

**Re: Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) Activities in East Timor –  
as at 20 July 2011**

This paper outlines planned activities, primarily focussed on capacity-building, conducted by the AEC until the end of 2012 in support of East Timor's electoral processes, pursuant to Activity Schedule 24 to Record of Understanding 36529 between the AEC and AusAID. It has been prepared against the background of AusAID's and the AEC's long-standing support for those processes, and in the light of the *Report of the Official Australian Delegation to observe the 2007 Parliamentary Election in East Timor*, which included among its "recommendations for future elections based on its observations during the 2007 parliamentary election" the following specific proposition:

"Australian assistance to East Timorese election officials be offered to East Timor at an appropriate level between elections. Assistance should include opportunities for selected election officials to visit Australia and work with Australian Electoral Commission officials during Federal elections and at other appropriate opportunities to assist capacity-building in STAE [the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration] and CNE [the National Elections Commission]."

Between now and the end of 2012, the AEC is delivering an AusAID funded program of electoral assistance in East Timor, as a continuation of one which commenced in June 2009, building on engagement which started at the time of the 1999 'popular consultation'.

The AEC works on the premise that contribution to electoral processes which are credible and transparent, and seen to be so, will help to consolidate stable and effective governance in East Timor. The AEC has worked extensively with STAE across 2008 – 2012.

The objective of all the AEC's AusAID funded activities in East Timor is to increase public understanding of, and support for, electoral processes by working closely with electoral authorities and civil society organisations in East Timor. The AEC's approach is designed to support the execution of core electoral functions by the Timorese themselves, particularly in the run-up to the presidential and parliamentary elections in East Timor next year.

This approach is intended to be respectful of Timorese sovereignty. It is an approach that is supported by both AusAID and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT); and reflects the approach also being taken by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

To achieve the AEC's objectives the AEC is providing support for capacity development. This is primarily by way of delivering Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) courses to STAE and CNE in East Timor; with clear efforts being made to continually engage with civil society bodies and media organisations.

The AEC has a full-time Timorese Program Officer who is currently employed in East Timor to further the AEC's relationships with local organisations. In conjunction with other AEC officers, he regularly conducts BRIDGE workshops in East Timor and is invaluable to our efforts to provide support for capacity development.

The AEC commenced 2011 activities in February by conducting two BRIDGE introductory workshops in Dili. The participants included staff of the CNE, members of Organisacao Igreja Para Assuntos Sociais (OIPAS), East Timor Media Development Centre (TLMDC),

Centro Jornalismo Investigativo East Timor (CIJTL), Aloia Foundation and the Asia Foundation.

These workshops were followed by a BRIDGE Train the Facilitator (TtF) workshop in April in Dili for those people who displayed mentoring and leadership skills in the introductory workshops. The participants who attended the TtF workshop were chosen in close consultation with those organisations that sent participants to the introductory workshops.

Last month two further BRIDGE introductory workshops were conducted for people that missed out on attending the February workshops and next month we are planning to conduct two BRIDGE civic education workshops.

Further BRIDGE workshops are planned for September including a Media and Elections module and the AEC expects to deliver at least two more civic education workshops later in the year and early in 2012. Links to these events can be found on the website [www.bridge-project.org](http://www.bridge-project.org)

### **Links to AusAID's Country Strategy**

The approach outlined above is well-aligned with AusAID's *Australia - Timor-Leste Country Strategy - 2009 to 2014* in a number of key respects, as noted below.

<b>Australia - Timor-Leste Country Strategy - 2009 to 2014</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<p><b>“Lessons from experience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donors need to focus on the task of building functioning relationships between the state and its citizens”</li></ul> <p><b>“National Objective 3: Improving Government accountability, transparency and integrity”</b></p>	<p>Electoral processes represent a fundamental element of the relationship between the state and its citizens, and the most basic accountability mechanism, in a democratic polity. If electoral processes decline in technical quality, or if societal support for them is not consolidated, their basic role as a source of the legitimacy of the state, and as a process for governmental accountability, is undermined, and that in turn can compromise all other aspects of citizens' relationship with the state. The planned approach is intended to focus directly on enhancing the quality of elections, and societal understanding of and support for them.</p>
<p><b>“Lessons from experience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It takes time to build institutional capacity. Too often donors fall back on simplistic models of change which revolve around the use of international expertise. Capacity building is a long-term endeavour, demanding a range of approaches—few of which are purely technical.”</li></ul>	<p>The planned approach is based on making optimal use of the skills of the AEC's Timorese Program Officer, working full-time, with additional involvement of AEC experts when courses are delivered. Australians will not be performing line-management tasks of Timorese institutions. A significant element will be the use of the BRIDGE (“Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections”) course curriculum. BRIDGE comprises 24 modules: two foundation</p>

	<p>modules, and 22 others falling into three broad thematic groups – electoral architecture, electoral stakeholders and electoral operations. BRIDGE is now regarded as the pre-eminent product in the field of electoral capacity-building, is used in over 50 countries, and won a First Prize in this year's United Nations Public Service Awards, in the category of "Improving the delivery of public services".</p>
<p><b>"Results focus</b></p> <p>Australia and Timor-Leste will sharpen the focus on results, particularly outside Dili. Decentralisation will be an important factor in delivering results in the districts."</p>	<p>CNE staff from the districts will be key targets for the planned capacity-building activities, and their role as civic educators will produce a multiplier effect for the knowledge and skills they acquire. The AEC's Program Officer will spend a significant amount of time working in the districts as well as in Dili.</p>
<p><b>"Greater use of NGO capacity</b></p> <p>The international NGO community has long been active in promoting Timor-Leste's development, including working with local civil society to deliver results at the community level. In line with the Australian Government's commitment to work more through civil society, there will be greater scope for engaging international and Timorese NGOs in policy issues and program implementation. To deliver the objectives of this strategy, particular roles for NGOs are envisaged in health service delivery, in strengthening social accountability and in reducing violence against women."</p>	<p>The proposed shift in focus of AEC activities will make the program more relevant to a broader range of NGOs with an interest in successful electoral processes, and will lead to greater engagement with them. Planned internationally-recognised courses on Gender and Elections, and Media and Elections, will be especially useful to NGOs working in the relevant sectors.</p>

## Summary

CNE's ability to perform its function of supervising the electoral process will be significantly enhanced if the skills of its staff, and their understanding of all aspects of electoral processes, are further developed. Its ability to promote public knowledge of electoral processes will similarly be increased if its staff, particularly those from the districts, can participate in a targetted capacity-building course on civic education, supplemented by direct mentoring by the AEC's Program Officer.

There will be a major emphasis on enhancing the skills of CNE Commissioners and staff. The program does not envisage any meeting of core election costs from donor funds. All work will be done in close cooperation with Timorese counterparts, with great use being made of the skills of the AEC's Program Officer. The focus of the program will be long-term capacity-building, rather than short-term support for particular electoral events.

## ANNEX 1 – LETTER FROM CNE



### Comissão Nacional de Eleições

Avenida Bispo de Medeiros,  
Kintai Bo'ot, Dili, Timor-Leste  
Telefone: 3310082

#### Hamrik iha Imparsialidade, Independensia no Transparénsia nia Leten

Dili, October, 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Nr : 87 /CNE/X/2010  
From : Election National Commission – CNE  
To : Australian Electoral Commission  
Special Adviser Electoral Reform and International Services  
Mr. Michael Maley PSM

Dear Mr Maley

Thank you for the recent opportunities for several of the CNE Commissioners to meet with the Australian Electoral Commission's (AEC) International Services staff.

The first of those meetings was held in Dili in July 2010, and was organised as a direct result of the successful attendance by three of the four Commissioners at the AusAID funded, BRIDGE Module on Gender and Elections. In attendance were Commissioners Jose Agostinho da Costa Belo, Arif Abdullah Sagran, Joana Maria Dulce Vitor and Teresinha Maria Noronha Cardoso and AEC International Services staff. At that meeting informal discussion canvassed possibilities for further AusAID-funded capacity-building support for CNE.

A second meeting was then held with CNE Commissioners Alcino de Araujo Baris, Lucas de Sousa and Manuela Leong Pereira, yourself and International Services staff in Canberra in August 2010 following the attendance of the CNE Commissioners at the Federal Election Visitor Program 2010. Further ideas were explored about collaborative and cooperative opportunities for AusAID funded training support which could be jointly planned with the AEC International Services staff with the support of Augusto Pereira, the AEC Program Officer based in Dili.

There was particular emphasis in the discussions on developing capacity for CNE staff and Commissioners, especially through supporting a professional development program using BRIDGE. It was suggested that initially an Introductory Module of BRIDGE be conducted for an audience to be agreed with CNE. It was also suggested that further program planning could be done during such a visit to East Timor by AEC staff.

CNE is also particularly interested in training support for Commissioners and in support for civic education.

Following those discussions, CNE would like to confirm that we wish to engage in future cooperation with the AEC. We request that you commence planning for the Introductory Module of BRIDGE.

We look forward to discussing this collaboration and planning for further activities with the AEC when its officers are next in Dili.

Best regards

DR. Faustino Cardoso Gomes, MSi.  
President of CNE