

Electoral Support Program Phase 3

Personnel Guidelines Strategy April 2011



Australian Government

AusAID

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AEC	Australian Electoral Commission
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
Cardno	Cardno Emerging Markets (Aust) Pty Ltd
CPG	Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
ESP	Electoral Support Program Phase 3
GoPNG	Government of Papua New Guinea
IDEC	Inter-Departmental Electoral Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PNGEC	Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission

SECTION 1: APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT

1. Principles and Approach

The Electoral Support Program (ESP) is committed to a fair and equitable approach to the recruitment, retention and management of all staff. Specifically, the Program will focus on three guiding principles.

1.1. Inclusion

ESP is committed to a policy of inclusion and non-discrimination. This extends, but is not limited to: age, religion, ethnicity, gender, disability and HIV status. Furthermore the Program is committed to child protection in all fields. The principle of inclusion applies in all aspects of personnel, from selection, to management, retention and promotion.

In particular, the Program will advocate for female candidates to fill new and vacant positions and provide particular support to women in existing roles to fulfil their responsibilities and take up career opportunities.

The Program's Gender, HIV and AIDS and Diversity: Strategies for Mainstreaming further outlines our commitments to these cross cutting issues.

1.2. Merit-based Selection

The Program will base all selections, for recruitment or promotion, on merit. This means that decisions are based on an individual's 'work-related qualities and those required to do the job'¹.

1.3. Supporting Local Professionals and Young Professionals

ESP is committed to utilising innovative and proven methods of engaging and supporting local professionals. Such an approach has the dual benefit of supporting and building the capacity of PNG beyond the direct counterparts of the Program, as well as providing an efficient use of Program funding. Similarly, the Program will continue to explore approaches to the engagement of young professionals. PNG, as with many similar countries, is experiencing a demographic 'youth bulge'. By explicitly seeking to engage with this professional demographic, the Program can contribute to sustainability in its broadest sense – facilitating intergenerational change and building a foundation for future experts and champions.

2. Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines

ESP is bound by and adheres to the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines (CPGs). While the CPGs set out specific conditions for when they do and do not apply, the CPG Procurement Principles provide a useful and ethical framework which will be applied by the Program in all settings. These are:

- › Value for Money;
- › Encouraging Competition;

¹ <http://www.apsc.gov.au/employmentpolicy/merit.htm> 12/04/2011

- › Efficient, Effective and Ethical Use of Resources; and
- › Accountability and Transparency.

The CPG Procurement Principles complement and add to the ESP recruitment principles outlined above.

Where procurement is via an activity grant ESP will ensure that the principles of the CPG are applied and in the case of government agencies that the GoPNG procurement guidelines are strictly adhered to.

3. Contractual Requirements

The ESP Scope of Services specifies the procedure to follow for certain recruitment processes.

Special provision is made for the recruitment of new positions, where no Terms of Reference are included in the Scope of Services. Essentially, this refers to new short- or long-term advisers recruited to fill positions identified as a necessary element of a Program Activity. For such positions, the Program will ensure:

- › That the position is in response to funding / activity requests approved in the Annual Plan;
- › That the positions justified as to why the input is the best option;
- › The Terms of Reference are developed in consultation with the activity applicant, PNGEC and AusAID;
- › Short-listed applicants' CVs and rates are submitted to AusAID for review; and
- › A selection process agreed to by AusAID is implemented and a preferred candidate recommended with the appropriate and required supporting documentation.

4. Management and Retention

Management and retention of staff are critical elements in good project management as these contribute to effective program delivery and value for money by maximising an individual's inputs and minimising the need for additional recruitment.

Communication is a key tool for effective management and this includes:

- › Providing all staff with a clear Terms of Reference and developing and agreeing to a clear work plan;
- › Providing clear and regular feedback, including constructive criticism where necessary; and
- › Listening to staff and seeking feedback on how systems, processes or situations can be improved.

As part of the Program's approach to inclusion, all new staff will undergo Child Protection and gender and HIV and AIDS sensitivity training.

SECTION 2: USE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

1. The Shift in AusAID's Approach

A large proportion of Australia's aid is delivered through advisers, particularly in PNG. Advisers will remain an important part of Australia's aid program delivery however recent reviews conducted by AusAID recommend the need to broaden approaches, including to other forms of technical assistance. In regards to advisers, there needs to be increased value for money and the use of advisers must be 'results focussed and demand driven, with expertise increasingly procured directly by partners through national systems and nationally managed.'²

1.1. The Joint Adviser Review Report

The Joint Adviser Review Report has been driven by a demand to achieve better results from Australia's aid program, as well as an increased demand for information, value for money and transparency.³ The Review centred on assessing the effectiveness and value for money of advisers, one of the main delivery mechanisms for Australian aid.

ESP reflects the changes in AusAID's approach outlined in the Joint Adviser Review Report. This includes a reduced number of advisers compared with the previous phase.

ESP had already moved away from the traditional adviser-counterpart model towards what the Program calls a 'core support team' which comprises advisers working in high priority areas across the whole agency, as well as providing support to Interdepartmental Electoral Committee (IDEC) and civil society activities as required. This approach concurs with Recommendation 4 in the Review. We will continue this approach in the current phase, where advisers may supervise or lead particular activities but are flexible to work across the agency and to provide support when and where required.

1.2. Inline and Advisory Approaches – Working along the Continuum

Cardno understands that the capacity development approach through advisers is only part of a broader mix of responses available to strengthen capacity in developing countries.

Still utilising technical assistance, a more in-line approach, or 'capacity substitution' is an option under certain circumstances, acknowledged by AusAID in the Joint Adviser Review and the Review of the PNG Australia Development Cooperation Treaty. Before considering in-line options, there must be a thorough assessment of the situation within the agency, the possible alternative approaches and lessons learned from the previous phase of the program and the 2007 election. Any use of in-line advisers under ESP will be for specific periods of time and only in the context of a broader capacity building approach. The design of any adviser role – wherever it falls on the continuum (capacity enabler, capacity substitution, capacity supplementation and capacity facilitation) will need to meet the Minimum Standards for Adviser Planning, Selection and Performance Management⁴.

² Use of Advisers in the Australian Aid Program – Operational Policy: Adviser Planning, Selection and Performance Management, AusAID, March 2011.

³ Joint Adviser Review Report, AusAID, February 2011.

⁴ Ibid

1.3. Inline Support under ESP2

Under the previous phase of ESP and in the immediate lead up to the 2007 election, advisers took a more 'hands on' approach at times of urgency and where there were significant PNGEC capacity gaps. This was not formally called an in-line approach in terms of personnel guidelines or contracts, but there was a shared understanding between AusAID, Cardno and the PNGEC that advisers would be 'hands on' and working at different points along the capacity development – in-line continuum as required. Whilst the Program's primary way of working was to advise, there were instances where it was appropriate to take on in-line and managerial tasks where there was urgency and risk associated with certain tasks being completed within crucial election timeframes, together with significant gaps in PNGEC capacity.

This approach was an appropriate response to the 2007 election however there is opportunity in this new phase and lead up to the 2012 national election to better articulate and manage the process. In particular, there will be increased transparency and a shared understanding between the PNGEC, Cardno and AusAID of the options available and clarity around using an in-line, capacity substitution approach.

2. Elections Context

The elections context in PNG is unique and creates a different set of circumstances for the Program compared with AusAID's programs in other sectoral areas.

The five yearly national election is the biggest single event to be held in PNG and is high risk and of critical importance to PNG's stability and long term development. It is also clearly in Australia's national interest to support a stable and democratic PNG.

Whilst PNG has been conducting democratic elections since independence, there remains considerable political instability. There have been improvements in the PNGEC's capacity, increased civil society involvement and a positive shift towards a whole-of-government approach but elections systems are fragile and in need of support. Factors having an impact on PNG elections include: the resource boom, in particular the LNG project and associated issues around land, politics and availability of goods and services; increasingly high stakes for election candidates and 'money politics'; and, growing security concerns.

The above mentioned complexities explain the context in which ESP operates. The Program has been supporting the PNGEC throughout the election cycle. In the interim years, ESP more closely resembles a usual government agency capacity development activity. However, in the lead up to the national election, a more flexible and innovative approach is required to respond to the unique and high risk circumstances. This includes escalation of budget expenditure with a broader range of activities and stakeholders, increased numbers of personnel and the use of 'surge' capacity (refer to Section 3, below).

3. Technical Assistance Options

Technical assistance is a broad term and describes a range of activities with the aim of building capacity and can include training, advisory support, mentoring and twinning. Conventional advisory and in-line roles have been discussed in the above section, but here we have outlined some other options which could be utilised in ESP.

3.1. Period Offers

If there is an urgent requirement for short term technical assistance and ‘surge’ capacity, Cardno will request the option of drawing down on AusAID’s list of advisers / consultants on period offers. This would be similar to requesting permission to sole source technical assistance or to conduct a limited tender, however personnel approved under AusAID’s period offers have already been through a competitive process, including agreeing on fee rates.

It is proposed that Cardno would request from AusAID a recommendation of a single candidate or short list of suitable advisers / consultants to interview against a position terms of reference and activity design.

3.2. AEC

The long term relationship and partnership between the PNGEC and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is to be continued under this phase. The ‘twinning’ relationship between the PNGEC and the AEC together with AusAID as the third party, is formalised in a Record of Understanding. The AEC and AusAID have a separate funding arrangement to that of the Program.

AEC personnel offer unique technical skills useful to the PNGEC, and which are rare in the market. It is efficient and value for money to draw on the skills within the AEC rather than recruiting (often ex AEC personnel) on the open market.

It is proposed that short and medium term technical inputs will be managed through developing a ‘period offer’ type list of AEC personnel who have expressed interest in working in PNG, have a suitable level of technical skills and can be made available.

The Program will support the PNGEC and AEC to propose activities, or requests for technical support which dovetail with the activities underway with ESP.

It is proposed that AEC short or medium term personnel will be supported and managed on a day-to-day basis by ESP, however their contractual, formal line management and salary arrangements will be with the AEC.

3.3. Local Professionals and Young Professionals

ESP will actively seek to engage local professionals for both in-line and advisory roles. Cardno is committed to PNG ownership and engagement and wherever possible will recruit local professionals to the Program through the local media, our website, by utilising our extensive networks and, when required, ‘head hunting’. The Program recognises the importance of sustainability and will actively support the PNGEC to renew its ranks and undertake succession planning whenever there is opportunity. Because the national election is a five yearly event, it is crucial that younger and newer members of staff are given opportunities to develop skills and experience in the preparation and conduct of the election.

The proposed Assistant Election Manager positions are an example of engaging both local and young professionals. It is likely these roles will be in-line, funded through the Program and address surge capacity requirements in addition to providing further opportunities for university graduates, and women. Another such example is the Program’s current work supporting the PNGEC to engage graduates in the Information Communication and Awareness Branch.

SECTION 3: SURGE CAPACITY

1. What is it?

Surge capacity can be broadly defined as the mobilisation of additional suitable personnel to respond to a large, urgent or extraordinary situation or event, often as part of a response to a humanitarian crisis or natural disaster. Surge capacity is always short to medium term depending on the response required to a particular situation.

In the case of the 2012 national election, large additional numbers of personnel are needed to conduct this 'event'. In the lead up to the election, the PNGEC will engage approximately 20,000 personnel in order to conduct the election and reduce back to its small core staff numbers of around 50 after the election. While of an order of magnitude less, ESP will need to undergo a significant scale-up and scale-down before and then after the national election.

1.1. Planned Surge vs. Urgent and Unexpected Surge

Unlike a humanitarian or environmental disaster, an election is a planned event. Despite this, there is still a requirement for large numbers of additional personnel, but mostly this can be planned and prepared for – elections conducted in all countries follow a similar pattern. Our experience from the 2007 election showed that most surge capacity required by ESP was of the planned nature and we anticipate this to be the case in 2012 due to important lessons learned and the continuity of highly experienced team members.

ESP understands the significant logistical challenges of conducting a national election in a complex setting. Ensuring surge capacity is critical. For 2012, the PNGEC will require a human resource surge capacity of a similar order to that of 2007, where the agency managed a short term workforce of approximately 20,000. The Program will work with PNGEC and IDEC to identify needs, and design a suitable response.

Elections are high risk and complex events and inevitably urgent and unexpected situations will arise which require surge capacity support. An urgent requirement for surge capacity could involve additional personnel in finance, IT, logistics and security / intelligence coordination, procurement and media management. The PNGEC with support from the Program is already planning for each of these areas however it is possible that there will be capacity or personnel gaps and unforeseen circumstances which require an urgent response.

1.2. Mechanisms for Engaging Surge Capacity

Mechanisms for surge capacity include networks with CSOs, the AEC and international electoral commissions, period offers, PNG Universities and graduates, and volunteers. Except in very urgent circumstances, we will use competitive recruitment processes in selecting and engaging personnel. Where this is not possible, the Program will seek AusAID approval to sole source or conduct a limited tender.

Case Study 1: Using Provincial and Regional Accountants as Planned Surge Capacity in PNG's 2007 National Election

The establishment of the Provincial and Regional Electoral Accountant positions enabled provincial Electoral Managers and Returning Officers to concentrate on their core operational role as well as providing better budget control at the provincial level and more robust financial accountability and transparency .

Prior to the 2007 General Election and the 2008 Local Level Government Election, ESP2 assisted the PNGEC by introducing a number of improvements in the financial management systems. In order to institutionalise these improvements and raise the financial management profile of the Commission, standard processes in managing election funds were developed. Improvements were made in the area of Budget development, financial reporting and cash flow management and the accompanying policies and procedures. These changes were recognised by PNGEC stakeholders as a significant improvement for the PNGEC. The delegation of financial responsibility to the provinces through the appointment of Provincial and Regional Accountants signalled an improvement in the rigour of accountability systems and processes.

The PNEC has been successful in its bid for Development Budget funds for Provincial Accountants in the 2012 election – a very positive outcome to this Program-funded initiative.

Other possible examples of planned surge capacity for the 2012 election:

- › *Piloting / Leading by example* – Assistant Election Managers: The PNGEC has one Election Manager in each Province – an inadequate number to manage what is required in the lead up and conduct of the election. Many of these Election Managers are nearing retirement and will not be in their roles for the 2017 election. By funding and deploying additional Assistant Election Managers (e.g. university graduates) to shadow and support the current Election Managers, the Program can support the PNGEC to increase personnel numbers in the provinces and concurrently address succession planning. Assistant Election Managers will provide much needed expertise in IT, an area where the mostly older Election Managers have limited capacity. Of the 20 existing Election Managers, there is only one woman. Targeted recruitment for Assistant Election Managers will provide an opportunity to redress this imbalance.
- › *Highly specific Technical Assistance* – Support to clean the electoral roll: The accuracy of the electoral roll is key to conducting a successful election and has been mentioned as an issue of great concern and area of weakness by CSOs, the media and the PNGEC. This is a highly specialised area and surge capacity may consist of engaging additional personnel through the AEC twinning program for training and overseeing roll cleaning. It could also consist of engaging additional personnel for data entry.

2. Criteria for using Surge Capacity

It is important that there are clear guidelines and that PNGEC, AusAID and Cardno have a shared understanding of the appropriate use of surge capacity and the associated processes.

2.1. High Risk / High Need

In order to qualify for a surge capacity response, an issue or area would need to be assessed as both high risk and high need in relation to the successful conduct of the election. The PNGEC's election plan which includes key milestones would be a useful tool in identifying

these areas. ESP's Risk Management Plan will also define higher risk areas crucial to the successful conduct of the election. Our Program Manager, Risk Assessment and Management Specialist together with the advisory team will conduct the appropriate analysis on a regular and ongoing basis communicating the outcomes through the Six Monthly Reports, risk updates and the above mentioned election plan.

2.2. Modelling / Piloting

The use of surge capacity provides an important and rare opportunity to model or pilot new personnel arrangements or initiatives from which to learn lessons, and apply in subsequent elections. This was the case with the Provincial Accountants in the 2007 election, where the Program funded the positions and supported their recruitment and management. Based on the success of this initiative, the PNGEC has successfully secured funding through their own Development Budget for Provincial Accountants to be used in a similar way in the 2012 election. This initiative is strong example of where a short term in-line or capacity substitution approach has been used within a broader capacity development framework. This contribution to sustainable change in improved financial management creates a precedent for future piloting or modelling of initiatives from which the PNGEC learns and incorporates new approaches within their agency. Well chosen and designed pilot activities in the 2012 election will create valuable lessons and opportunities for the PNGEC's future work. Assistant Election Managers proposed to be engaged in the lead up to the election may be one of these pilots.

The Program Manager and advisory team together with the PNGEC will undertake the situation analysis and design for any proposed modelling / piloting activity utilising surge capacity.

3. Protocol and Parameters for Utilising Surge Capacity

The categories of 'high risk/high need' and 'modelling/piloting' provide parameters at a high level for the use of surge capacity. Within these areas, a case must be built and the use of resources (whether advisory, in-line or another form of technical assistance) justified based on a situation analysis including risk assessment, lessons learned from the previous election and current phase, M&E data and a strong commitment from the PNGEC to the proposed activity.

Together with the PNGEC, the Program will undertake the analysis and present the case to AusAID for feedback and approval, and then to the Program Board. In the case of planned surge capacity, this will mostly occur through the Annual Planning process. In the case of unplanned, or urgent surge capacity requirements, the Program together with the PNGEC will undertake the analysis and present the case directly to AusAID for feedback and approval and then through an 'out of session' process with the Program Board or the Activity Expenditure Review Committee where it has delegated authority.

3.1. The Practicalities of Recruiting, Engaging and Managing Surge Capacity

There are some key funding, contracting and HR issues to consider in relation to utilising surge capacity.

Where proposed additional personnel are taking on inline duties, such as the Assistant Election Managers, or undertaking data entry as part of roll cleaning, it is appropriate positions are advertised, recruited and managed directly by the PNGEC. In instances where the Program funds in-line surge capacity activities / personnel there will be a clear understanding that whilst

salaries are funded by ESP, the PNGEC is to manage personnel and that terms and conditions will be consistent with PNGEC arrangements.

A contract between the Program and personnel would be countersigned or at least endorsed by the PNGEC, include a terms of reference, terms and conditions (consistent with the PNGEC) and would detail management arrangements, including reporting lines.

The Program would support the PNGEC in the recruitment and engagement of in-line surge capacity, with a high level of scrutiny and involvement particularly where Program funds are concerned. Recruitment in these instances would involve shared decision making and model rigorous processes meeting both PNGEC and Cardno / AusAID standards. This would include gender balance, merit based considerations and value for money in recruitment.

The management arrangements for advisers engaged as part of surge capacity will each need to be assessed case by case. However, where personnel are engaged by the program to provide technical advice (as opposed to working in an inline role) it is appropriate that they be contracted and managed directly by the Program. These advisers may work at different points along the capacity development/inline continuum but their main purpose will be to provide advisory support, capacity building and training.

In the case of AEC personnel, their salaries and contractual arrangements will remain with their agency, while the Program would provide direct supervision and day-to-day management support.

The Program will report on funded surge capacity activities and personnel through the regular M&E and reporting processes, regardless of whether personnel are in inline or advisory roles. It will be more straightforward to monitor and report on the day-to-day activities and outcomes of advisers' work because they will be managed directly by the Program. However, we will also monitor and report on inline surge capacity personnel as part of our contribution to the PNGEC's work.