

Global Project for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS) - Phase II 2015 -2017
PAC Meeting Minutes
(5 March 2015)

Participants:

- Stan Nkwain (BPPS), Chair
- Patrick Keuleers (G&P, BPPS)
- Niall McCann (G&P, BPPS)
- Linda Maguire (RBA)
- Samuel Rizk (RBAS)
- Ana Maria Diaz (RBLAC)
- Robert Juhkam (BERA)
- Corrado Scognamillo (CRU)
- Hideko Hadzialic (BOM)
- Suki Beavers (G&P, BPPS)
- Aleida Ferreyra (G&P, BPPS)
- Lea Zoric (G&P, BPPS)
- Diego Antoni (Gender Team, BPPS)
- Chitose Noguchi (Global Programme, BPPS)
- Margaret Chi (Global Programme, BPPS)
- Li Peng (Global Programme, BPPS)

Minutes:

Stan Nkwain opened the meeting by indicating that the objective of the PAC meeting is to have a higher level discussion about global project document, since the project document has gone through substantive revision during the formulation process. He indicated that the GPECS Phase II project document is well conceived and aligned with the focus of the Strategic Plan and noted the significant level of consultation that has gone into the formulation of the project. He welcomed the fact that regional components of the project document are aligned with Regional Programmes, and were developed by Regional Electoral Advisors in the respective regional centres.

Patrick Keuleers indicated that GPECS Phase II incorporates recommendations from past evaluations and lessons learned exercises, especially with regards to integrating electoral assistance more into democratic governance and peacebuilding programming; ensuring that the electoral cycle is properly applied; connecting UNDP's principles-based electoral framework more closely with Country Office realities; advocating more consistently for cost-effective and sustainable technological solutions, and; improving internal efficiencies. He indicated that Phase II of GPECS comes at a time in which the organization is better prepared to accommodate the suggested inter-linkage between UNDP's electoral work and the wider context of inclusive governance programming. The fact that the restructuring process has combined governance and peacebuilding into one bureau, and elections is now part of the Inclusive Political Processes team, provides the institutional incentives for the integration of electoral policy and programming into broader governance and conflict prevention.

Niall McCann indicated that Phase II of GPECS is aligned with the new the Strategic Plan and will be organized under four interlinked components: global, regional, national and gender mainstreaming, as in the previous phase. The largest parts of the programme will be the regional components, which are closely aligned to the regional programmes and have been developed by the different Regional Electoral Advisors in the RSCs. He

highlighted that the global component of GPECS Phase II will concentrate on cutting-edge knowledge products that advance the electoral cycle approach by identifying gap areas such as civil and voter registries, fraud detection, and identity management in the biometric age, and the cost and sustainability of electoral processes. He also stressed that GPECS second phase will continue to have a strong gender focus; gender mainstreaming will not only be one of the four components, but also will also be an important issue within the other three components. Finally, he indicated that at the moment, the only resources available for GPECS II are coming from a SIDA contribution to GPECS I signed for the period of 2014 - June 2016 for the GPECS Regional Component of Arab States. At the time it was agreed that any balance of funds under GPECS I would support the transition period from GPECS I to GPECS II and would not solely be utilized for regional activities in the Arab States.. The rest of the budget needs to be mobilized. The programme will allow for earmarked and open contributions and will feature a mechanism that allows donor contributions to be channeled to specific countries and features a fast-track mechanism to fund these electoral processes in very short timeframes.

Samuel Rizk indicated that RBAS considers the proposed second phase of GPECS as a good project, which adequately reflects learning from the previous phase with good situation analyses, closely aligned with the priorities of their region. He indicated that events in the Arab states clearly highlighted the role of elections within the broader political process. He asked how the programme is envisioning to ensure that UNDP Country Offices have the capacity to deal with the big challenges that they face in dealing with issues electoral and constitutional processes, given the most funds will go to the regional level.

Robert Juhkam indicated that BERA welcomed the fact that the programme focuses on electoral cycle support instead of single election events, and stresses UNDP's clear niche in supporting the long term capacity needs of electoral management bodies. He also expressed appreciation for the project document envisioning seed money to kick start country level electoral projects. He noted that the project document tailors each regional component to the different regional realities. He pointed out that there are several issues that affect UNDP electoral support, such as the political will and the culture of compromise in parliament, which are issues that need to be considered when supporting elections and EMs. He furthermore asked about the strategy for resource mobilization.

Ana Maria Diaz indicated that the GPECS Phase II project document is well aligned with the RBLAC regional priorities. She asked how the funding gap could affect the implementation and which areas would be prioritized in case the proposed budget cannot be fully mobilized. She indicated that although guidance and publication are welcome and, the programme should consider further how to develop the capacity of the country offices to assimilate policy and guidance and therefore place more emphasis on dissemination and capacity development. She also indicated that, regarding the implementation, it would be important to emphasize how the Regional Electoral Advisors would coordinate their work with the country support advisors and other areas of work such as gender.

Linda Maguire pointed out that RBA welcomes phase II of GPECS since the African region strongly benefitted from phase I in terms of expenditures and advisory services received. She also indicated that phase I regional components had a very positive impact on African countries through the regional and HQ advisory services and learning and seed funding at the country level. For this reason, she indicated that RBA welcomes GPECS Phase II with its strong emphasis on the regional components since this clearly has a strong impact on national projects. She also acknowledged the linkages of GPECS Phase II with the regional programme. The budget-gap is a concern and she asked if there are any potential donors lined up for the programme. She further asked how Phase II will use the policy envelope to innovate. She indicated that linking electoral assistance to the broader

governance agenda through integrating it within the Inclusive Political Processes strategy is a positive feature, but that synergies should also be sought with the Responsive and Accountable Institutions team, especially related to rule of law and public administration. She suggested adding a couple of paragraphs on how all the global, global, and country interventions are glued together. She stressed RBA's appreciation of phase II's focus on the Sahel. She suggested adding a sentence indicating that UNDP is in the lead of the governance part of the Sahel Integrated Strategy.

Hideko Hadzialic from BOM indicated that the project document should highlight UNDP's unique comparative advantage more explicitly, especially in regard to horizontal linkages and integration. She indicated that the project document talks about youth at the regional level, but needs to indicate how this would be translated at the country level. She pointed out that south-south cooperation is quite important, but that we should avoid the confusion of equating south-south cooperation with study tours. The programme could contribute to the development of a matrix of regional support against which progress will be monitored. She noted that BOM was pleased with the acknowledgement of the role of PSO in the project document. She indicated that the risk matrix could be revised to provide more information on what measures will be put in place if significant resources are not mobilized.

Corrado Scognamillo, representing CRU, indicated that the project document is well conceived and welcomes the fact that electoral violence prevention and electoral risk assessments are mentioned. He indicated that electoral violence prevention and security have only been mentioned in some regions, but not in others (like RBAS), where there are clearly issues related to electoral violence. He indicated that early warning and electoral risk assessments could be undertaken to support regional organizations such as the AU, IGAD and ECOWAS.

Diego Antoni from the BPPS Gender Team indicated that some of their earlier comments have been incorporated, but not all. In this regard, he indicated the need for having a dedicated gender advisor and substantial budget for the gender activities. He also indicated that UNDP's Regional Electoral Advisors would need to work closely with gender advisors in the Regional Service Centres. He expressed concern with the change of wording of the output for the gender component (from women empowerment to gender mainstreaming) and indicated that it seemed less ambitious, especially in regard to the regional component for Asia and the Pacific. He also advocated for stronger linkages to be made between the electoral cycle support and the discussion of the women's peace and security agenda (UN resolution 1325 and others). He indicated that good practices among regions are not often shared and especially the success stories from the first phase in Latin America component could be more highlighted in the project document.

A discussion followed on the issue of having a resource mobilization strategy in the project document. In the end, it was agreed that it was not needed at the project level, but that it would be good to mention that a resource mobilization plan would be developed in due course and in close consultation with BERA. In terms of the need to prioritize Year 1 activities in light of the funding limitations, the GPECS team indicated that it will apply the principle that support to critical project start-up initiatives may need to supercede research-type activities.

Following the discussion, the Chair summarised the decisions reached: the PAC endorses the project for approval with the understanding that the project team will revise the project document based on these discussions.