

Minutes of Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) on the “Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2016 – 2018”

The Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) meeting for the Project Document “Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone, 2016 – 2018”, was held at 11.00am on 4th July 2016 in the Conference Room of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Freetown. The meeting was chaired by UNDP’s Economic Adviser, Dr. Moses Sichei, and was attended by Team Leaders, Programme Specialists, Procurement, Gender and Results Based Management Specialists from the Country Office. A UNDP staff member from the Joint EU-UNDP Task Force on Electoral Assistance in Brussels also participated via skype. The agenda was to present and approve the Project Document, “Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2016 – 2018”.

Ms. Annette Nalwoga, Team Leader Governance, presented the Project Document to the meeting by means of a power point presentation. The project duration is 2^{1/2} years, and the document was developed based 1) on lessons learnt from the previous electoral cycle, 2) upon request and 3) on needs assessment. She informed that all requested assistance was included in the document, but that activities might be cut or added depending on available resources. Amongst the lessons learnt were the need for a strong PMU team to support the project, and a strong Steering Committee. A Steering Committee meeting she said has been planned to take place the following week.

The project document contains 2 Outcomes:

- Outcome 1:** National Electoral Commission (NEC) Capacity to Administer Technically Sound, Credible, Inclusive and Sustainable Elections Improved; and
- Outcome 2:** Public Confidence and Participation in Electoral Processes Improved.

Ms. Nalwoga quickly took members through the 5 Outputs of Outcome 1, and the 4 Outputs of Outcome 2 with their related activities.

Project Management: Ms. Nalwoga informed that the Basket Fund modality would be used. So far only Irish Aid has committed funds for the project, whilst anticipating that DFID would come on board. EU on the other hand, has intimated that their funding would only be available late next year. The project would have a Steering Committee which will be responsible for management decisions, and a Technical Committee that would provide high technical support. There will be a Project Management Unit (PMU) comprising 5 international staff and others.

Budget: Option 1 of the budget which stipulates extraction of the voter register, is maintained. The estimated cost is USD15,073,020.00. So far only Irish Aid and UNDP have committed USD1M each.

Risks: Several risks (financial, political, operational and strategic), were identified in the project.

Ms. Nalwoga also informed that the Boundary Delimitation component was removed from the project document. A separate project document was prepared and sent to Irish Aid which will fund the project this year.

Comments, questions and answers

Discussions on the document ensued and it was mentioned that:-

- Basic support to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) was essential to enhance their capacity to monitor the electoral process, including preparations and as observers during the electioneering period. Therefore a footnote detailing CSO's support should be added to the Project.
- Turn out for civil registration and consequently voter registration could be low for various reasons. The civil registration will be decentralized to attract people to come out and register.
- There were plans to embark on comprehensive campaign to engage chiefdoms, women's organizations etc. and that there is commitment and pledge to inform the people to come out and register.
- Data capture is expected to be done in December 2016 and would last for 6 weeks.
- One must not lose sight of the fact that the project was to support the elections and for us to acknowledge the fact that there will not be sufficient funding.
- The project was already starting late and that we should consider prioritizing activities, should all the funding required not come through.
- UNDP had been advised to look out at other non-traditional donors like Chinese Trust Fund, Government of Netherlands and so on. Once the project document is approved, it will be forwarded to other donors with the request for funding.
- The programme strategy of the project was clear and articulate, and that the project is based on cost sharing. The rationale for cost sharing however was not clear and it should be articulated in a better way. The monitoring and evaluation bit was very good, but that the communication strategy was missing.
- The outputs and outcomes were not properly engendered, and there was need for clear results targeting women's issues, like encouraging voter turnout etc. A social and environmental assessment needs to be carried out.
- The National Electoral Commission (NEC) has a Communications Strategy which could be incorporated into the project document.
- Both a Communications Strategy and a Visibility plan were absolutely essential, and that there is a dedicated visibility document for the EU which could be added as an annex to the project document.

- Information and communications materials be gender sensitive with the human rights aspects addressed, and data captured be gender disaggregated.
- Government of Sierra Leone contribution in the project should come out, including contribution in kind which can be quantified.
- Since recruitment and procurement are lengthy processes, it should be reflected as an area of high risk for smooth implementation of the project. Thus, prioritization is of paramount importance, and getting a team in place especially CTA while the project has already started is not ideal.
- The Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) can be recruited immediately with the limited available resources.
- The project engage a peace building initiative to ensure a violence-free elections.

The issue of inadequate coverage in moving from civil registration to voter registration, or the risk of moving under age persons from the civil register into the voter register was also mentioned, but it was clarified that local authorities/chiefs could support by checking/verifying information of those to be registered.

Clarification on the difference between the NEC budget and the project budget was sought and it was explained that the NEC budget contains items that had been funded before, including Boundary Delimitation. It was stated that there were ongoing meetings for NEC to produce a realistic budget. It was clarified that the project budget was to support the electoral cycle and not to cover the entire elections.

Summary

Discussions on the Project Document brought out several issues and risks not captured in the document. It was decided that the document be revised to incorporate the under-mentioned issues:-

- The Risk log on the document to be updated:
 - Low citizen registration in civil registration which could impact on voter registration
 - Delay in recruitment of project staff
- A footnote on civil society's support to the elections to be added to the project document
- Both Communications and Visibility Strategies to be added to the project document
- Issues of gender, human rights, youth, disability, to be incorporated in the document
- Social and environmental standards assessment
- Prioritization of activities depending on available budget
- The rationale for cost sharing to be explained
- Harmonization of NEC and prodoc activities/budgets

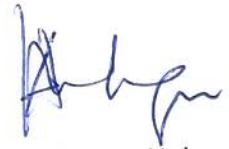
The Project Document was then unanimously approved, on condition that the necessary amendments and modifications be made to address the above-mentioned.

Ms. Annette Nalwoga thanked members for their inputs and assured that the necessary modifications would be done against the following week when the document would be presented to stakeholders at a Steering Committee meeting.

The Chair Dr. Moses Sichei also thanked members for their valuable contributions and brought the meeting to a close.



Dr. Moses Sichei
Economic Adviser



Ms. Annette Nalwoga
Team Leader, Governance

13/7/2016

Date:

13/7/2016

Date:

Attendance:

1. Dr. Moses Sichei, Economic Adviser
2. Ms. Annette Nalwoga, Team Leader, Governance
3. Mr. Ghulam Sherani, Team Leader, Inclusive Growth
4. Ms. Mariatu Swaray, Programme Specialist, Environment
5. Mr. Issa Conteh, Results Based Management Specialist
6. Mr. Yona Samo, Procurement Specialist
7. Ms. Musu Bangura, Gender Specialist
8. Mr. Dan Malinovich, Electoral Assistance Specialist, UNDP Brussels, (via skype)
9. Mr. Mike Zulu, Consultant, UNDP
10. Ms. Gloria Thomas, Programme Assistant