

Evaluation Report Title: Ghana Electoral Support Programme, 2012 - 13

Response to Evaluation Report (overarching narrative)

DFID-Ghana welcomes the findings of the external evaluation of the Ghana Electoral Support Programme (GESP), which ran from March 2012 to November 2013. The programme provided assistance to Government of Ghana (GoG) institutions including the Judiciary, Electoral Commission, security agencies, and also to civil society organisations to ensure a 6th consecutive peaceful and generally accepted elections.

The independent evaluation found that the project components contributed to the higher-level objectives of a peaceful election, concluding that the GESP components “*delivered to plan and that excellent progress was made in delivering towards logical framework targets, milestones and outputs*”. The evaluation however “*identified aspects of GESP implementation that encountered significant challenges. This applies largely to the Electoral Commission and the use of Biometric Voter Registration*”.

The evaluation made a number of recommendations concerning the structure of the programme, with a view to improving future support. Of particular note, the evaluation assessed the approach of GESP as a one-year election programme and recommended “*extending this into a programme that would provide support during the entire election cycle*”. We welcome the recommendations from the evaluation and will consider these in future programmes. We will share the findings of the evaluation across our network to ensure lessons are built into programmes supporting elections in other countries, as appropriate.

Key findings are summarized below.

GESP was based on credible evidence of the importance of fair, free and peaceful elections to ensuring democratic stability and accountability in Ghana

The evaluation concluded that the programme had identified the key electoral challenges, was comprehensive in nature and addressed election challenges at stages throughout the election process continuum. However, the omission of high-level political party engagement (beyond Electoral Commission activities) failed to address the importance of political party acceptance of the credibility of the election process and the election institutions. The lack of coordination mechanisms amongst the nine implementing partners potentially resulted in the failure to capitalise on synergies between complementary activities.

We agree with the importance of coordination as well as engagement. During the programme substantial levels of coordination took place. For future programmes, we will explore opportunities for optimising formal and informal structures for coordination.

GESP's interventions complemented the work of other partners and reflected the priorities and existing work of Ghana's Government.

The evaluation concluded that the programme's design noted the existing and anticipated election support priorities and interventions of other donor partners and although broader in scope than other donor programmes, GESP did not duplicate that support. Likewise, GESP funded state institutions to undertake non-core activities that would not otherwise have been undertaken and were designed to contribute to more credible and peaceful election outcomes.

We agree with the point made.

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Effectiveness of the programme

The evaluation noted that while all five GESP components delivered towards their objectives and overall met their targets, the Police, Coalition of Domestic Observers (CODEO) and civil society interventions were the most effective and made the biggest difference in terms of addressing the problems that undermine free, peaceful and fair election processes.

We agree with the point.

Coverage of the programme

The evaluation concluded that there was mixed effectiveness of the programme's targeting of inequities related to participation in the electoral process. The civil society interventions led through Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana demonstrated a focus on addressing inequality and promoting gender equality and social inclusion. The election registration process was inclusive, although the target to achieve greater female representation and inclusion in other interventions, were not attained.

Within the overall success we recognise the challenges on equality and inclusion and the need to pay further attention to these areas.

Impact of the GESP

The evaluation also concluded that GESP's design and architecture proved to be an effective approach in supporting a peaceful election process. Aligning with GoG priorities and working alongside key state institutions along with the citizens of Ghana (through STAR-Ghana) and supporting these key components with a capacity building strategy proved successful. There was general agreement amongst informed stakeholders that through GESP support, election disputes were handled more effectively and that voter education and participation of excluded groups was greater than in any previous election. In this regard, the programme achieved its outcome objectives and contributed in a substantial way towards a 6th consecutive peaceful election process.

DFID-Ghana welcomes the findings and we agree with the recommendations on the importance of coordination between state institutions.

Sustainability of the GESP

The evaluation concluded that programme activities were delivered with a focus on sustainability - building the capacity of individuals and institutions to manage and support credible elections without creating an over-reliance on donor funding. While this approach was appreciated by many of the programme beneficiaries, the nature of the election process means that it is beyond the capability of the programme to ensure that these benefits are carried forward to the next election process.

DFID-Ghana welcomes the finding. In response, we held a lesson-learning event with implementing partners to assess the performance of the various implementation partners during the 2012 general elections, share the lessons learnt, assess the challenges that confronted the partners and causes of these challenges and develop an action plan which will help reduce the occurrence of these challenges in the next general elections in 2016.

Our specific Management Response to the recommendations from the evaluation is set out in the table below. We thank the evaluation team for their work. The report has provided important input for DFID and implementing partners in the consideration of electoral support programmes in Ghana and beyond.

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Recommendations	Accepted or Rejected	If “Accepted”, Action plan for Implementation or if “Rejected”, Reason for Rejection
1. Relevance of the programme		
Engage the national party leadership directly in the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC), an informal but well-established body comprising representatives of all registered political parties and the Electoral Commission that meets to discuss, agree on, and advice the Electoral Commission on election matters.	Principle accepted. Specific action rejected.	DFID-Ghana agree on the importance of engaging political parties, but we disagree that IPAC is the best approach. National party and political leaders were engaged at the highest levels by DFID and the British High Commission. Their ideas and suggestions contributed to the design of the programme. IPAC, as currently composed, is a dialogue platform between the Electoral Commission and the political parties, with development partners participating as observers. As such it is one among a range of ways to encourage regular and appropriate engagement between the parties and the Electoral Commission.
2. Coherence and coordination		
The Election Working Group (EWG) is unique and the donors interviewed were not aware of any other group like it in Africa, especially during non-election years. The EWG could coordinate and build support for the coming 2016 election if a cyclical approach was considered as opposed to a linear one-year election approach. A platform with civil society, institutions and donors could be developed now to continue dialogue on election-related issues. Each institution could share work plans and donor partners could look at mutual governance priorities and how these align to GoG priorities, drawing lessons from the 2012 election to inform support during the next electoral cycle.	Accepted	We agree that regular on-going dialogue – as opposed to short-term dialogue around elections - on elections and democracy is critical to being a credible partner. The Election Working Group started meeting in mid-2013 to consider implications of the then presidential election petition before the Supreme Court. Following the verdict, a sub-committee worked on identifying key electoral reform issues to be followed up with the Electoral Commission. The efforts are being coordinated by the Elections Sector Working group co-chairs, UNDP and the EU. We note that Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia, Kenya and Tanzania have had democracy/election working groups active for years.

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3. Effectiveness of the programme		
<p>A coordination function across the components was largely lacking during the implementation and delivery of GESP. The components worked in silos as opposed to collectively. We recommend that any future design put in place a coordination function to plan around mutual areas of work and common areas of impact. A specific output dedicated to coordination should be incorporated into logframes to hold the programme and components to account, and monthly coordination meetings could be held with brief reporting, action points and agreed follow-up. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) could play an initial important role in coordinating components but also sit in quarterly meetings to get a sense of how work is progressing and help resolve any issues that may arise.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>We agree with this recommendation to increase synergy and achieve value for money amongst different components in the project. We recognise the role DFID played and have already convened a lesson-learning event. This provided an opportunity for implementing partners to outline their plans, discuss best practice and share learning on accountability and transparency within their organisations.</p>
<p>Reconsider the approach of GESP as a one-year election programme and extend into a full election support programme that would consider the entire election cycle. Stakeholders overall pointed to the importance that support to elections needs to not be time bound and restricted to a certain stage of the election. There are opportunities to work well before the election year, particularly with voter education and providing MIS or IT guidance to improve the quality of the Electoral Commission systems in place. Post-election, the EWG could be a key contributor to this effort and continue the dialogue with institutions and civil society to discuss key concerns and challenges, priorities and workplans for the upcoming election 2016.</p>	<p>Principle accepted.</p> <p>Specific action rejected.</p>	<p>We agree with a full election cycle programme approach.</p> <p>However, GESP was planned to be our last major support to a Ghanaian election. This was based on a long history of support, but also recognition of progress in Ghana's election-related institutions. UK's substantial support in 2012 was needed in part because of the shift to biometric registration. The elections were disputed, but state institutions performed credibly and showed resilience.</p> <p>Development partners are coordinating activities towards district and general elections from 2014 – 2016.</p>

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4. Coverage of the programme		
<p>Future programme designs should identify opportunities to address the importance of fair and inclusive elections. Programme and component workplans should demonstrate a strong commitment to integrating issues of gender and social inclusion into programme activities. There is room for a number of improvements in regards to a more integrated gender-social inclusion approach by working with the Ministry of Women or Women's Affair Committees and have more targeted interventions to build capacity and incentivise change.</p>	<p>Principle accepted.</p> <p>Specific action rejected</p>	<p>DFID is committed to inclusivity, to democratic principles of all eligible people given right and access to vote, and to gender issues. DFID very much welcome the focus of the evaluation on these elements and the evaluation findings. Fairness and inclusivity are important issues for DFID and these points will be considered within any future plans to support the election cycle. We will continue to work with other partners to ensure that gender elements, and marginalised groups, are fully considered.</p> <p>However, fair and inclusive elections are beyond the scope of any one development intervention. There are deep-seated structural and social barriers that will require time to address.</p> <p>Gender equality is a cross-cutting theme of DFID Ghana's portfolio, and we will continue to work through and support relevant partners (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, STAR Ghana, the public and media) to promote gender equality, inclusivity and fairness.</p>
5. Impact of the programme		
<p>We recommend that a capacity-building framework be developed as support to state institutions was a key approach for the GESP.</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>In principle we agree that a comprehensive capacity development framework for state institutions would be helpful. However, the extent to which this is an expressed need is not clear. The Election sub-group may wish to explore the recommendation further.</p>
6. Sustainability of the programme		
<p>In order to improve the sustainability of election support activities, future electoral support programmes should take a strategic approach to facilitating partnerships between government institutions and other election bodies. It would also be beneficial to have an end of project workshop with all implementing partners to capture lessons, learning and innovative practices to take forward for the next election.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>As stated in Recommendation 3, this lesson –learning workshop has already been convened and the most significant lessons shared with DFID Governance Advisers working in the Africa region and others implementing electoral support programmes.</p>

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