Evaluation Report Title: Evaluation of Africa Democracy Strengthening Programme – Phase Two

Response to Evaluation Report (overarching narrative)

DFID and the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) welcome the findings and recommendations of the independent evaluation of the Africa Democracy Strengthening Programme II (ADS II). The evaluation had two key objectives, (a) accountability, and (b) lesson learning. The final evaluation report was reviewed by DFID's external quality assurance panel prior to approval and found to be "excellent".

This document reflects a joint management response by DFID and EISA to the evaluation. Each core recommendation in the evaluation was either directed to DFID or EISA. In the response to recommendations table below the response is from the individual organisation (either DFID or EISA) that has been specified.

The ADS II programme was designed to strengthen democratic governance and electoral processes in Africa through the provision of training, wider capacity building support and technical advice to multiple stakeholders at the continental and national levels. Specifically, at the continental level EISA has provided technical support to the African Union (AU) to enhance its capacity to manage and carry out professional Election Observation Missions (EOMs). At the national level, in Kenya, Chad and Mozambique, the programme has sought to improve the functioning of national electoral management bodies (EMBs) and democratic institutions through improving the breadth of stakeholder engagement in the election process, strengthening the interaction between legislatures and civil society and supporting enhancement to the institutional management of political parties. ADSII was launched in 2009 and, after extension to activities at the continental level, will now conclude in March 2015.

There were two key elements to the evaluation methodology:

- a process evaluation which assessed: 1) what the project is doing, 2) whether the programme is performing in terms of its capacity to deliver the quantity and quality of activities and services that were originally planned; 3) whether the activities and services delivered are being used for the optimal effect and 4) whether programme management and administration arrangements are facilitating the delivery process to this end; and

- a theory-based evaluation which refined and then assessed the extent to which the theory of change underpinning EISA's approach to regional strengthening activities held true. This element of the evaluation also considered the contribution that regional strengthening activities make to improving election management and assessment processes and increasing the credibility of election systems and results.

Overall, at the output level, the evaluation concluded that ADSII had met or exceeded expectations in most areas, in some instances substantially. In this regard it found that "*EISA is delivering ADSII effectively and that the programme represents a good return on DFID's investment of funds*", managed in a way that "*deliver[s] high-quality outputs at a reasonable cost*".

In terms of outcomes, the evaluation found evidence from a range of stakeholders which "*consistently demonstrated the relevance of ADSII to increasing the credibility*

and quality of national elections in Africa". It also found that ADSII results had leveraged the benefits of EISA's "dual role" as both a regionally respected source of technical expertise and a trusted local partner to government, civil society organisations (CSOs) and political parties in Mozambique, Chad and Kenya. In particular, the evaluation found that ADSII had contributed to the following:

- increased strength and effectiveness of democratic institutions at the pan-African level. The ability of the AU to organise and deliver EOMs has improved significantly during the period of ADSII. This change process has been driven by the AU itself, but it is clear that EISA has made a significant contribution;

- stronger and more effective democratic institutions in Kenya, Chad and Mozambique. Bills and policies are now subject to public consultation, EOMs are operated more effectively and deliver better outputs, and electoral processes are less likely to fail as a result of the ADSII programme; and

- significantly increasing the space for civil society to engage on electoral reform with political parties and parliamentarians in Mozambique and Kenya.

The evaluation was largely conducted in accordance with the evaluation plan. While the effects of ADS II were considered (particularly in relation to regional approaches), this was not however an impact evaluation. As such, the sampling strategy was designed to be inclusive rather than representative, and a robust counterfactual was not developed. The scale of the evaluation also placed limits on the breadth of research undertaken. This meant that research focussed largely on stakeholders with direct involvement with ADSII. Indirect beneficiaries were not consulted in the evaluation, nor were stakeholders who were not directly involved in EISA activities. In most areas, the evaluation team found adequate information was gathered from a range of stakeholders to enable them to triangulate evidence and make reliable assessments. In some cases, however, it was not possible to triangulate the evidence of certain stakeholders and the report is explicit in recognising that the evidence base is weaker where this is the case.

The key recommendations from the evaluation focused on three themes:

(i)   Results

        The ability to apply knowledge and learning across contexts and scales has added significant value to ADS II, increasing the credibility and quality of individual project interventions as well as the overall effectiveness of the programme. This effectiveness can be attributed, in part, to the way in which ADSII funding was structured. Regional funding of the programme, allowed EISA which is an African-based body, greater flexibility to work across scales than would otherwise be present. The evaluation therefore recommends that any future iterations of ADSII reflect on the regional added value of ADSII demonstrated through the evaluation.

(ii)   Sustainability

        The evaluation found it more useful to understand sustainability in terms of the quality and longevity of relationships and institutional structures

being created, rather than the decreased reliance of key stakeholders on services. For example it found that the AU might not seek to provide all observer training in house, but could move to make more strategic use of partners such as EISA. In this regard it recommended that EISA maintains its partnership with the AU, in coordination with other organisations, and agrees a more strategic basis for this relationship.

(iii)   <u>Programme Management</u>

The evaluation highlighted the complexities of monitoring democratic governance programmes such as ADSII, in particular where flexibility is a key aspect of ensuring delivery across a range of contexts. Although it found good awareness within EISA of the need to collect regular data to track progress against logframe indicators, it felt that EISA could further strengthen its internal monitoring and evaluation processes. This might include improving the effectiveness of the logframe for capturing results and as a project management tool, or more systematically capturing instances of synergies/alignment with activities undertaken by other organisations.

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Recommendations: DFID	Accepted or Rejected	If "Accepted", Action plan for Implementation or if "Rejected", Reason for Rejection
1. **Maintain a flexible approach**. EISA has been able to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities to ensure ADS II remained relevant to the problems it aims to address and delivers effectively. DFID has played an important role in enabling this flexibility through a strong working relationship with EISA and a willingness to quickly fund new activities that contribute to programme goals. The evaluation team therefore recommended that DFID retain this flexibility in future iterations of ADSII and develop strategies to ensure that a flexible approach to implementation is not lost due to internal staff changes. [Specific recommendations 5.4, 5.5D] 2. **Continue to structure programmes to capitalise on partners' strengths**. EISA occupies a unique position as a respected regional body with in-depth knowledge of a variety of national contexts and access to key counterparts at all levels of the system. ADS II demonstrated the value of this position to both regional and national level work. The evaluation team therefore recommended that future programming ensures partners able to continue to operate at both regional and national levels in a coherent and complementary way. [Specific recommendations 5.1, 5.3B, 5.5E, 5.5F]	Accepted	DFID fully recognises the significant contribution played by EISA's regional role and ability to work across contexts in delivering ADSII results. DFID also appreciates that the contexts within which ADSII operates makes it especially important to maintain flexibility. This has been demonstrated throughout implementation of ADSII, for example through successful scaling up of support for AU election observation to maximise achievements under output 1, or scaling back activities in Burundi where contextual changes meant assumptions underlying the intervention would no longer be realised. DFID is currently considering options for future regional democratic governance programming and will draw on the findings of this evaluation in full to ensure that any future programming does take account of lessons learned about working across contexts and the need for continued flexibility, on both the part of DFID and implementing partners. As also acknowledged in the evaluation, an important corollary for flexibility is the need to ensure robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including regular update to the logframe to reflect any significant changes in focus. This will also be taken into account in any future design. Drawing on the evaluation, and recognising the significant contribution that ADSII has made to strengthening AU election observation methodology and practice, DFID has already increased funding under ADSII to maintain enhanced engagement with the AU for a further 12 months. **Action: commenced and ongoing.**
Recommendations: DFID and EISA	**Accepted or**	**If "Accepted", Action plan for Implementation or if "Rejected", Reason for Rejection**

	Rejected	
3. **The findings of DFID's wider research on democratic governance and elections should be used when updating the ADSII theory of change** to ensure achievement of outcomes actually contributes to delivering the stated programme impact. [Specific recommendation 5.6]	Accepted	EISA has already taken significant steps to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methodology and capacity. An important aspect of this will be periodically reflecting on and updating its theory of change, which includes the specifically regional aspects of this which were further refined through the evaluation. DFID will routinely share emerging lessons from its Research and Evidence Division on democratic governance and elections. **Action: commenced and ongoing.**
Recommendations: EISA	**Accepted or Rejected**	**If "Accepted", Action plan for Implementation or if "Rejected", Reason for Rejection**
4. **Use the log frame as a project management tool**. Where activities under outputs change, EISA should update the log frame and targets in coordination with DFID to ensure that the benefits of activities actually delivered are captured and recorded. [Specific recommendation 5.5A] 5. **Strengthen M&E systems**. Improving M&E systems will help EISA to collect evidence of their effectiveness. For example, EISA could systematically record instances where potential overlap of activities is avoided and / or complementarily with the work of other organisations is maximised for use in future evaluations and reports. [Specific recommendation 5.5A]	Accepted	EISA has already carried out a thorough review of its M&E processes and has recruited a dedicated M&E programme officer tasked with developing appropriate tools to monitor the quality of programme implementation and ensure systematic reporting, sharing and managing of information on project progress. The strengthened M&E system will ensure the following: 1) evidence of programme achievements are systematically collected, and better captured and reported on; 2) programme interventions are responsive to changing contexts or partner needs and any potential problems or deviations are flagged; 3) routine feedback is gathered from partners/beneficiaries and lessons learned are fed back to management; and 4) the programme log frame is better utilised to track activity implementation and is regularly updated. **Action: work to strengthen M&E systems has already commenced and will be continually reviewed by EISA.**

6.	**Update the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between EISA and the AU Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit (DEAU)**. As the AU moves to supporting long-term observation, EISA should agree on the role the organisation will play in supporting DEAU and formalise this agreement in an updated MOU to help ensure future work remains relevant to the problem, complementary to existing work, and coordinated with the work of other partners on an on-going basis. [Specific recommendation 5.2, 5.5C]	Accepted	A renewed MOU has been agreed verbally and is expected to be formally signed in early 2014 following the appointment by the AU Commission of the new Director of the Department of Political Affairs. **Action: MoU agreed verbally and to be signed by May 2014. A revised work plan will be developed by April 2014**
7.	**EISA should consider reviewing long-standing agreements with suppliers for key goods and services** to ensure that these still represent best value for money and ensure that EISA is securing the most cost-effective options available. [Specific recommendation 5.6]	Accepted	EISA carries out a review of standing agreements with vendors every 2 years in addition to regularly assessing costs for key goods and services necessary for effective and efficient implementation of programmes. In addition the strengthened M&E system will periodically assess cost effectiveness of the programme. **Action: EISA will review agreements every 2 years. Cost effectiveness will be assessed when carrying out mid-term and end of project internal evaluations as stipulated by the EISA M & E system.**
8.	**EISA should capitalise on opportunities for maximising the benefits of its regional presence**, for example by using EMB and CSO staff members as election observers where lessons can be across contexts. [Specific recommendation 5.3A]	Accepted	As a matter of policy, EISA draws its observers (including EMBs and CSOs) from across the different sub-regions of the continent. **Action: Observers drawn from EMBs and CSOs from countries that will be having elections in the same year will be prioritised in EISA observer missions. This will facilitate immediate assimilation of lessons-learnt and best practices in the observers countries of origin.**