

Government of Sierra Leone  
and  
United Nations Development Programme

with

National Electoral Commission; Government of Sierra Leone (Office of the President and the Office of the Vice President, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Development); UNAMSIL; and other international development partners

## **Project Document**

### **Support to Electoral Reform and the National Electoral Commission**

#### **Brief description**

The project aims to develop the institutional capacity of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) to ensure the delivery of free and fair elections in 2007-2008 and beyond. It supports the seven step reform process of NEC namely: Restructuring of the Existing NEC; Staff Capacity Development; Infrastructure Development; Setting up of IT System; Reviewing Electoral Laws and Regulations; Boundary Delimitation; and Voter Registration. The project facilitates and supports Sierra Leonean ownership and leadership of the process of institutional reform and promotes the development of national institutional capacity by supporting the NEC initiative on restructuring the institution and reforming the electoral framework. It will also foster a collaborative approach to the electoral reform among major stakeholders- the NEC, Government, donor community and civil society by coordinating joint efforts in pursuit of transparent and accountable democratic processes in Sierra Leone.

## Section I Elaboration of the narrative

### Part I. Situation Analysis

1. This project document (ProDoc) “Support to Electoral Reform and the National Electoral Commission” supports a process of electoral reform that is the initiative of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), with participation of the Government of Sierra Leone, civil society, and international donors and partners. On 15 December 2004 the NEC completed a plan for electoral reform entitled ‘*Outline of areas for intervention to strengthen the NEC - Planning for 2007-2008: Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections*’ (NEC Outline Plan 2005-2008). This plan was the culmination of a six-month process of lessons learnt coming from the May 2004 Local Government Elections as well as bringing forward decisions and recommendations pending since the 2002 national elections.<sup>1</sup>

2. The Lomé Peace Agreement of 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1999, enunciated the centrality of electoral processes to post-conflict stabilisation in Sierra Leone. It also provided recognition that the lack of legitimate, elected government was one of the key causes of the war. Since the official end of disarmament and demobilisation in January 2002, Sierra Leone has made progress in the transition from a decade-long conflict to peace and national recovery. The Government of Sierra Leone has extended its authority and assumed primacy for security throughout the country. The United Nations, including UN agencies and the peace-keeping mission UNAMSIL, and bilateral partners have collaborated closely with the Government to achieve these objectives. UNAMSIL’s exit strategy should ensure a seamless transition towards tackling the longer-term challenges facing the country. The peace needs to be consolidated and sustained with further measures aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict.

3. Notwithstanding the success of the post-conflict electoral process and the over-all political stability in the country, democratic transformation and political dialogue among the main actors as well as the strengthening of the role of the civil society require additional efforts. More recently this has been expressed in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which documented the causes of the conflict, and highlights the need for reform because the root causes are still substantially present in Sierra Leone.

4. The NEC’s December 2004 plan provides the foundation for comprehensive electoral reform, which this ProDoc proposes to support. The NEC has formulated a strategy, in the making for over three years, which addresses basic institutional weaknesses of the NEC, in evidence over the past elections, and the lack of systematic capacity building. Over the past three elections in eight years, instead of improving its capacity the NEC has actually become weaker. Its lack of independence is not so much *de jure* or political as it is administrative and financial, with weak capacity in both organizational structures and technical staff.

5. The activities proposed in this ProDoc are consistent with the UNAMSIL and UN Country Team’s joint UN Transition Plan, which includes electoral reform in the Security Council’s benchmarks for the consolidation of state authority.<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2004-2007), stipulates that the causes of war were many and complex, including bad governance, denial of fundamental rights, economic mismanagement and social exclusion. These concerns have to be addressed if peace is to be consolidated<sup>3</sup>. UNDP’s contribution to the UNDAF is provided through three main areas of support: National Recovery and Peace Building; Governance and Democratic Development; and Poverty Reduction and Human Development. UNDP’s effort to promote Good Governance and Democratic Development, under the terms of the Country Program, includes institutional capacity building of NEC so that it can become “*an independent, credible and well-resourced institution which promotes democracy and good governance through transparent, credible and free and fair elections*”<sup>4</sup>. This is the basis for the present ProDoc.

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<sup>1</sup> IFES,Ltd. Restructuring Reports 2002, 2003, 2004; IFES,Ltd Final report 2002; UNAMSIL Final Reports 2002 and 2004; NEC Regional Debrief reports North, South, East and West 2004; NEC Post Local Government Elections Report 2004; UN Senior Electoral Adviser Mr. Ron Gould final report May 2004; UN Senior Election Advisor, Justice J. Kriegler, Assessment Reports, Dec 2004 and March and May 2005

<sup>2</sup> ‘*The conduct of free and fair elections is a critical element in ensuring political stability. In this respect, greater emphasis will be made on promoting electoral reform*’ UN Transition Plan, 1 December 2004

<sup>3</sup> Sierra Leone Peace, Recovery and Development UNDAF 2004-2007

<sup>4</sup> Extract from the NEC Restructuring Concept Paper 2004

## Part II. Strategy

6. NEC leadership: The assistance strategy is based in NEC's authorities as an independent institution.<sup>5</sup> This is articulated in the NEC's plan of action (*NEC Outline Plan 2005-2008*), as adopted in NEC Resolution No. 1 of 2005, May 17, 2005. The ProDoc supports a reform process that will involve significant external assistance. However the strategy of this assistance is to develop NEC's independence.

7. National ownership, international partnership: An accompanying strategy is to ensure national ownership of the activities contained in the reform program, and to secure a coordinated and comprehensive framework of action between national and international partners. This ProDoc was collaboratively completed by the Electoral Commissioners in the first instance, and in consultation with the Ministry of Finance, Office of the President, Office of the Vice President, Ministry of Development and Economic Planning (MODEP), Establishment Secretary, Public Service Commission, and other GoSL Ministries. International partners such as the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), European Union (EU), and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have been involved in the formulation of both the NEC's *Outline Plan 2005-2008* as well as this document. IFES Ltd., UNAMSIL and UNDP have provided technical assistance. Execution, monitoring and supervision must also take this collaborative approach between the national and international stakeholders. Preparation of the ProDoc was coordinated by the UNAMSIL Office of the DSRSG and UNDP and has benefited from the expert guidance of the Electoral Assistance Division, Department of Political Affairs in keeping with their responsibilities for coordinating electoral assistance in the UN system.<sup>6</sup>

8. Capacity building and sustainability: A clear lesson of the period 2001 – 2004 has been that capacity building of the NEC, given the weak institutional base, was not achieved while simultaneously running electoral processes in the complex post-conflict environment of 2002 and 2004. In that sense the Electoral Commissioners are asking for the renewed joint efforts in achieving the objective. The support to the NEC's *Outline Plan 2005-2008* must therefore include at every stage a commitment to and investment in capacity building.

9. Outcomes and Outputs of the Reform Process: The NEC has outlined its reform process in 7 outputs, as follows: Restructuring of the Existing NEC; Staff Capacity Development; Infrastructure Development; Setting up of IT System; Reviewing Electoral Laws and Regulations; Boundary Delimitation; and Voter Registration. Successful implementation of these seven steps will result in a transformed institution, with organizational, physical assets and human capacities to conduct its Constitutional mandate; and will provide the basic preparations for the 2007 and 2008 elections to take place, specifically the process of constituency boundary delimitations and preparation of a permanent voter registration list. These outputs are framed in the existing UNDAF 2004-2007 outcome "Restoration/Strengthening of Local Government and Conduct of Elections". A mid-term revision of the UNDAF may provide a more specific outcome, such as "Improved national capacity to administer free, fair and credible elections". The outcome of restoration and strengthening of Government's capacity to conduct elections will be fully achieved if the 7 outputs of this reform process are successfully achieved, as reflected in the Results and Resources Framework. The UNDP Resident Representative will share with the UN Electoral Assistance Division regular progress reports, in accordance with DPA-UNDP guidelines.

## Part III. Management Arrangements

### (i) Executing Agency

10. The project will be executed under the Direct Execution modality. The Executing Agency will be the UNDP Country Office/Governance Unit (UNDP/CC/Gov), through a Project Management Unit (PMU). The UNDP Resident Representative will ensure coordination with the UN Mission to Sierra Leone and the Electoral Assistance Division of the UN Department of Political Affairs.

<sup>5</sup> The legal framework which expresses the independent political and legal character for the NEC includes: The Lomé Peace Agreement 1997, The Sierra Leone Constitution 1991, Electoral Commission Act 2002.

<sup>6</sup> In accordance with General Assembly Resolution 46/137, 1992, and further articulated in *Note for Guidance for UNDP and UNDP on Electoral Assistance*, rev. 1999

11. The Project Management Unit (PMU) will be competently staffed with the following core competencies<sup>7</sup>:

- a. Electoral expertise
- b. Finance Support
- c. Procurement Support
- d. Programme/Operations Support

12. As Executing Agency, the UNDP CO/Governance Unit will be responsible for ensuring necessary standards and substantive work is maintained, and that all resources assigned to the project are used efficiently. A Basket Fund Steering Committee will determine the general framework for support to NEC's electoral reform process. The Executing Agency will provide periodic reports to the Steering Committee for its information.

13. The PMU will ensure timely disbursement of funds to all contracted partners as agreed in the budget and disbursement schedules; provide financial monitoring and guidelines to all contracted partners by collecting accounts, reports and receipts from the partner organisations; prepare regular financial summary narratives and consolidated accounts of the Electoral Basket for circulation/presentation, provide substantive progress reports to the Basket donors and the Steering Committee; and provide Terms of Reference including all necessary documentation for an audit of the Electoral Basket, as well as prepare responses to audit observations and account examinations.

14. The PMU will be responsible for continuously reviewing, documenting and analyzing project progress, for monitoring progress towards achievement of the outcomes, and recommending actions to ensure that the planned outputs are produced with timeliness and that outputs contribute to outcomes. To this end, the PMU may rely on its own assessments of the project performance as well as draw on assessments made in this regard by other implementing partners as it establishes an effective coordination, monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanism.

15. The functional responsibilities of the PMU will therefore comprise the following broad categories: setting up joint financing procedure and manage UNDP-donor agreements; providing substantive support to the electoral processes; management, coordination and oversight of basket sub-programmes; procurement for the election activities; and financial management and audit<sup>8</sup>.

## **Part IV. Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **(i) Monitoring and Reporting**

16. UNDP-Sierra Leone intends to establish a new monitoring and evaluation capability during 2005. Indicators will be tracked from the UNDAF and the UNDP Annual Work Plan 2005.

17. In the interests of local ownership and building national capacity the PMU will assist the NEC Finance Unit to apply principles of accountability and financial probity being exercised in the management of the Electoral Basket.

18. The administrative, monitoring and reporting requirements among the Partner Governments and UNDP will be articulated in the following documents, as appropriate: the respective cost sharing agreements, the various Terms of Reference appended to those of PMU and this project document.

19. Notwithstanding the above, administrative, monitoring and reporting functions will include, *inter alia*, submission of quarterly substantive/technical reports; financial monitoring and reporting; and annual monitoring and reporting of results, including results against outcome indicators articulated in the project document.

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<sup>7</sup> TOR for the PMU – Electoral Activities in Sierra Leone 2005-2007 draft.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

20. According to UNDP's regulations and rules, and as articulated in the separate cost sharing arrangements between UNDP and the Partner Governments, the Electoral Basket will be audited / reviewed at least once during the programme implementation and at least once after its termination. Additional audit(s) shall also be subject to UNDP's regulations and rules.

21. For any Periodic Review, the PMU will prepare and circulate to the parties, at least two weeks in advance, a brief descriptive Periodic (eg, quarterly or half-yearly) Progress Report, the updated Output matrix, the updated Work plan, and the latest financial report etc. The PMU will prepare and, within one week, circulate to all parties a summary of no more than two pages of the assessments, conclusions and decisions of the meeting as well as the finalized matrixes and work plan which serve as the project workplan/budget for the following quarter.

22. As the Electoral Basket is a subcomponent of the UNDP Work Plan (WP), monitoring and reporting of Electoral Basket inputs and outputs will be included in monitoring and reporting of the WP. In addition to this, the Basket-funded components will be subject to: an Electoral Basket mid-term progress report. The evaluation will be done by a National Independent Expert, in accordance with UNDP policies and on the basis of agreed terms of reference with appropriate input from UNDP and other stakeholders.

**(i) Evaluation**

23. The project will be subject to an in-depth, external evaluation to assess its overall performance, the outputs/outcomes produced against its initial targets, the impact it has brought about or would likely bring about, its relevance to the national context and management efficiency. The evaluation offers lessons learned and recommendations to improve project performance during the remaining part of its life. Hence, preference should be given to a mid-term evaluation to ensure that such lessons and recommendations are incorporated in the work plans of the project during the rest of its life.

24. The evaluation will at least be an event for the project alone, and as an option may be a thematic event whereby a cluster of related programmes/projects are evaluated jointly, so as to enhance the scope for more integrated and coordinated project implementation. The evaluation will be in line with the revised corporate monitoring and evaluation principles and format.

25. This evaluation should primarily focus on assessing the long-term results (or impacts) and sustainability of the project following its completion and draw lessons for further programming and policymaking. The timing for and necessity of this evaluation will be decided based on mutual agreement between the UNDP CO/PMU , Basket Donors and Government.

26. The Evaluation Mission prepares a Project Evaluation Report and a Project Evaluation Information Sheet in the standard UNDP formats and submits both documents to the UNDP Headquarters, UNDP/CO, prior to its departure from the duty station. The UNDP/CO shares the report with the Electoral Basket Donors, Government and, if appropriate, with other interested partners.

## **Part V. Legal Context**

27. This shall be the instrument referred to as the project document in Article 1 of the SBAA between the Government of Sierra Leon and UNDP, signed on 21<sup>st</sup> December, 1977.