMs may have more to do with this latter issue than with a deliberate overstepping of its mandate on the part of the JTF Coordination Unit

Joint Task Force knowledge-production activity

When one reviews, once again, the specific objectives of the EC-UNDP Strategic Partnership Agreement, an evaluator can arrive at no other conclusion than the European Union is a major policy partner of UNDP and is thus perfectly placed to be engaging in knowledge-production and “best practice”-type activity with UNDP:

- to foster ***close collaboration on common policy approaches***, and to ensure a more strategic framework for cooperation at all levels between the European Commission and the UNDP;
- to facilitate the joint identification of programmes in the areas covered by the partnership;
- to ***enhance knowledge sharing*** with a view to fostering improved co-ordination and synergies in the field, and to ***help support best practice***; and:

⁹⁰ The late (in the eyes of the EU Delegation) deployment of the NAM to the Central African Republic in 2009 illustrates this dilemma. EAD felt that there should not be a NAM before the electoral management body was established. By the time the NAM took place, the timeframe for the holding of the elections was so short that the EU Delegation did not feel that it could programme funds quick enough through the quality support directorate mechanism.

⁹¹ An issue referred to in the 2008 General Assembly Resolution A/RES/62/150 “*Strengthening to the role of the UN in enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratisation:*” “*Recalls the establishment by the Secretary general of the UN Trust Fund for Electoral Assistance, and, bearing in mind that the Fund is currently close to depletion, calls upon Member States to consider contributing to the Fund....Requests the Secretary-General to provide the Electoral Assistance Division with adequate human and financial resources to allow it to carry out its mandate...*”

- to build on each others' comparative advantage, particularly to advance development effectiveness of the actions of both institutions.

The only issue, therefore, would appear to be whether the Joint Task Force, alongside BDP, is the UNDP body that should be doing it. Although the respective mandates of EAD and BDP clearly assign those bodies the policy-producing arms of the UN system, this evaluation also finds the activities of the JTF Coordination Unit to be completely consistent with both the specific mandate assigned to it by the Operational Guidelines and by the wider spirit of both the Guidelines themselves and the Strategic Partnership Agreement, which calls for both policy dialogue and “enhanced programme collaboration at...(the)...**global, regional** and country levels.” (our italics). We find nothing in the activities of the JTF Coordination Unit that steps beyond its mandate as determined by the Operational Guidelines. It would appear, therefore, that it is the Operational Guidelines themselves that are at the heart of the differences of views between “Brussels” and “New York,” which, considering that they were reviewed following the first two year period of their implementation as recently as 2008, can be explained by the “GPECS effect.”

It is too early in the evolution of the GPECS project to speculate on whether the concerns of BDP and EAD are valid. It would appear inevitable, however, that the country-level component of the GPECS project, the co-location of the GPECS Programme Management Unit in the same premises of the JTF Coordination Unit, and the GPECS contribution to the functioning and activities of the Joint Task Force, will create a perception, in the minds of many stakeholders, that GPECS and the Joint Task Force are one and the same project, which, again, BDP and EAD oppose. An unfortunate consequence of how these concerns manifest themselves is the cooling of relations between the relevant UN electoral assistance bodies, as evidenced in the occasional non-promotion of the Partnership and the Joint Task Force, which would not appear to be in UN/UNDP's interest.

Clear evidence of this is in the recent *Democratic Governance Reader* published by BDP and Bureau for Management in November 2009, which “*is intended as a single volume reference tool on UNDP's approach to democratic governance...*” There are 24 pages documenting the work of UNDP in the area of electoral assistance, including a section on the “UNDP approach to partnerships:” “*Internationally, UNDP works with leading institutions in the field such as IDEA, IFES, EISA, Elections Canada, the Instituto Federal Electoral de Mexico and UNDESA through the partnership on Administration and Cost of Elections (ACE). In 2007, UNDP also joined BRIDGE which is a partnership of the Australian Electoral Commission, EAD, IDEA and IFES.*” There is no mention of the Strategic Partnership Agreement with UNDP's largest donor and major policy partner (the EU), and no mention of the body (the Joint EC-UNDP Task Force) through which that Partnership is operationalised. Later on, the *Reader* goes on to state that “*there are a number of national and international organisations which provide assistance and support to electoral processes, many having partnership arrangements with UNDP.*” Sixth on the list, after EAD, IDEA, IFES, EISA and the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, is the European Union, where the Operational Guidelines are mentioned, somewhat incorrectly, as a means “*to facilitate collaboration at country level*” (no mention of the work of the Joint Task Force, the support to

ACE, etc.).⁹² The Reader mentions the Joint Training Initiative, also described, somewhat incorrectly, as training to “*field staff from both organisations in delivering together effective electoral assistance.*” Considering that the EU is UNDP’s largest (€614m) and most reliable donor, and a policy partner with whom, through the Partnership and the Task Force, UNDP has produced lessons learned publications, organised numerous training initiatives, etc., this is a considerable understatement. The Joint Task Force does not merit mentioning at all. This is a startling omission.

Future developments

It is also, unfortunately, evidence of a perception which will, if unchecked, encourage some EU interlocutors (as they did during the course of this evaluation) to ask whether it is more accurate to describe the electoral assistance projects as “UNDP projects financed by the EC” or “EC projects implemented by UNDP.” Re-appraisal of the EU’s commitment to UNDP-implemented projects at a country level is likely to increase, with the successful implementation of electoral assistance projects with other partners, but also with other external developments.

Recent changes in the European Union’s external relations policy may have significant changes on the EC-UNDP Partnership in the coming years, particularly at the country-level Operational Guidance work. The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009 has created the European External Access Service (EEAS) (established under the newly-appointed High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy), envisaged to commence activity in April 2010. Two of the Directorates General (DG) of the European Commission that currently deal with external affairs and development cooperation – DG External Relations (RELEX) and DG Development (DEV) – shall make way for the EEAS, many of whose staff shall be appointed by the member states.⁹³ The former Delegations of the European Commission have already been replaced by Delegations of the European Union, and a total of 56 countries – including the vast majority of African countries that make up the chief “target market” for the Joint Task Force’s work, will convert to Embassies of the European Union (replacing Member State national embassies). The former Heads of Delegation of the European Commission – full time Commission staff members – shall be replaced by Ambassadors of the European Union with full diplomatic status. These changes may affect the programming and implementation of electoral assistance projects as the strengthening of the relative position of the member states versus the Commission, including the appointment of a full Ambassador as head of the EU Embassy and continued full approval of all 27 member states for projects approved by the EuropeAid Quality Support Groups, may add a much greater sense of coherence between the development policies, objectives and synergy of both the Commission, EuropeAid, the EU Embassies and the member states, with knock-on effects for electoral assistance projects.

In short, the empowering of the external actions of the Union towards the member states and away from the Commission has, paradoxically, the potential to unify the development cooperation actions of the EU with the member states at country level. This may increase

⁹² It was beyond the remit of this evaluation to assess the level of cooperation that UNDP engages in with IFES, EISA, etc. We believe it safe to assume, however, that the resource value of such cooperation, over the life span of the EC-UNDP Partnership, has not reached 0.5% of the value of the Partnership.

⁹³ The third of the external relations DGs – DG Enlargement – shall still continue to perform its functions.

the possibility that member states will jointly contribute to UNDP-managed basket funds, or not at all, and increases the relative strength of the Joint Task Force to mobilise resources not only from the Commission but from member states as well, particularly as one member state, Spain, has made such a substantial commitment to unifying country-level work with the Joint Task Force through the GPECS.

This is the context to the debate of where the Joint Task Force “fits in.” Furthermore, the Lisbon changes also introduce two new implementation options; the direct funding of electoral management bodies themselves (such as in the proposed 2010 project in Ghana) and the possibility for individual member states to implement programmes on behalf of the Commission, both of which have the potential to move the Commission further away from UNDP as implementing partner (approval of which was included in the review of the Operational Guidelines in 2008). Using implementing partners other than UNDP is something that is likely to increase, also as the institutional memory and lessons learned of these projects within the European Commission increases as the number of projects increases, in spite of the considerable cost increases of using, in particular, private sector partners (costs, in this regard, can rise to as much as 30%%, compared to the 7% GMS fee charged by UNDP for administering the projects).

DRAFT

Conclusions and Recommendations

Since the EC and UNDP Partnership in Electoral Assistance formally commenced in 2004, there has been a huge increase in the amount of EC financial support for UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects. In the seven years from 1995-2003, €84.8m was channelled to UNDP (average €9.4m per year) in 17 countries. In the 2004-2006 period, this figure rose to €350.5m in 28 countries (of which €165m was committed to one country, DR Congo). In the 2007-2009 period, €196m of funds were channelled from the EC to UNDP in 25 countries, representing a yearly average of some €64m. A further €61m worth of projects are in the identification/formulation phase in early 2010 in 10 countries, as well as a €6.1m regional project for the African Lusophone countries and Timor-Leste.

Although it is not possible to determine how the exact “leverage value” of the Joint Task Force, in terms of whether a lesser amount of EC funds would have been channelled to UNDP in the event that the Task Force was *not* created, is not entirely relevant, given that the Partnership, and the Task Force that followed it, were set up precisely in anticipation of and as a means to “lubricate” a large increase in funding. Nevertheless, we believe it is safe to assume that, *on top of* a repositioning of the importance of electoral assistance work as part of the wider support to democratic governance by the Delegations of the European Union,⁹⁴ that the communication channels, level of trust and expertise that the Joint Task Force has brought to the EC-UNDP Partnership has been responsible for a significant increase in the EC funding of UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects.

In spite of the success of the Task Force in terms of mobilising resources and expediting the *commencement* of electoral assistance projects through assisting the EC and UNDP at country level and HQ level with finalisation of the project documents and assisting them through the EC and UNDP institutional programming machines, there remain significant challenges in the management of the projects during the implementation phase that require a level of follow-up from either the Joint Task Force Coordination Unit, BDP or EAD that, due to resource constraints and the constant need to focus on new projects in other beneficiary countries, is at present lacking. This should be addressed primarily by the EU Delegations themselves, through the engagement of external consultants with close links to the Joint Task Force and the new GPECS Regional Advisors, but especially via the GPECS Regional Advisors themselves, who will also become UNDP members of the Joint Task Force. The experts, and the GPECS advisors, would be deployed on follow-up missions in order to provide assistance on overcoming both implementation problems and the refocusing of the project, where necessary.

These experts, and the GPECS advisors, would also work on addressing communications between the EU Delegations and the Country Offices as required, which, on the basis of the views expressed by interlocutors in the course of this research, is a recurring source of tension that centres around certain aspects of UNDP’s performance in managing the projects, primarily in the financial reporting and visibility field. What is considered by EC interlocutors as the poor financial reporting of the UNDP management teams, compounded by the tendency of UNDP to set up their ATLAS reporting programming managing system in

⁹⁴ Delegations of the European Commission are, since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009, officially titled Delegations of the European Union, and are referred to as EU Delegations in this report when speaking in the present or future tense.

a manner that is not conducive to the type of reporting that the EU Delegations require and which the Operational Guidelines require them to provide, appears to fuel a genuine issue of differences in perception, at country level, as to the level to which the EU Delegation should be involved (or not) in the day-to-day monitoring and management of the project. It would appear that the Operational Guidelines are not known to or implemented by UNDP project management staff to the level they should be at country level. For their part, the EU Delegations often lack the human resources to engage operationally, and thus their influence appears to refocus itself on efforts to extract progress reports strictly according to the parameters of the signed project documents, which is often problematic in such a fast-paced and political field vulnerable to “external implementation shocks” as elections, and where needs constantly appear and change during the course of an electoral process.

An additional problem is the tendency, under the DEX modality, not to extend the capacity building agenda to the area of budget control, donor liaison and procurement, which has an effect of building artificial boundaries between the electoral advisors that work on a daily basis with the electoral management bodies, and the programme managers whose work is primarily with the UNDP Country Office, to the neglect of their relationship with the electoral management bodies. This regularly creates a feeling, on the part of electoral management bodies, that they are not as involved on matters of budget and procurement that they should be, frustrations that are fuelled back to the Delegations and other donors in Steering Committee fora, further creating a perception that UNDP is underperforming in its project management role. The standard model for implementation should see the electoral assistance team/PMU reporting to the UNDP Country Director and headed by the Chief Technical Advisor (where exists) or, where there is no CTA, to the Programme Manager, where PMU staff responsible for procurement, budgeting and donor liaison are guided by the same capacity-building agenda as other advisors, and where the principles of DEX implementation can be protected by retaining *final* decision-making power on budgetary matters with the Country Office.

The Joint Task Force has also been extremely active in conceiving and delivering training events for electoral practitioners, electoral management bodies, relevant staff from both the EC and UNDP, and other international partners in the field of electoral assistance. In spite of the recent branching into thematic training (with the successful holding of highly relevant training in the area of the role of ICT in electoral process), the joint trainings would benefit from a fresh revamp centred on two principles: making the trainings more interactive, with less presentations and more group work, and by “compartmentalising” not only in terms of the themes of the training, but also in terms of the target groups. At present the joint trainings represent more of a networking opportunity, with a “conference” feel, than training per se. Although the networking element is a success in terms of building a more inter-linked electoral practitioner community, and should continue in the form of a yearly Joint Task Force conference, there is a clear need for “back to basics” targeted training in different areas for different target groups: training on FAFA implementation, the EC-UNDP partnership, the Operational Guidelines, project reporting and project management for EC Delegation and UNDP Country Office staff; training on electoral budgeting, donor liaison and procurement for electoral management bodies; and, of course, thematic training along the lines of the recent ICT role training for electoral experts. It is commendable that the GPECS will also facilitate the creation of a support network of universities for knowledge dissemination in effective electoral assistance building on the work of the Joint EC-IDEA-

UNDP Training and of the Joint Task Force. These activities will be implemented through the sub-group on effective electoral assistance of the Train4Dev [Joint Donors' Competence Development Network](#)⁹⁵ (JCDN) given the mandate and membership of this Network.

The huge growth of EC support for UNDP-implemented projects, and the parallel growth of the Task Force itself, has brought to the surface institutional issues within both UNDP itself (UNDP Brussels vis-a-vis BDP) and between UNDP and EAD/DPA that have been exacerbated by the fact that a) the European Commission would appear content with dealing almost exclusively with UNDP Brussels in the implementation of the Partnership, and b) with the onset of the GPECS programme. There is a perception within both the EAD/DPA and UNDP BDP that the success of the JTF Coordination Unit in mobilising resources has both a) fostered a “too cosy” relationship with the European Commission that could have the effect of associating UNDP electoral assistance work too closely with one donor, and b) resulted in the JTF Coordination Unit developing “mission creep” in moving ahead with knowledge producing initiatives that should be the preserve of the UN’s policy-driving arm – EAD and BDP. The Operational Guidelines, however, clearly mandate the Joint Task Force to engage in such activity. And although the deployment of Joint Formulation Missions of the JTF in close proximity to the deployment of a Needs Assessment/Formulation Mission by EAD as the chief UN Focal Point (with BDP) is, unfortunately, this may have more to do with the chronic under-resourcing of EAD than with any deliberate overstepping of responsibilities on the part of the Task Force, and, more importantly, is often inevitable if a contribution from the EC is sought.

This evaluation finds nothing, therefore, in the activities of the JTF Coordination Unit that oversteps its responsibilities as defined by the Operational Guidelines, suggesting that it is the Operational Guidelines themselves that are at issue, seen in a different light in UNDP since the onset of GPECS. The full onset of the GPECS Programme in 2010, and the close relationship that the GPECS programme management team will, of necessity, have with the JTF Coordination Unit, may have a paradoxical effect. On the one hand, the basing of the GPECS programme management team in the same premises of the JTF Coordination Unit and GPPS, the significant country level component of the GPECS, and the support of the GPECS to Joint Task Force activities, will inevitably lead some (or many) stakeholders to view the Joint Task Force and GPECS as one and the same project, but it should also ensure a significant smoothing of the information flow between the JTF Coordination Unit and BDP.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Train 4 DEV is an open forum of development partners and international organizations currently comprising 25 members: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, United Nations, World Bank, ILO, IOM, CEF, OAS and IDEA. The overall objective of the Network is to promote improved aid effectiveness through enhanced donor co-operation in the field of joint competence development and joint training. The network is organized within subgroups. EC, UNDP, IDEA, CIDA, IOM and OAS have joined forces and established a subgroup on effective electoral assistance to carry out training and knowledge dissemination activities. The group is coordinated by the Joint EC UNDP Task Force and the ongoing activities are: Face-to Face Learning, E-Learning Training, ICTs study on civil-voter registration and data transmission.

⁹⁶ It is worth quoting at length from the GPECS ProDoc to highlight some of the management structures that GPECS that, in effect, “merge” it with the Joint Task Force, with regards to the country-level component: “*The Joint Task Force will work in close coordination with, will be supported by and will in turn provide support to the UNDP Regional Centres in Dakar, Johannesburg and Bangkok, which are the frontline providers of Africa and*

The implementation challenges at country level, arguably not fully appreciated in UNDP due to a lack of human resources for follow-up (pre-GPECS) and “energy loss” in disagreeing on the role and mandate of the JTF Coordination Unit, are not insignificant. Unless addressed, they threaten not necessarily the future of the Partnership, but certainly its scope, as the European Commission, with the successful implementation of electoral assistance projects in some countries without UNDP (either with different implementing partners, new procedures allowing for direct funding of Electoral Management Bodies, or the possibility for EU Member States to manage basket funds on behalf of the EC), is likely to continue to source different implementing partners, in spite of the significant cost increases in doing so, as it seeks a more direct and visible policy and implementation role. This will likely benefit the European Commission, lead to a potential loss of visibility, funding, programming and implementation expertise within UNDP, and arguably have a neutral effect on electoral management bodies.

Finally, the success of the EC-UNDP Partnership in Electoral Assistance has mobilised hundreds of millions of euros for electoral assistance projects. From 2007-2009, the average size of the EC contribution to a UNDP-managed basket fund project in a beneficiary country is €7.58m. The projects funded tend to be large scale projects that regularly include support to voter registration activity, provision of polling equipment, funding and resourcing of many operational needs of electoral management bodies including vehicles, computer hardware, electricity generators, etc. The funding of materials that can be quantified in terms of “number of units supplied,” etc., allows for greater accountability and traceability of funds expended. Less quantifiable is electoral assistance support, for example, in terms of political lobbying for electoral legal reform. As part of a wide scale impact assessment of the projects funded by the EC and managed by UNDP (which should be funded and carried out in the latter half of 2010), the issue of the nature of the electoral assistance projects funded should be addressed against the goals and policy of the electoral cycle approach. Is there enough focus, within the electoral cycle, on legal reform? Is there enough work on capacity-building of electoral management bodies in terms of standardised IT training, financial management, reporting and HR policy? This EU study should arguably be accompanied by a further Ten-year Review of UNDP Electoral Assistance, along the lines of the last evaluation published in 2000.

Furthermore, both of these impact assessments should address more fundamental questions about the nature of electoral assistance support. Is the democratic governance agenda of international development policy served if electoral management bodies are assisted in implementing democratic elections by the EC-UNDP Partnership but in a political context where the elected bodies are then left to themselves, or, in many cases, under-

Asia/Pacific regional and country level support and which also represent UNDP as JTF’s members in various JTF activities in the regions. The GPECS will provide further support to the JTF to perform its duties following the revised Operational Guidelines, particularly for formulation missions; joint monitoring and Quality Support Mechanisms; implement research and studies on issues related to the role of the contribution of the EC and EU Member States in UNDP electoral assistance programmes at country level; deliver and further develop training on effective electoral assistance; interact and coordinate with the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network and Training Programme of IFE Mexico; and cooperation with regional institutions.”

perform? Scope exists for electoral assistance projects to be more closely interlinked with parliamentary support projects such as GPPS, and GPECS encourages further liaison. It would seem almost negligent for the EC and UNDP to implement a project designed to elect a parliament in as democratic a manner as possible where the elected parliament then proceeds to govern, due to lack of capacity or parliamentary expertise, in an undemocratic manner. Scope exists to link the provision of electoral assistance with the acceptance, by the beneficiary country, of a project of parliamentary assistance in the EU Country Strategy Paper and the UNDP Multi-Annual Plan. Similarly, support to electoral dispute resolution bodies, either where they are specifically established for the purposes of an electoral event, or permanently established, could benefit from greater support as part of the electoral cycle approach.

As part of the electoral cycle impact assessments, proper analysis also needs to be conducted of likely future developments in the area of technological innovation in voter and civil registration and the legal, political, civil liberties and operational consequences that arise. The introduction of national identity cards with biometric and/or magnetic stripe-enabled features have numerous implications that would lead many electoral assistance (and democratic governance) providers to question whether civil and voter registration processes should be merged. The demise of the Polaroid instance camera has had serious cost implications for active voter registration processes in developing countries and the lack of a portable digital printer alternative does lead one to question whether the interests of either beneficiary nations or donors are served by conducting parallel registrations of both citizens and voters using similar expensive technologies producing similar-type cards. Merging voter and civil registration, however, is an example of where the boundaries of electoral assistance work are being pushed. In this instance, towards the realm of citizen registry, census and population movement control. Although this process may be inevitable, electoral assistance projects that fund such technological innovations need to similarly ensure that adequate resources are provided within the project to advise EC/UNDP/electoral management bodies on anticipating the political challenges of implementing such systems (what if ethnicity is recorded? Will nationwide electronic civil registries create political minorities where none today exist?⁹⁷ Analysis of IT issues in electoral assistance is a specific element of the global component of GPECS and is to be encouraged.

In short, there is a need to address the fundamental nature of the electoral assistance support that the EC has provided for UNDP to implement at country level. The proposed extensive impact assessments could address some of the issues that, due to time constraints, this evaluation was not able to address:

- a) Is there a reason why some countries have availed of EC-funded, UNDP-implemented electoral assistance projects, but other countries, in very similar stages of their democratic development, have not? Is the process entirely demand driven, reflecting what is programmed in the Country Strategy Papers and Country Programme Action Plans?

⁹⁷ For example, no census has taken place in Lebanon since 1932 due to a fear of the political consequences of learning of the exact confessional make-up of the country for the confessional power-sharing arrangements. Plans to computerise the civil registry, included in the UNDP ProDoc for the 2009-2010 electoral assistance project, have to address the consequences of creating a national registry that may be able to calculate confessional breakdowns of the population.

- b) Are projects being designed, and more importantly, funds committed, taking into account the *financial need* on the part of the beneficiary country, or the political desire of the EU and UNDP to support the electoral process? Where, along a continuum, does the answer lie to the question: does the EC-UNDP Partnership assist countries and electoral management bodies that want to be supported (demand driven), or where the Partnership wants to support them (supply driven)?
- c) What constitutes “value for money” in an EC-UNDP electoral assistance project? Is there a deadweight effect (improved electoral processes that would have happened anyway without the EC-UNDP support) and/or a displacement effect (for example, poor performance of parliament after an EC-UNDP assisted improved parliamentary electoral process, that has the effect of prompting citizens to ask whether the improved elections led to any positive changes in their daily lives, and thus affect future voter apathy and turnout)?

Recommendations

1. Greater effort must be focused on ensuring that electoral assistance projects implemented by UNDP and financed primarily by the EC are implemented in a manner as consistent as possible with the signed Contribution Agreements. In order to achieve this, it is necessary for more regular follow-up of projects to take place beyond the design and formulation phase. It is recommended that the EC deploys greater resources notably through setting up a formal network including expert staff now posted in EU delegations, but also in the form of a greater engagement by external consultants by the EU Delegations themselves. These extra resources, as well as the extra UNDP resources (in the form of regional GPECS advisors), should contribute to greater follow-up at country level. The nature of the follow-up missions should be to review implementation as per the signed Contribution Agreements, to re-focus the projects where necessary (not only in day-to-day activities but in the programming documents also), to make alterations to the agreed performance indicators, to thrash out progressing reporting difficulties, and to create a fora for the EU Delegation and UNDP, outside of the Steering Committee, to discuss implementation challenges.
2. As a matter of policy, all electoral assistance project staff of the PMU or advisors, should be embedded within the electoral management body or, if not possible, as close to the EMB as to facilitate daily contact. A twinning system targeting capacity development should be considered as a standard approach.
3. All electoral assistance advisors engaged by UNDP on electoral assistance projects with EC-funding should be provided with a copy of, and briefed on, the Operational Guidelines, preferably in a joint EU Delegation-UNDP Country Office presentation facilitated by the Joint Task Force, either in country or during face to face training or specifically dedicated regional trainings.
4. Both EU Delegation Task Managers and UNDP Country Office Programme Officers with respective responsibility for the electoral assistance project, should undergo

day-long training sessions on each other's reporting systems as they pertain to the electoral assistance project and also to the FAFA and the Operational Guidelines.

5. All Project Steering and Technical Committees should study, and discuss, the Operational Guidelines during one of the first Steering or Technical Committee meetings. Other donors should be invited to also participate in the discussion.
6. In order to ensure that capacity-building agenda is enshrined throughout the electoral assistance project, the Programme Management Unit for each electoral assistance project implemented under the DEX modality, regardless of the size of the electoral assistance team, should be headed by a Chief Technical Advisor/Programme Manager, but where both positions are deployed, the Chief Technical Advisor should have overall management responsibility.⁹⁸ For the duration of the project, all electoral staff whose positions are funded by the electoral basket fund should report primarily to the Chief Technical Advisor, and through him/her, to the UNDP Country Director. All PMU procurement and budget execution staff should be evaluated against the capacity-building objectives of the project.
7. All UNDP-contracted electoral staff with responsibility for budget execution, as well as progress and financial reporting, should have either experience of implementing EC-funded projects at a senior management level, or, where not available, undergo full training on EC financial reporting procedures as part of their induction process (including the FAFA, the joint EC-UN reporting and visibility guidelines, etc.)
8. Recognising the political sensitivities of electoral assistance projects in the political and social development of beneficiary states, EU Delegations, and UNDP Country Offices, should endeavour to ensure, wherever possible, that Task Managers and Programme Advisors assigned the electoral assistance project brief are of a level of seniority in age and experience suitable for engaging with senior government officials and senior members of electoral management bodies.
9. The relevant EC and UNDP services, including the JTF Coordinating Unit, BDP, EAD/DPA, and the GPECS programme management team, should maintain detailed databases on all electoral assistance projects funded and implemented across all years. These database should contain, at the very least, data on the a) the value of the final UNDP ProDoc, b) the value of the EC contribution indicated in the Contribution Agreement signed by the EC and UNDP, c) the value and source of all other funds from other donors, d) data (where available), on non-basket fund assistance provided to the electoral management bodies or civil society by other unilateral donors, e) the total amount of funds finally raised during the course of the project and their source, f) the total amount of funds expended under the project by the end date of the project's implementation, g) the name of the Chief Technical

⁹⁸ This may represent a change in the current arrangements, where, according to the *UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide*, "the PMU Manager will head the PMU" (pg. 116) although the Guide also states that "...it may be advisable...for there to be a Chief Technical Advisor **supported by a Project Manager**" (pg. 65).

Advisor/Project Manager, and, where feasible, h) data on performance under the agreed performance indicators for the project.

10. The successful joint trainings in effective electoral assistance should continue but in the following format. An annual 5-day conference on Effective Electoral Assistance of the EC-UNDP Partnership in Electoral Assistance should be hosted each year, in Brussels, in November, by the Joint Task Force. Invitees should continue to include representatives of electoral management bodies, EU Delegations, UNDP Country Offices and UNDP electoral assistance teams that are involved in the design, formulation and implementation of electoral assistance over the calendar year. Task Force members/staff, as well as senior staff of the Bureau of Development Policy, the DPA Electoral Assistance Division, and Brussels-based EC and UNDP staff, should be invited. The agenda for the Conference should allow for reflection on implementation achievements and challenges at country level that can be extrapolated to serve as lessons learned for all projects, as well as presentations on future developments.
11. One/two other thematic joint trainings on effective electoral assistance should also be hosted within each year, along the lines of the recently-held training on the use of ICT in electoral processes. One of these thematic trainings should focus exclusively on the FAFA, project design, formulation, implementation and reporting, and be held exclusively for EU Delegation and UNDP Country Office staff. Where possible, these trainings could be organised on a regional basis, using the UNDP Regional Centres and GPECS Electoral Advisors as hosts. The other training could address a thematic issue (e.g. linking electoral assistance with parliamentary development support and other tranches of democratic governance interventions, the technical, legal and political issues surrounding future linking of voter registration, civil registration, census conducting and population movement control, etc). These trainings should, as a target audience, include representatives of electoral management bodies, civil registration authorities, etc.
12. The successful introduction of the e-learning module on effective electoral assistance should be built upon. Plans to implement elearning modules on: FAFA applied to electoral assistance; elections and technology and elections and conflict management are to be commended. Scope exists to enhance the e-learning experience by introducing, in association with IDEA and the ACE Practitioners Network, a similar e-learning DVD/online resource dedicated entirely to exercises/scenarios on, e.g. the design of electoral operational plans, the design of electoral management bodies, appropriate electoral systems for post-conflict societies, scenarios for registering voters, etc. Initially, these modules could be produced without requiring recourse to human resources to grade exams, etc. Eventually, however, through the engagement of appropriate educational institutions (with potential funding from GPECS), scope exists to introduce elements of qualitative questioning/open-ended answers into both the existing module and future modules.
13. As part of a wide scale impact assessment of the projects funded by the EC in the context of the EC-UNDP Partnership, which should be funded and carried out in the

latter half of 2010 under the auspices of the EC, the issue of the nature of the electoral assistance projects funded should be addressed against the goals and policy of the electoral cycle approach. In terms of the projects funded since the commencement of the Partnership, for example, has there been enough focus, within the electoral cycle, on legal reform? Capacity-building of electoral management bodies in terms of, for example, standardised IT training, financial management, reporting and HR policy?⁹⁹ These issues could also be addressed in a global Ten-year Review of UNDP Electoral Assistance (along the lines of the evaluation published in 2000).

14. Scope exists to link the provision of electoral assistance with the acceptance, by the beneficiary country, of a project of parliamentary assistance in the EU Country Strategy Paper and the UNDP Multi-Annual Plan. Similarly, support to electoral dispute resolution bodies, either where they are specifically established for the purposes of an electoral event, or permanently established, could benefit from greater support as part of the electoral cycle approach. In this context the collaboration and synergies between the Joint Task Force, GPECS and the UNDP Global Programme on Parliamentary Strengthening is to be welcomed.
15. Electoral assistance projects that fund technological innovations need to ensure that adequate resources are provided within the project to advise EC/UNDP/electoral management bodies on anticipating the political challenges of implementing such systems. In this light, the production of the upcoming “Operational Paper of the Joint Task Force in collaboration with International IDEA on the Procurement Aspects of ICTs in Electoral Processes: the Specific Case of Voter Registration” is to be welcomed. Also to be commended is the planned collaboration between the EC, UNDP and IDEA for the production of a handbook on Civil and Voter Registration.
16. The first post-GPECS review of the Operational Guidelines, scheduled for late 2010, need to address the fundamental differences in perception between BDP, UNDP Brussels and DPA/EAD on whether the Guidelines themselves “push” the JTF Coordination Unit into engaging in activity that BDP feels that is its preserve, and how the Guidelines will interact with GPECS, which institutionalises and strengthens further the Joint Task Force. The debate must be tempered by realism, however. The EC is UNDP’s largest and most reliable donor in the electoral assistance area and there could be an increased pivotal role that the EC-UNDP Partnership, and the Joint Task Force, could play in the context of the EU Lisbon Treaty where a greater synergies between the EC, EU Council and EU Member States is demanded in external actions, especially development cooperation. Attempts to “pull-back” the work of the Joint Task Force and its Coordination Unit from what the Operational Guidelines allow will likely lead to the EU moving more towards implementation of electoral assistance projects with other implementing partners. A yearly dedicated meeting between the EC, BDP, GPECS and EAD/DPA on the specific operationalisation of the EC-UNDP Partnership on Electoral Assistance, as well as monthly coordination teleconferences, should be formalised. This could contribute to

⁹⁹ These issues will be discussed at an OECD DAC conference on international electoral support to be held in Paris on 1 March, 2010, with the support of the Joint Task Force, DFID, International IDEA, and EAD/DPA.

smoothing the misunderstandings related to the EC development cooperation mechanisms and electoral assistance and to the role of JTF Coordination Unit vis a vis BDP (also part of the Joint Task Force) and EAD. Regional thematic seminars dedicated to electoral assistance between EU Delegation Ambassadors and UNDP Country Directors should be piloted (along the lines of the high level review of the EC UNDP Cooperation in the ECOWAS region in December 2008 in Dakar).

Annex 1 – Terms of reference for the evaluation

Annex 2 – List of interviewees

Annex 3 – Stakeholders questionnaire.

DRAFT