United Nations Development Programme



Solomon Islands Country Office

Project Initiation Document

Building Capacities for Peace and Development in the Solomon Islands

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to lay the foundation for a multi-year Social Cohesion Programme in the Solomon Islands. The project is designed to help build a cohesive and peaceful Solomon Island by empowering and building upon the resiliencies of national stakeholders to promote peacebuilding, conflict management, social cohesion strategies and processes.

The project is also part of UNDPs larger initiative to support the Solomon Islands in developing a National Peacebuilding Policy (NPP) and framework that all stakeholders can sign onto and work to implement. Similar national policies do not exist in the Pacific region, and this NPP is the first of its kind.

Since the signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement in 2000 and the arrival of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in 2003, outstanding grievances are slowly being resolved. However, there remains a very 'uneasy peace' that severely limits the ability of the country to move towards a 'unified, secure and viable nation.' The lack of attention and limited communication from authorities, based in the capital Honiara, with the rest of the country accentuates the disparities in economic opportunities and political participation between various Islander groups and continues to create potential disorder and fuels separatist sentiments.

In addition to underlying political tensions, there has in recent years also been a dramatic increase in violent crime. A growing population, a disaffected youth and high unemployment are perceived to be driving forces behind this increase. The trend toward violence not only challenges law and order resources but also increases the possibility that vulnerable sections of society could be manipulated for

politically motivated violence, which allegedly was the case during the 2006 Honiara Riots. Until today, the population as a whole (women, young people and the elderly in particular) continues to endure both physical and emotional trauma as the result of the conflict. Deep-seated distrust remains a significant factor to unity and peace.

By strengthening the capacities, structures and systems of the Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace (MNURP) and other stakeholders, the Solomon Islands government will be better able to address the root-causes of potential violent conflict, and help mitigate the factors that can lead to the escalation of another violent conflict such as the one that gripped this pacific island country from 1998 to 2003.

To ensure sustainable peace, this project will work to strengthen current institutional capacities, strengthen relationships, mainstream conflict sensitive policies and programmes, support dialogue and other conflict resolution processes and lead public awareness campaigns.

Background and context

Solomon Islands is an extended and diverse archipelagic nation with a population of 515,870 spread across six main islands and numerous small islands stretching over 1,300 square kilometers of ocean. It is one of the least developed countries in the Pacific with a ranking of 143 out of 186 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) and in the category of low human development. The islands comprising the Solomon Islands are inhabited largely by Melanesian peoples (approximately 95% of the overall population) with smaller Polynesian and Micronesian groups

The country was a British protectorate from 1893 and gained independence on 7th July 1978. The country is divided into 10 administrative areas – 9 provinces and Honiara city, the national capital.

The governance of the country is largely based on a decentralized democratic governance system modeled on the British Parliamentary system. The British monarchy remains as Head of State and is represented by a Governor General. The Prime Minister is the head of the elected government at the national level and the Premier is the head of the elected provincial government assembly. The Parliament is unicameral Parliament of fifty (50) constituencies, with members of Parliament elected every four years through a first-past-the-post electoral system.

Institutions of formal governance have a limited presence in most rural areas. The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, for instance, operates throughout the country but most conflicts are managed locally, particularly by chiefs and church officials but also by influential individuals and groups, including women's and youth organizations. Solomon Islands is a country of villages, with approximately 85% of land under customary ownership and subsistence agriculture dominating the economy in rural areas. The national economy is heavily reliant on donor support and export revenues from extractive industries mining fishing, timber. and some along with some tourism income.

Solomon Islands has struggled to build a strong sense of national unity. From before the time of independence the Western Province has demanded a greater share of the national budget to reflect what they felt was the province's greater contribution to national revenues. This manifested as the Western 'breakaway' movement. Since independence there have been consistent calls from throughout the country for a federal form of government to deliver greater autonomy, resources and control to the provinces. So although some regional commentators and policy-makers have characterized Solomon Islands as a 'failed

state' following the outbreak of violent conflict in 1998,¹ it is probably more accurate to say that the Solomon Islands state never fully consolidated.² The question of national identity and unity, then, remains an ongoing and overarching concern.

The Solomon Islands went through an intense period of social upheaval caused by the internal conflict (1998-2003) that expanded six years. This internal conflict was protagonized by small armed groups to advance and defence narrow ethnic interests. Since then, the nation has been slowly recovering both socially and economically from the effects of what is widely called the "Tensions".

The violence during the Tensions included torture, rape, sexual violence, murder, beatings, arson, kidnapping, looting and extrajudicial detentions. The tensions also took a severe toll on the economy and contributed to the break-down of democratic laws, governance, respect for human rights as well as any sense of national unity. The already precarious infrastructure was heavily damaged. Medical clinics, schools and other basic services closed. Gender specific harms to women were extremely common.

The atmosphere of lawlessness and the capital in chaos prompted a formal request by the Solomon Islands Government for outside assistance. In July 2003, Australian and Pacific Island police and troops arrived in the Solomon Islands under the auspices of the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). A sizable international security contingent of 2,200 police and troops, led by Australia and New Zealand, and with representatives from about 20 other Pacific nations arrived in August 2003 under Operation Helpem Fren.

Over the years after the Tensions a range of international donor partners and non-governmental organizations have contributed to the efforts in bringing peace to the Solomon Islands. Much of these international help has gone to the recovery and rebuilding of damaged infrastructures and the restoration of basic services which has contributed to the efforts in stabilizing the economy. Of these donors, RAMSI and UNDP have been the most active and influential in promoting social cohesion and peace initiatives.

It is difficult to identify a single cause – or simple set of causes – of the 1998-2003 Tensions, Some of the underlying issues driving conflict stem from the time of independence (or before) and are experienced throughout much of Solomon Islands, and are inextricably linked with issues of governance, uneven economic development and access to services, unemployment, internal migration, land issues and commercial interests of business leaders with investments in logging, hotels, casinos, prostitution and fishing.

Much still remains to be done to consolidate peace and unity in the Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands government, the political authority with primary responsibility for peace and order, has also not taken the firm control of the policy agenda that is necessary to address root causes of the conflict. As the Foreign Relations Committee reports, 'To date, no government has had the necessary political will and public support to address issues such as land rights, federalism, repatriation of 'illegal squatters', control over internal migration, and so on'.³ The population as a whole and women, children and the elderly in

¹ Wainwright 2003.

² Braithwaite *et al.* 2010, p. 1.

³ Foreign Relations Committee 2009, pp. 208-209. The report goes on to state that 'following the RAMSI intervention, the CNURA Government is today in a far better position to do so than any of its predecessors. It is also clear from the provincial hearings that there is a huge nationwide expectation of the SIG in this regard'. Notwithstanding the CNURA Government commitment to address conflict issues, which notably includes the establishment of the TRC and support for MNURP-led reconciliation processes, the Committee's point about 'necessary political will' appears to continue to ring true.

particular, continue endured both physical and emotional trauma as the result of the conflict. The national elections in late 2014 now offers a big opportunity for the government to move the country forward. Engaging all stakeholders in the electoral process- including security forces, politicians, voters, supporters, the media, civil society will be crucial for the government to deliver credible, peaceful and sustainable elections in 2014.

Women's representation in legislatures in the Solomon Islands, as the rest of the Pacific excluding Australia and New Zealand, is the lowest in the world, lagging behind the Arab States region. Gender Based Violence (GBV) is also wide-spread and the gender gap within education is clearly visible.⁴ Another big challenge for the Solomon Islands is its young and growing population, with more than 60 percent under the age of 25. This is highly visible in the areas of public health and education. Schools are overcrowded and under resourced, which has resulted in high illiteracy rates. Unemployment figures are rated as high as 75 percent.

Since the Tensions, UNDP have provided technical and financial assistance to the design, establishment and implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; the design and implementation of a Human security initiative for "tensions" reduction, reconciliation and rehabilitation efforts in the Solomon Islands; and the design and the implementation of the Strengthening Capacity for Peace Building in Post Conflict Solomon Islands. With these initiatives, UNDP has established a solid platform for a longer-term peacebuilding project, which this project document will help achieve. The Solomon Islands Government also recognizes the importance of UNDP's contribution to post-conflict reconstruction, and also of its neutral role in development policy and implementation. Stability and sustained peace were identified as strategic priorities in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2008 – 2012 and remains so in the country specific UNDAF for the 2013-2017

Lessons learned by RAMSI and UNDP since 2003

Need to avoid continued monetization of peacebuilding

The inflow of donor funds has had a corrupting and monetizing effect on peacebuilding initiatives in the Solomon Islands. The activities and programs of international organizations and NGOs inflated the fees associated with the provision of services and created unrealistic expectations about the material benefits of peace. While support for peacebuilding is needed, assistance must seek to foster - not undermine – true commitment. It is important that efforts not perpetuate expectation that peacebuilding is something that outsiders should pay for. Solomon Islanders have to want peace and be willing to work to build a stable and secure nation for peace to "stick".

Need to include non-state actors, women, youths and marginalized citizens in peacebuilding efforts

Despite the many contributions of CSOs to peacebuilding, the contributions of these actors have not been adequately recognized and supported by national actors or the international donor community. Some scholars note that one of the most crucial weaknesses of the justice reform efforts has been the failure to enable and support conflict prevention by traditional leaders and churches at the village level.

Need to strengthen coordination, build sustainable working relationships and foster information sharing to maximize impacts of peacebuilding efforts

The large number of donors and CSOs has created a coordination problem. International support is often project driven and generally lacks clear vision, or linkage to a strategy and sustainable implementation

⁴ The literacy rate in the age group between 15 to 29 years is 88 percent for males and 80 percent for females, and in 2009, only 30 percent of government scholarships were awarded to female students

plan. The lack of documented data and information sharing on programming activities amongst Peacebuilding actors has created knowledge and information gaps that have thwarted more effective Peacebuilding efforts. The unstable peace in the Solomon Islands requires continued nurturing of peacebuilding efforts as well as a more systemic and conflict-sensitive approach to development and governance strengthening.

Need to develop programs that are based on a nuanced understanding of local context

The governance reforms that have been undertaken, particularly under RAMSI support pillars were developed based on very western notions of modern state and did not take into account a nuanced understanding of the nature of the traditional structures of Solomon Island societies. RAMSI's programs designed to strengthen governance, for example, have weakened the bonds of reciprocity of politicians in Honiara to their provinces and strengthened the hand of elite business interests; thus possibly fueling corruption as opposed to stemming it. Rather than condemning local practices, governance reforms must be attuned to the cultural, geographical and historical complexities of Solomon Islands.

Need to incorporate gender and conflict sensitive approaches in programs

Among the weaknesses of the RAMSI supported efforts is the lack of attention to justice for women. The judicial system, with support and technical assistance from RAMSI, conducted several dozen trials for crimes committed between 1998 and 2003. The tension trials addressed a range of crimes; however, although there were many incidents of sexual violence during the tensions, no tension trial has dealt with these crimes. Currently, no known efforts have been made to formally address tension-related crimes committed against women.

Need for extensive trauma healing through effective methodologies

With regard to reconciliation and trauma healing efforts, religious-based stakeholders have realized that traditional forms of reconciliation, if done properly, can be effective. But, many are critical of efforts that they say "put the cart before the horse." Traditional reconciliation ceremonies should be the symbolic end to a process of healing that generates authentic, heart-felt forgiveness. Reconciliation and trauma healing are a process. These processes require sophisticated skills, proper training and proven, effective methodologies.

Need to strengthen conflict resolution processes and build capacity

Solid skill building in an array of conflict analysis and conflict resolution skills are necessary as the country struggles with the challenges ahead. The Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace - the key government agency in the Solomon Islands with a peacebuilding mandate – needs better skills to implement its mandate and coordinate with other stakeholders to ensure greater sustainability of peacebuilding efforts. However, stakeholders concur that capacity building efforts should not be for the ministry alone but should involve the community of peacebuilding stakeholders.

Need to promote social cohesion, national identity and unity

There are longstanding demands and processes in Solomon Islands that are driving toward a federal system. But, there is little political will among the elite in Honiara for such reform. The issues continue to simmer in ways that erode national unity and could become a trigger for further conflict. There is a need for sustained dialogue on these issues as well as sustained advocacy and educational initiatives that promote peacebuilding at the community/grassroots level as well as to help mainstream peace at all levels and in all sectors.

Need for peacebuilding activities to be connected to the root causes of conflict

The net result past actions by all key players is a substantial shortfall in the efforts to address the root causes of conflict in the Solomon Islands. Despite the progress, the Solomon Islands still faces real transitional challenges with post-conflict 'gaps.' The failure to adequately address the gaps may provide potential impetus for renewed conflict since the underlying causes of the conflict remain.

Project objectives

The key objective of the programme is to advance a peaceful and united Solomon Islands, strengthen stability and foster social cohesion. The project proposes immediate assistance needed to deal with the current issues and unresolved business of the Tensions that continuously thwart developmental initiatives and at the same time contemplates the development of a longer term strategy for peace consolidation. To address the challenges the key objectives of this project are to:

- Strengthen conflict resolution processes and develop national capacity
- Unresolved and sensitive issues from the Tensions as well as existing and emerging conflicts are effectively managed with appropriate technical assistance
- Solomon Island citizens engaged in building a more tolerant, peaceful and cohesive nation.
- Develop a nationally owned and driven multi-year project document on Peacebuilding and social cohesion

The objectives are reflected in the outcomes below:

<u>Outcome 1</u>: Conflict resolution processes and national capacity is developed and coordinated

- **Output 1.1** Ministry for National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace (MNURP) staff mentored and trained to assess and design programs with conflict sensitive and peacebuilding perspectives and offer conflict management assistance to governmental clients in other ministries
- **Output 1.2:** UNCT staffs have greater capacity to assess and design programs with conflict sensitive and peacebuilding perspectives and offer conflict management assistance to internal clients.

<u>Outcome 2</u>: Unresolved and sensitive issues from the Tensions as well as existing and emerging conflicts are effectively managed with appropriate technical assistance

- **Output 2.1** Processes for channeling conflicts are made more inclusive and participatory, and strengthened through tailored technical assistance
- **Output 2.2** Conflict resolution, Social Cohesion and dialogue process on critical issues are effectively designed, convened and facilitated.

<u>Outcome 3</u>: Solomon Island citizens engaged in building a more tolerant, peaceful and cohesive nation.

- **Output 3.1:** Public have improved awareness of and involvement in the building of long term sustainable peace
- **Output 3.2** Educational Curricula for formal and informal education settings developed and implemented

• **Output 3.3** The project is well coordinated with the efforts of the UNDP electoral support program to ensure that the 2014 elections are perceived as inclusive and credible

<u>Outcome 4:</u> Nationally owned multi-year project on peacebuilding and social cohesion developed and funded

- **Output 1.1:** Updated Conflict Analysis and comprehensive consultations conducted
- **Output 1.2:** Resource mobilization strategy developed

Project Scope and Exclusions

The Social Cohesion and Development Specialist will assist the CO to enhance the capacity of the Ministry for National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace (MNURP) and other key stakeholders to effectively engage in peacebuilding efforts. The project will focus on enabling MNURP to implement its mandates to provide a high level leadership and coordination in the promotion of social cohesion amongst its beneficiaries so as to mitigate the factors that could potentially lead to the escalation of another violent uprising.

Defined Method of Approach

The program recognizes the need to discover, empower and build on the cultural and contextual resources for peace in the Solomons. To best address the conflicts, we must first understand how the actors conceptualize and experience their problems and how they utilize various resources to address and resolve them.

The project also works on the premise that the greatest resource for sustaining peace in the long term is rooted in the local people and their culture. This program sees the people of the Solomon Islands as core resources and focuses on working with people at all levels of society who envision themselves as playing a role of peacemaker. The proposal focuses particularly on strengthening the capacities of those who are bridges between various communities, constituencies or sectors and respect and legitimate their work. It is through these people that we build a strong peace constituency. The program envisions working with a cross section of Solomon society, but most particularly staff of the MNURP. This is because the MNURP has the government-wide mandate to coordinate all 'tensions' related reconciliation and Peacebuilding activities in Solomon Islands. However, to function in a credible and legitimate manner the project staff will also have to develop and maintain strong ties to all the peacebuilding stakeholders of the Solomon Islands as well as reach out to political actors, other government representatives, civil society advocates, police force members, RAMSI personnel, traditional leaders, women and youth.

To enhance national ownership of this project it is proposed that oversight of is to be conducted through the same mechanisms as are put in place to guide the implementation and monitoring of the National Peacebuilding Policy to avoid the creation of duplicative advisory groups. Terms of reference for the any oversight committee will be devised through consultations but with the following in mind: the oversight committee should help communicate the program's intent and operations to relevant parties, give guidance as to how to improve the quality and impact of program activities, and act as a liaison to their communities to do outreach for the program and engender participation and buy-in from relevant stakeholders (including their attendance and participation in various activities). Members of an oversight committee will not receive salary or compensation, but will be provided with modest resources for expenses related to the exercise of their duties. The project will be led by a Social Cohesion and Development Specialist who will be responsible to implement activities proposed in this program. To ensure effective implementation the project will draw on its Crisis Prevention and Recovery unit at the Honiara Sub-Office to support the implementation. This includes one national officer and one programme assistant. By utilizing the existing management resources this project will minimize the costly need for significant additional recruitment and will also build the capacity of local UNDP staff. The project will be hard-pressed to jumpstart all needed activities in a timely manner and efforts should be made to supplement this with high caliber international interns. Internally, the program staff will be under the supervision of the head the Assistant Resident Representative, while the Social Cohesion and Development Specialist will be under the supervision of the Deputy Resident Representative.

The implementation of activities will be undertaken in a sequenced manner taking into account available funds and balancing the most urgent priorities, with those having greatest influence on key decisionmakers and widest impact on diverse stakeholders. It will start, where practical, with activities to imbed the requisite skills among our key interlocutors who can take the program forward under their own national ownership.

Project Organization Structure

This project will be implemented by the Social Cohesion and Development Specialist together with the Crisis Prevention and Recovery team of the UNDP Sub-Office, Solomon Islands. The project team will be accountable to two bodies: the Project Executive Group and a National Oversight Committee. These bodies are described below:

Project Team

The project will be managed and implemented by a Social Cohesion and Development Specialist, stationed in Honiara and housed within the UNDP sub-office. The Specialist will draw on its Crisis Prevention and Recovery unit at the Honiara Sub-Office to support the implementation which has a National Officer and a Program Assistant. In addition, interns provide back up support on an as – needed basis. As Project Manager, the Social Cohesion Specialist is responsible for the following:

- 1. The Day-to-day management of the Project
- 2. Identify and obtain any support and advice required for the management, planning, and control of the project
- 3. Reporting progress through regular updates
- 4. Prepare and convene Project Executive Group
- 5. Prepare for and convene National Oversight Committee
- 6. Responsible for project monitoring through the maintenance and update of the on-line Tracker (RMG Implementation Toolkit)
- 7. Delivery of the projects deliverables as outlined in this project document

Project Support

Day to day operations will be supported by the Sub office CPR team, the Sub-office Operations Unit, and UN Headquarters-based support team.

Project Executive Group

The PEG representing: the **Executing Agency** (i.e., the UNDP Sub office), **Senior Supplier:** The role of the Senior Supplier is to provide the necessary resources (both financial and technical) to support activities leading to the attainment of outputs that are supporting the overall project objective(s). Additionally, the Senior Supplier provides guidance regarding the technical feasibility of the project.

3. Senior Beneficiary: role to ensure the realization of project benefits from the perspective of project beneficiaries.

The Project Board responsibilities include:

i) Ensure that adequate mechanisms and resources are in place to guarantee the transparency and accountability as well as the efficiency of project operations,

ii) Ensure consensus around the project's strategies and planned results, including the links between its outputs and the intended outcomes

iii) Provide advice when substantive changes are needed in the project's planned outputs, strategies or implementation arrangements,

iv) Oversee progress, consult with beneficiaries, and ensure that potential opportunities and risks, including lessons learned from experience, are taken into account by the project management

v) Endorse project annual work-plan and assess performance at the end of the project.

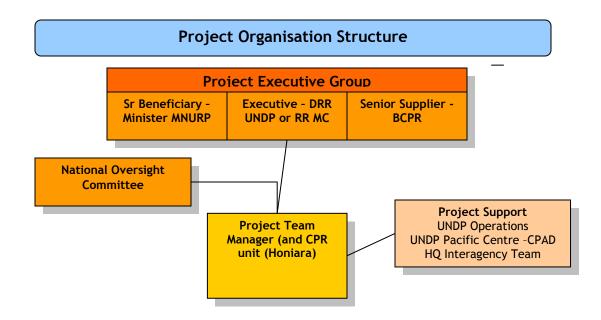
vi) Provide guidance to the project manager as needed.

The Project Board will meet twice during the duration of this one year project. The first meeting should be held within the month of the fielding of the Project Manager to review and approve its annual work plan. The Project Manager shall prepare the agenda and the relevant papers (i.e. to be discussed at the Board Meeting) and circulate this at least two weeks in advance of the Project Board meeting. The Project Manager will take minutes and will circulate the same within two weeks after a meeting is held. The Chairperson of the Board is DRR or his/her alternate. Key functions of the PEG are to ensure:

National Oversight Committee

To ensure national ownership of this project it is proposed that oversight of this project be conducted through the same mechanisms as are put in place to guide the implementation and monitoring of the National Peacebuilding Policy to avoid the creation of duplicative advisory groups.

- 1. Overall direction and guidance on the implementation of the Project
- 2. Participate in planning of quarterly work plans
- 3. Participate in the monitoring of implementation efforts



Communications Plan

The key stakeholders of the Project include:

- UNDP Country Office staff
- UNCT in SI
- UN HQ Support Team
- Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace (MNURP)
- Other SIG ministries (police, justice)
- Project Executive Group
- National Oversight Committee
- CSOs, FBOs, youth, women's and community organizations involved in peacebuilding efforts

The following Project communications plan defines communications to these stakeholders throughout the Project:

Stakeholder Group		Information Required	Information Provider	Frequency	Method
A.	UNDP Country Office Staff	1. Communication of project and stage objectives, rationale, and plans	 Social Cohesion and Development Specialist (SCDS) 	• At start of each Stage	 Email General All Staff Meeting Programme Staff Meeting
		2. Communication of project progress (incl. constraints and solutions, resources utilised)	• SCDS	• Adhoc (as and when required)	 During staff meetings as required Email Briefings as required Review

Stak	eholder Group	Information Required	Information Provider	Frequency	Method
				• Quarterly	quarterly progress reports • After missions Back to the Office Reports (BTOR)
		3. Communication of key deliverables/outputs	• SCDS	• Quarterly	 Review quarterly progress reports After missions Back to the Office Reports (BTOR)
В.	Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace (MNURP)	4. Plans for programme and project capacity development for national counterparts	 SCDS and Project Support 	• Monthly	 As appropriate in local context based on consultation with MNURP Trainings and workshops
		5. Update of project monitoring	• SCDS and Project Support	• Monthly	 After missions Back to the Office Reports (BTOR) Information received from participants of Trainings and workshops One-one discussions, focus groups discussions Review newspaper articles, local radio news
		6. Progress on implementation of project capacity development plans and follow-up on implementation of NPP	• SCDS, Oversight Committee and Project Support	• Quarterly	 UNDP- MNURP meetings Emails
C.	CSOs	7. Plans for programme and project capacity development for national counterparts	SCDS and Project Support	Monthly	As appropriate in local context based on consultation with CSOs

Stakeholder Group		Information Required	Information Provider	Frequency	Method
					• Trainings and workshops
		8. Update of project monitoring	• SCDS and Project Support	• Monthly	 After missions Back to the Office Reports (BTOR) Information received from participants of Trainings and workshops One-one discussions, focus groups discussions Review newspaper articles, local radio news
D.	Project Executive	9. Progress on project implementation	• SCDS	• 2 times per year (after inception and one month after final quarter	 Email Briefings as required Review quarterly progress reports

Tolerances

An overall stage tolerance of plus/minus 20% on approved stage budget and plus/minus 2 weeks on stage schedule will be allowed.

If these tolerance levels are forecast to be exceeded, the Project Executive Group will be immediately notified, and corrective action will be taken as required.

Project Controls

The Project will be reviewed 2 times by the Project Executive Group. These management points include the following deliverable reviews and approvals:

- 1. Signed Project Document
- 2. Annual workplan and 1st Quarter workplan

The Project Manager will be responsible for updating the on-line Tracker to record progress about the project implementation.

The Project will also be reviewed by the PEG at Project Closure to ensure that all project deliverables were completed and in order to review lessons learned. Responsibility for all day-to-day controls will rest with the Project Manager. Overall responsibility for the successful delivery of the project will rest with the Executive member of the PEG.