

Helpdesk Research Report: Management Arrangements in UN-led Electoral Assistance Programmes

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Query: Please provide examples of recently used management arrangements in electoral assistance programmes led by the UN.

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1. Overview

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) guidance recommends a **two-tiered management structure** for electoral assistance programmes. One tier provides policy oversight and is normally referred to as a **Steering Committee**; the other tier consists of a **Project Management Unit** (PMU) and is responsible for implementing the project on a day-to-day basis. In addition, the UNDP recommends **coordination structures** to facilitate consensus amongst donors and to help minimise duplication. These coordination structures can exist at the donor level (e.g. a donor coordination mechanism) and at the stakeholder level (e.g. a stakeholder forum which includes all national stakeholders).

Electoral assistance programmes can either be directly executed by the UNDP or nationally executed by the national electoral management board (EMB). Direct execution is the default modality for election-specific projects, especially in post-conflict or fragile environments where little local capacity exists. National execution is more common as

part of longer term efforts to build the capacity of national election management bodies (EMBs).

International agencies and donors all emphasise the 'electoral cycle approach', and therefore, management arrangements for electoral assistance should reflect and reinforce this approach.

The key lessons gleaned from the reviewed literature are:

- Management structures should **avoid the over-centralisation of responsibilities**. Consequently, there should be a clear separation between the political engagement of donors with the electoral process, the provision of technical assistance and the oversight of the programme itself.
- The management and coordination structures outlined above should contain **sufficient senior policy and operational representation from the UNDP and relevant national stakeholder bodies**. These representatives need to be accountable to their respective employers.
- There should be **sufficient linkages and information flows between the management and coordination structures** to minimise duplication.
- **Donors need to strengthen their own governance and oversight of UNDP-managed programmes**. Especially important is the separation of political dialogue from technical oversight and greater use of third party monitoring to challenge UNDP and make it more accountable for its performance.
- Management arrangements can vary depending upon the context. **Programming within peacekeeping contexts differs from that in more stable environments**. In a peacekeeping context, electoral assistance programmes often sit within a broader UN mission headed by a Special Representative of the Secretary General. As such, it is important that there is harmonisation among the different pillars of the overall mission, as well as between individual donors. Management structures for electoral assistance in peacekeeping, post-conflict or fragile contexts are also likely to include security or peacekeeping elements.
- **Local ownership of management and coordination structures should be encouraged where feasible and appropriate**. For example, where capacity exists, primacy should be given to national EMBs in chairing and facilitating donor coordination, steering and stakeholder committees.
- **Risk management and monitoring** was found to be neglected in many of the case studies reviewed. They should be incorporated into management arrangements at programme inception.

There is a paucity of in-depth, cross-country or thematic analysis of international electoral support. Most coverage of management structures used to deliver electoral assistance programmes is contained within project documents, a number of which are included in this report. Due to the nature of such documents, which are created at the inception of projects, there is little critical analysis of management structures. Furthermore, few evaluations and reviews of management arrangements are available in the public domain. Further research over an extended period of time is needed.

2. General Guidance

UNDP (n.d.) *Online Toolkit for Electoral Assistance: Coordination and Management Arrangements Note*, United Nations Development Programme
http://toolkit-elections.unteamworks.org/?q=webfm_send/168

This note outlines a management model for an electoral assistance project receiving pooled funding from several donors. It describes structures for coordination and management in UNDP projects, which include:

- An overall **Donor Coordination Mechanism** that includes heads of donor agencies contributing to a 'basket fund' or through other means. It is often chaired by the national Elections Management Board (EMB) and facilitated by the lead donor and/or UNDP Resident Representative on behalf of donors. This is a high level forum with an emphasis on high-level policy development, collaboration and information sharing.
- A **Steering Committee**, a management mechanism that makes policy-level decisions around joint or pooled funding arrangements (baskets). It usually meets quarterly or monthly (more frequently when elections are approaching) and is responsible for the oversight of project activities within the basket, including financial oversight and approval of funding allocations. It is facilitated by the Project Management Unit (PMU), which provides a secretariat and liaises with the Steering Committee chair. It also includes representatives from contributing donors, the EMB and other domestic stakeholders. It may be chaired or co-chaired by the UNDP, the lead donor, the EMB or a combination thereof.
- A **Project Management Unit (PMU)**, which provides technical oversight, implements projects on a day-to-day basis and reports to the Steering Committee. The PMU should include technical experts in electoral management and is led by a Chief Technical Advisor. It should also include dedicated financial and administrative personnel.
- A **Stakeholder or Information-Sharing Forum** can prove to be a good coordination tool and can function as a sounding board for the project. The forum is best convened by the EMB, rather than the UNDP, on a monthly basis. Those participating usually include all organisations working within the election field, as well

as relevant officers within donor agencies. Its purpose is to ensure common knowledge on election activities in order to avoid duplication.

UNDP (2007) *Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide*, United Nations Development Programme

<http://content.undp.org/go/cms-service/download/publication/?version=live&id=2219667>

Chapter four, 'Management and Governance' (p.58), reiterates the structure described above, but also goes into more detail with regards to implementation arrangements and the key considerations and challenges of setting up a PMU. The staffing of a PMU depends on the nature of the proposed assistance. If the project calls for strong political coordination and democracy building, then the Project Manager should have the profile and experience that fits with those requirements. Where there is a primary focus on technical assistance to the EMB then it may be advisable for the manager's skills to reflect this priority or for there to be a Chief Technical Advisor post supported by a Project Manager.

Management structures used in electoral assistance projects vary widely depending upon the context. Programming within peacekeeping or other political mission structures led by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) or other representative of the Secretary-General differs from that managed by UNDP Country Offices in more stable environments. In a peacekeeping context, the SRSG heads up the overall mission and is supported by deputies responsible for political and development/humanitarian areas. It is especially important in such contexts that the political and development interests are in close communication and that there is harmonisation in the reporting process.

EC-UNDP-IDEA (2007) *Joint Training on Effective Electoral Assistance: Participants' Manual*, European Commission, the United Nations Development Programme and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

http://www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=46&Itemid

This training manual includes a section (Module Four) on EC-UNDP Procedures for Programming, Identification, Formulation, Implementation and Evaluation. Particularly pertinent is the sub-section on delivery methods (p.93), which provides an explanation of the differences and utility of Direct and National Execution modalities.

Direct Execution, where the UNDP manages the project itself, is the default modality for election-specific projects. Here, senior PMU staff report to the UNDP and to donors through a steering committee.

National Execution, where project management is carried out by a governmental entity, is more common for longer-term electoral projects that offer capacity assistance to EMBs. Here, the project is managed by the EMB, with the UNDP working closely with the EMB to identify specialist support needs.

International IDEA (2009) *Making Electoral Assistance Effective: From Formal Commitment to Actual Implementation*, ACE Focus On Series, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

http://www.idea.int/publications/making_electoral_assistance_effective/upload/ACE_focus_eng_low.pdf

This paper describes the activities and initiatives undertaken by institutions such as the EC and UNDP in order to make electoral assistance effective. It includes a section on 'Setting Up an Effective Electoral Assistance Project' (p.18). It highlights the planning, identification and formulation stages as perhaps the most critical to effective electoral assistance.

The coordination mechanism that has shown the best results is the **multi-level assistance coordination system that covers political, managerial and technical levels**. In addition, participation of the partner country institutions in the technical coordination mechanisms is essential, but needs to be planned before the implementation starts. Stakeholders' interest must also be stimulated and sustained by requiring multi-stakeholder participation in information sharing, for example through EMB/political party/CSO liaison mechanisms.

The most neglected component of electoral assistance programmes remains monitoring and evaluation. Operational auditing, external and internal peer reviews, results-based monitoring and evaluation tools and independent or multi-stakeholder post-election reviews all help to make electoral assistance programmes more effective.

3. Comparative Evaluations

ICAI (2012) *Evaluation of DFID's Electoral Support through UNDP*, Independent Commission for Aid Impact

<http://www.oecd.org/derec/50360055.pdf>

This evaluation assesses whether DFID funding for electoral support through the UNDP is being managed so as to be effective and deliver value for money. It draws on lessons learned from recent case studies from Malawi, Burundi, Bangladesh and Afghanistan and provides some recommendations pertinent to the management of electoral assistance programmes.

Risk management

UNDP risk management practices are not well developed and not all electoral support involves robust risk management tools so that problems can be identified in time for corrective action to be taken. In Malawi, DFID introduced a detailed Electoral Risk Register setting out plausible risks (e.g. abuse of incumbency, interference with the EMB and opposition boycotts) and indicators to suggest when they might be occurring, along with mitigating steps. Such tools need to be accompanied by a monitoring strategy, in which DFID and FCO staff meet regularly with the political parties, journalists and civil society representatives to collect up-to-date intelligence on events around the country.

DFID's oversight of UNDP

Formal governance and oversight arrangements of UNDP-managed basket funds were not always well designed. Oversight was achieved effectively in Burundi, where the following arrangements were implemented:

- political oversight, undertaken by senior representatives of international partners in-country (Heads of Mission);
- technical coordination of international support to the elections as a whole, involving all active donors;
- oversight of the UNDP basket fund, involving the contributing donors.

This structure ensures a clear separation between the political engagement of donors with the electoral process and the oversight of programme activities and funding. DFID and other donors should retain direct channels of communication with governments over election issues. It may also be appropriate to create a mechanism for technical co-ordination across different strands of electoral assistance, separate from oversight of the UNDP basket fund.

Such oversight structures were not as clearly articulated in Malawi. There was evidence of role confusion and tension among the stakeholders. Therefore, DFID and UNDP should invest more effort in the design of governance and oversight arrangements from the outset.

Monitoring

DFID and other donors should strengthen real-time monitoring of UNDP assistance. In Burundi, DFID funded an international elections expert attached to the EU observer mission. The expert produced regular and detailed briefing notes on various aspects of the preparations for the election. This ensured that the donors were well informed and allowed a healthy level of challenge to UNDP operations at the technical level.

Wilson, R., et al. (2008) *Review of UK Electoral Assistance in the Context of Lessons Emerging from Best Practice in International Experience*, Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/Review_UKElectoralAssistance_2008.pdf

This report compares UK electoral assistance with emerging best practice and draws on desk-based assessments of electoral assistance in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Malawi, Palestine, Rwanda, Yemen, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan and Sierra Leone. It offers lessons relating to UN management of electoral assistance, as well as some recommendations on inter-governmental coordination and risk assessment that are pertinent to the management of electoral assistance.

UN management of electoral assistance

The structures that the UN uses to implement their donor mandate vary depending on the circumstances of the country. In the DRC, the UN peacekeepers' logistical and administrative resources were largely responsible for delivering the election; similarly, the UN virtually managed the elections in Afghanistan and post-war Sierra Leone – in both cases due to lack of state capacity. However, the UN's management of these arrangements was criticised for lacking in electoral expertise and capacity. The UN's Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) was not engaged sufficiently regularly to provide the expert leadership required to assess progress with the election or the adequacy of the UNDP management arrangements and basket-fund policies. There was also often a lack of capacity: in some cases, regular UNDP staff were required to administer basket funds and lacked time and expertise.

The report outlines lessons learnt and good practices which could help to alleviate such perceived problems, including the following.

- DFID should insist as a condition of basket funding that UNDP recruits sufficient dedicated full-time expert staff to manage the basket fund and provide technical assistance.
- Donor spokespersons should be appointed at the political and technical levels to interact directly with the electoral commission, government, political parties and civil society. Often, donors' only formal interaction with the electoral process within a basket funding arrangement is through a committee, often chaired jointly by the electoral commission and UNDP. More direct representations to the head of the electoral commission and to ministers and political party leaders may be necessary to leverage changes or initiate requests for additional assistance.
- An expert adviser should be recruited to check on the UN's performance and the Government's progress on behalf of donors. In Zimbabwe, where there has been no aid to government for elections, the EU recruited an elections adviser to make short visits in the run-up to the election and for a longer period immediately prior to the

election. The adviser's expert input on the election process and its management informed donor policy and added credibility to their views.

- Furthermore, donors should remember that there are alternatives to the UN. In Pakistan's 2008 elections, for example, donors chose the Asia Foundation, rather than the UN, to coordinate some of their aid for NGOs.

UK Assistance/Cross-government Coordination

There were good working relations and coordination between the FCO and DFID in many of the case study countries. The FCO leads on political analysis and high level political meetings, whilst DFID leads on the technical side and on coordination with donors. In Malawi, there was good communication and a clear division of labour, particularly when it looked as though the 2004 elections were not on track and problems with the electoral commission began to surface. The FCO led on the political side of the process – meeting with political parties and various political contacts – whilst DFID provided the technical support and focused on managing relationships with the key donors.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessments for elections are conducted in the context of country assistance plans or programme approval processes. The case studies provide limited evidence of specific risk assessments around the election. For example, the focus of risk assessment in Rwanda has been around the partnership documents and their funding rather than for elections per se.

4. Country Case Studies

Afghanistan

Carrio, J., et al. (2011) *Final Evaluation: Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow Project*, United Nations Development Programme Afghanistan.

<http://www.undp.org.af/Projects/Report2011/elect/ELECT%20Final%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf>

The UNDP's Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow Project (ELECT) was the main vehicle through which the international community assisted the 2009 presidential and provincial elections and the 2010 parliamentary elections in Afghanistan.

The programme was led by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Political assistance was provided through UNAMA's Department of Political Affairs, with technical and financial assistance through ELECT. Logistical and security assistance was provided through UNOPS (with ELECT funding) and through NATO's

International Security Forces (ISAF), which had more than 85,000 troops in country. USAID undertook a bilateral programme supporting the Independent Elections Commission (IEC) in addition to providing funding through ELECT. Other complementary assistance came from Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, the United States and Germany.

Problems with the 2009 elections raised serious doubts among stakeholders as to the viability of the 2010 parliamentary elections. ELECT was perceived as implicitly responsible for the process and was therefore widely criticised. Consequently, UNDP commissioned an external mid-term evaluation in September 2009 to assess ELECT's performance, which noted a number of issues. It found an overly centralised project structure with the functions of technical advice to recipient organisations, ELECT programme management and political advice to UNAMA all within the hands of a single Chief Electoral Advisor (CEA). It also found a management style that lacked transparency and receptiveness to outside assistance and information sharing.

The mid-term evaluation recommendations included: (i) separating the three CEA functions; (ii) fully embedding technical assistance within organisations; and (iii) putting a quality assurance mechanism into place for the delivery of technical assistance.

The final evaluation states that in 2010, the process was much better coordinated and managed than in 2009, due in part to the following changes.

- Donor coordination was led and chaired by the IEC. ELECT supported IEC members in preparing for stakeholder meetings but kept a low profile, which was seen as an improvement.
- At the political level, the SRSG chaired a weekly Ambassadors' Forum, which helped to build consensus among the international community.
- Policy was made by the Project Board, under the co-chairmanship of the IEC and the SRSG. The presence of the SRSG enticed ambassadors to participate, which facilitated agreement on decisions and ensured a link between policy and implementation.
- ELECT financial and administrative support was ensured by a Project Management Unit. This comprised of 17 national and international staff and worked closely with the Country Office. The PMU was ultimately responsible for the delivery of the project.

The daily management of technical assistance should be separated from the political advisory role in any management arrangement. As a result of recommendations made in the 2009 mid-term evaluation, the Chief Technical Advisor retained the supervision of technical services, as well as the political advisory role. Given the difficult political context and frenetic pace of assistance, this was too much for one person. While it is important to have one single head for any project, daily work on the technical assistance

side should be entrusted to an equally experienced senior person. This also holds true for the project management side, where the evaluation team recommends the position of the project coordinator be replaced by that of project manager, as monitoring, reporting and coordination are an intrinsic part of project management.

UNDP (2010) *Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow*, Project Document, May 2010, United Nations Development Programme Afghanistan
http://www.undp.org.af/WhoWeAre/UNDPinAfghanistan/Projects/dcse/Prodoc_DCSE/EL_ECT_ProDoc%28Signed%29.pdf

This project document outlines the substantive revisions to the project in response to the mid-term review of activities conducted between the 2009 presidential and provincial elections and the 2010 *Wolesi Jirga* elections. The revisions were brought about in light of the substantial challenges of the 2009 elections. The revisions made incorporate a number of lessons learnt from the 2004-5 elections, highlighting the need for increased coordination, an enhanced flow of information, and increased efficiency and accountability. The document describes the implementation and project management arrangements.

Project Governance

- *Project Board (sometimes referred to as the Steering Committee)*: This was co-chaired by the IEC/ECC (depending on the issue under review) and UNDP. Members included UNAMA, UNDP, donors and other key domestic stakeholders. It was responsible for overall management control of the project and was accountable for resource mobilisation and expenditure, including financial oversight and approval of funding allocations. It received regular reports from the IEC, approved activities and expenditures, made decisions about the workplan and provided ongoing risk analysis. Its deliberations were informed by input from the Technical Group. It convened as often as required.
- *Technical Group*: The principal thematic review body for the project, including the review of policy matters pertaining to the project and the electoral process. It was co-chaired by the IEC/EEC and UNDP and members included implementing partners and donors. The group included and was informed by a number of thematic working groups covering every aspect of the election and electoral support. The agenda of group meetings included reports from donors on bilateral and other activities supported outside the confines of the ELECT project. The group met at least monthly and more often during peak electoral periods.
- *Internal UNAMA-UNDP Consultative Task Group*: This was established to coordinate UNAMA's role and responsibilities for political and policy leadership and UNDP's technical assistance responsibilities. Tellingly, stakeholder meetings were not included in the project as part of the revisions; instead, ELECT was tasked with supporting the IEC and ECC in organising consultations.

Project Management

UNDP ELECT was implemented using the direct implementation modality, which meant that the project was the direct responsibility of UNDP Afghanistan. The project management structure consisted of support for coordination and management by UNDP, in addition to technical assistance to the IEC and EEC.

- *Project Coordinator*: Reported directly to the Country Director, and was guided on strategic issues by a Chief Technical Advisor. The Project Coordinator was supported by a Project Management Unit, as well as a coordination and monitoring team.
- *Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)*: The CTA was responsible for substantive and technical leadership and provided high-level advice to the IEC and EEC. The CTA reported directly to the UNDP Country Director and was supported by the Project Coordinator.
- *Operations Adviser*: An Operations Adviser headed a Technical Assistance Team and was the primary electoral policy and technical advisor to the IEC after the CTA. The Operations Adviser reported to the Project Coordinator for administrative issues and to the CTA for policy related issues.
- *Technical Assistance Team*: Embedded within the IEC and advised different departments.
- *Election, Security and Logistics Advisers*: A small team based in regional offices supported, through capacity building, the regional and provincial IEC offices.
- *Dedicated Elections Focal Point*: The UNDP Country Office had an Elections Focal Point, who provided quality assurance of project documents and processes, and ensured compliance with UNDP procedures.
- *Project Management Unit (PMU)*: Based at the Country Office, the PMU reported directly to the Project Coordinator and provided operational services such as procurement, human resource management, budget planning, admin and logistics.

Bangladesh

UNDP (2011) Electoral Support Project: Strengthening Election Management in Bangladesh (SEMB) – Project Document, United Nations Development Project Bangladesh

<http://www.undp.org.bd/projects/prodocs/SEMB/Prodoc%20SEMB.pdf>

The SEMB is a nationally executed five-year electoral support project running from 2011-16. It consists of technical assistance designed to enhance and consolidate the

institutional and professional capacities of the Bangladesh Electoral Commission. The SEMB is a follow-on programme to a number of nationally executed projects supporting the electoral strategy in the run up to the 2008 elections. An independent evaluation in 2009 identified the need for continuing support to strengthen electoral processes and management through to 2015. A project management structure diagram is included on p.20 of the document.

The SEMB is being executed by the Economics Relations Division (ERD) of the Bangladesh Ministry of Finance and the UNDP. Programme and project management consists of the following structures.

- *Project Steering Committee (PSC)*: The highest level policy and oversight body. It provides policy guidelines, reviews all aspects of project progress, and ensures coordination with other national initiatives and development projects. It meets quarterly and receives reports from a Programme Management and Administration Support Unit (PMSU). The Election Commission Secretariat chairs the PSC and the National Project Director acts as the Secretary. It includes representatives from: the Planning Commission; the Finance Division; the Economic Relations Division (ERD) (part of the Ministry of Finance); representatives of other development and elections related projects such as the National Identity Registration Department (NIRD), the Electoral Training Institute (ETI) and the Preparation of Electoral Roll with Photographs (PERP) projects; the Planning Wing of the Election Commission, the UNDP, the EU, DFID and USAID.
- *Project Implementation Committee*: Supervises the overall project implementation and the day-to-day management of the project. It is responsible for preparing and endorsing the quarterly work plan, the monthly and quarterly progress report, the annual workplan and the annual progress report. It is chaired by the National Project Director and includes representatives from: the Planning Commission; the ERD; the Ministry of Planning; PERP; ETI; the Elections Commission; the UNDP as well as the Project Coordinator.
- *Programme Management and Administration Support Unit (PMSU)*: The National Project Director is ultimately responsible for the day-to-day management of SEMB, but is supported by the PMSU. The unit includes recruited posts, including international experts, to cover the following skillsets: training and capacity building (international and local experts); communications (international and local experts); ICT (international and local); operations manager; project management and finance experts; human resources; systems administration; website administrators and programmers.
- *PMSU project support staff*. Project Associate; Project Assistants; Training Assistants; Finance and admin assistants; Office Secretary; Drivers and a Messenger.

Nepal

Election Commission Nepal (n.d.) *Electoral Support Project: Institutional Strengthening and Professional Development Support for the Election Commission of Nepal – Project Document*, Election Commission Nepal and United Nations Development Programme Nepal

www.undp.org.np/pdf/projectdocs/ESP%20project%20document.pdf

The Electoral Support Project (ESP) was a three-year directly implemented technical assistance initiative which ran from 2008 to 2011. It commenced upon the completion of the Constituent Assembly elections and supported the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) to address longer term challenges to the electoral process. A project management diagram is included on p.32.

UNDP Nepal in consultation with the ECN and other partners directly implemented the project. It consisted of the following structures.

- *Electoral Support Team*: Based at the ECN's headquarters, it comprised an international Senior Electoral Advisor, an international Capacity Development Advisor and a national Administrative Assistant.
- *Senior Electoral Advisor*: Acted as the Project Manager and was responsible for implementation, including the day-to-day management and decision-making and reports to a Project Board.
- *Project Board*: Responsible for making consensual management decisions when guidance was required by the Senior Electoral Advisor. It also led project reviews on a quarterly basis. It included representatives of the ECN, UNDP Nepal and the international/donor community. Of these, the ECN representative served as the main focal point for implementation issues and interacted on a regular basis with the Senior Electoral Advisor.
- *Operations Manager (UNDP Nepal)*: Provided project support.
- *Programmes Officer*: Provided project assurance and supported the day-to-day work of the Senior Electoral Advisor.
- *Project Implementation Teams*: Made up of short- and medium-term consultants, recruited as required, to support the Electoral Support Team in the implementation of activities.
- *Steering Committee*: Chaired by the ECN and comprised of donors and other international organisations. It provided an impartial forum for consensus building and held review meetings every six months.

Sudan

UNDP (n.d.) *Support to Elections and Democratic Processes, United Nations Development Programme Sudan*

http://www.sd.undp.org/doc/prodocs/dg16%20elections_PD.pdf

This project document illustrates the planned management arrangements and coordination mechanisms for the ‘Support to Elections and Democratic Processes’ project, which ran from April 2009 to December 2010 in support of the 2010 elections.

Management Arrangements

The project was implemented through an established UNDP Project Management Unit (PMU), with offices located both in Khartoum and Juba. The UNDP integrated interventions for the north and south of Sudan, including integrated reporting, management arrangements and regular direct engagement between teams in the north and south. This was to ensure that interventions were responsive to the particular needs of the south, including geographic accessibility due to limited physical infrastructure and security flashpoints.

The Project Manager – supported by logistics, operations and finance teams – was responsible for the day-to-day management and decision-making for the project. In Juba, a Deputy Project Manager ensured the continuity of the project in the southern states. The PMU included a Principal Senior Elections Advisor based in Khartoum and a Senior Elections Advisor based in Juba to provide overarching and day-to-day technical support to the project. Each advisor received the support of a team of electoral specialists. The advisors were part of the core staffing structure of the UNDP Country Office reporting to the Head of the Governance and Rule of Law Unit, and provided advisory support to the Deputy Country Director of Programmes. The project manager, special advisors and respective teams supported activity implementation and monitoring in both the north and the south.

The elections project office in Khartoum was located near the National Elections Commission (NEC) Headquarters and the Principal Senior Elections Advisor and Elections Specialists were co-located within the NEC Secretariat with appropriate staff and other advisors. A similar project office was established in Juba.

Donor Coordination

Several donor countries contributed to the project through an Elections Assistance Basket Fund administered by the UNDP. Decisions for combined donor contributions were made within a Basket Fund Steering Committee (BFSC), which was chaired by the NEC and co-chaired by the two donors who had made the highest contributions – in this case the European Commission and DFID. Voting members on the committee included the Ministry of International Cooperation (MIC), the Ministry of Finance and other donors. The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), the International Foundation for Electoral

Systems (IFES) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) held observer status. The UNDP managed the basket fund and provided secretariat functions to the BFSC.

Roles and responsibilities of the main actors involved in managing the project

The document includes the following table (on p.30), which provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the main actors:

Stakeholder	Role in Elections	Role in the UNDP project
NEC	To organise and supervise elections in Sudan	Chair of BFSC. Liaise with UNDP on planning for electoral activities such as civic education, training of observers, media support, and registration and polling procedures. Liaise on key planning activities such as procurement and operational procedures.
UNMIS Elections Assistance Division	Provide lead technical assistance on behalf of the UN to the NEC.	Work together with the NEC and UNDP Electoral Specialists to implement programme activities as described in the Project Document. Advise on the technical specifications of equipment with NEC Secretariat and refer details to UNDP project for procurement.
UNDP	Support technical assistance on behalf of the UN to the NEC; Provide lead support on long-term democratic development activities	Manage the electoral assistance basket fund. Implement programme activities as described within the project document. Procure equipment and services to support the electoral process as per NEC specifications and UNMIS EAD advisory.
IFES	Support technical assistance on behalf of USAID to the NEC	Implement support activities to the electoral process and the NEC as per their contract agreement with USAID.

Coordination Mechanisms

As well as the BFSC, several coordination mechanisms were built into the project to avoid the duplication of efforts. These included the following.

- A Policy Committee, whose role was to discuss elections policy and make key decisions with government, UN and other electoral stakeholders. Representation included the NEC, MIC, MRC, MOFA, UNMIS, UNDP, EC, USAID and other BFSC donors.

- A Technical Committee, whose role was to coordinate logistics and operations to support election activities. Decisions in this forum informed the BFSC. Representation included the NEC, MIC, UNMIS, UNDP, EC and IFES.
- There were also a number of non-basket related information sharing groups to facilitate communication and reduce parallel planning efforts. These included an Electoral Assistance Group (EAG) and a South Sudan Electoral Donors Group (SSEDG), which were attended by UNMIS, UNDP, donors, UN agencies, relevant INGOs and implementing partners. The EAG and SSEDG included working groups on civic and voter education and the media, and the EAG included a donor working group.

These mechanisms were supplemented by a number of internal UN committees and task forces, such as the UN Committee on Elections, which was responsible for internal UN policymaking, and a UNMIS Internal Elections Task Force, which provided internal coordination for elections planning across all relevant UN agencies.

The appendices include some useful resources, such as a project organogram (p.49) and Terms of Reference for the BFSC (p.50), the Policy Committee (p.53) and the Technical Committee (p.56).

DWG – R (n.d.) *Lessons Learnt from Elections Programming - DRAFT, Draft Working Group – Referendum*

This is a draft document provided by DFID.

The purpose of this document is to draw upon lessons learnt from election programming and to support coordination of donor programming (design and implementation) for the Southern Sudan Referendum, Abyei Referendum, Popular Consultations, and post 2011 negotiations.

The key lesson learnt was that international stakeholders need to identify as soon as possible the key political and technical messages to be delivered to national counterparts, and to then identify and establish mechanisms for these messages to be effectively delivered.

The document provides an evaluation of the various management structures that were in place for international assistance to the Sudan elections.

Donor Working Group – Elections (DWG-E)

- The DWG-E played a useful role in supporting the coordination of donor programming (both design and implementation). However, while it needed to discuss both technical and programmatic issues, it sometimes became bogged down with

these issues, which should be avoided in the future.

- Juba was not involved in the DWG-E and there were no joint meetings until the elections. For the post-2011 process, it is essential that there is strong coordination between Juba and Khartoum.
- UNMIS presence as an observer at DWG-E meetings enabled more informed political and programmatic discussions.
- The decision not to invite UNDP as an observer to the DWG-E enabled open discussion among donors, without concerns around conflict of interest (UNDP as an implementing agency with donor finance).
- The DWG-E was able to integrate political and programmatic dialogue – essential in such a high profile process and in such a politically charged environment, where technical issues and programmatic issues are often not seen as separate by other stakeholders (e.g. political parties) and are often raised at a high political level.

Elections Assistance Group (EAG)

- The EAG played a useful role in allowing a broader group to meet and focus on technical issues. However, it was completely separate from the DWG-E, which resulted in significant repetition of discussion. A closer linkage (in terms of timing of meetings) might have enabled shorter meetings in both cases.

Policy Committee

- This played a useful role in allowing key technical and programmatic messages to be raised at a level where a response could be encouraged. However, at times, the Policy Committee became bogged down in technical issues – and more effort could have been made to refer these to NEC and then ensure effective technical level discussions with the NEC.
- The Policy Committee format played only a limited role in terms of enabling effective political engagement and messaging. It was limited in structure (e.g. no political parties were present) and facilitated only limited productive discussion. Other mechanisms are required that include all political stakeholders.

Donor Lessons from the UNDP Basket Fund

- The Basket Fund Governance Structure was of limited effectiveness. The Basket Fund Steering Committee was often unable to make decisions or have a useful dialogue due to: (i) lack of a senior presence from the UNDP Country Office (often donors were talking to UNDP consultants who are not accountable for UNDP); (ii) a disconnect between the Basket Fund and Policy Committee; and (iii) the need for

more senior policy and operational representation from the national body.

- The Basket Fund for Elections took a long time to become established and some donors did not contribute funds until the last minute – if a similar structure is used for support to the Referendum process, then it will be important to secure funds as quickly as possible given the tight timeline.
- Between DWG-E, EAG and Basket Fund Steering Committee meetings, there was some repetition in information. Linking the timings of DWG-E and EAG meetings would have helped.
- The move to have technical meetings prior to steering committee meetings was useful in allowing more productive steering committee meetings at the later stage of the election process.

5. Further Information

Additional GSDRC reports

The GSDRC has published two additional reports on electoral assistance programmes that may be of interest.

- Haider, H. (2008) *Electoral Assistance Lessons*. Helpdesk Research Report, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre.
This report contains further coverage of the electoral cycle approach and the broader lessons learned from electoral assistance programmes.
Available at: <http://www.gsdr.org/docs/open/HD546.pdf>
- McLoughlin, C. (2008) *Multi-donor Funding for Elections in Post-Conflict or Fragile States*, Helpdesk Research Report, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre.
This report provides examples of good practice in basket funding arrangements in post-conflict and fragile states.
Available at: <http://www.gsdr.org/docs/open/HD538.pdf>

Key websites

ACE – The Electoral Knowledge Network, the Asia Foundation, Bangladesh ECS, the Carter Center, DFID R4D, European Commission, EC-UNDP Partnership on Electoral Assistance, GSDRC, International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), United Nations Electoral Assistance Division, OECD DAC, OSCE, UNDP (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sudan), USAID.

About Helpdesk research reports: Helpdesk reports are based on 3 days of desk-based research. They are designed to provide a brief overview of the key issues and a summary of some of the best literature available. Experts are contacted during the course of the research, and those able to provide input within the short time-frame are acknowledged.