

# Electoral Support Program Phase 3

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## Quality Management Plan April 2011



**Australian Government**  
**AusAID**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. PREFACE .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Program Planning .....</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework .....	3
3.2. ESP Annual Plan .....	3
<b>4. Program Communication .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Subcontract Procurement and Management.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. Personnel Recruitment and Management .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>7. Partner Development.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8. Financial Management.....</b>	<b>9</b>

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
Cardno	Cardno Emerging Markets (Aust) Pty Ltd
CPG	Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ESP	Electoral Support Program Phase 3
IDEC	Inter-Departmental Electoral Committee
MEF	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
PMO	Program Management Office
PNGEC	Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission
QMP	Quality Management Plan
QMS	Quality Management System

## 1. PREFACE

The Quality Management Plan (QMP) outlines the systems and procedures by which the Electoral Support Program team, together with stakeholders, will implement the third phase of Electoral Support Program (ESP). This document also meets the requirements of Clause 8.1(e) of the Scope of Services.

Cardno Emerging markets (Australia) Pty Ltd (hereafter Cardno) has been contracted by AusAID to manage and implement ESP under AusAID Agreement Number 57942.

The duration of the contract is from 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2011 until 21 February 2013, unless agreed otherwise by the parties.

This document will be reviewed and updated at least twice a year. Any changes will be communicated as part of the Six Monthly Report and on an exception basis.

## 2. Introduction

The goal of ESP is to contribute to strengthened Papua New Guinea electoral systems.

The implementation and management of ESP is guided by the following principles:

- |                                    |                       |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| › Whole of government coordination | › Ownership           |
| › Performance-based activities     | › Flexibility         |
| › Consultation                     | › Additional Services |
| › Appropriateness                  | › Affordability       |
| › Training and Support             | › Systems development |
| › Continuous Improvement           |                       |

The Program principles are given effect by a range of procedures and processes outlined in the following key documents:

- › Financial Operations Manual;
- › Personnel Guidelines Strategy;
- › Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF);
- › Risk Management Plan;
- › Communications Strategy; and
- › Gender, HIV and AIDS and Diversity: Strategies for Mainstreaming.

Together, these documents both describe and determine the operating parameters for ESP's operations. The QMP provides an overview of the key principles in these more detailed documents and explains the relationship between each.

### 3. Program Planning

The planning of all activities under ESP is guided by the principles of *ownership*, *consultation* and *appropriateness*. Cardno uses these principles as the foundation of its program planning for ESP.

The two key Program planning documents are the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF) and the Annual Plan.

#### 3.1. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The MEF was developed through a consultative and participatory process during the first month of ESP, drawing upon the guidance in the Scope of Services, our experience and lessons learned from ESP2 and the direction of key stakeholders, especially the PNG Electoral Commission (PNGEC) and AusAID. The Framework identifies a series of focus areas under each of the Program's four components.

Critically, it also identifies measures of success (what does success look like), indicators (how will we measure success?) and sources of the data (where will the information come from?). The Annual Plan and all activities which fall under it or the broader ESP structure will need to align with the MEF to ensure that all activities are contributing to the Program's objectives and goal, and to ensure that appropriate measures, including baselines where required, are established to measure effectiveness.

#### 3.2. ESP Annual Plan

Each year, ESP will facilitate an additional consultative process to identify key activities for implementation, aligned with Strategic Focus Areas detailed in the Annual Plan and MEF. The draft Annual Plan will detail proposed activities, costings and expected outcomes. Once developed, the draft Annual Plan is submitted to the Program Board for review and approval.

The standard process for the development of the Annual Plan is as follows:

- › The Program Board will discuss and confirm the activity selection criteria and strategic focus areas, taking into account previous activity performance (where relevant), lessons learned, financial and risk management and value for money.
- › ESP will coordinate the activity proposal development process, including:
  - identifying needs and opportunities, encouraging submissions from stakeholders to address the approved strategic focus areas; and
  - providing advice on concepts, ideas and specific proposals to ensure that proposals address the identified needs and selection criteria.
  - The Activity Expenditure Review Committee (AERC) will review all submitted activity proposals and provide recommendations to the Program Board for acceptance or rejection based on the agreed selection criteria.
- › The Program Board will meet quarterly to, amongst other things, assess the recommendations from the AERC and make a final determination as to which activities will be approved.

The process for development and submission of the 2011 Annual Plan has differed from the process outlined above due to the need to concurrently: establish the new Program Board, develop the Strategic Framework and draft the first Annual Plan within the space of two months.

As such, the first Annual Plan will include a list of priority and time-critical activities which, once approved, will commence immediately. For all other areas of the Annual Plan, full activity proposals and costings will be developed after the Annual Plan has been approved and submitted to the Board at a later date.

## 4. Program Communication

Communication is critical to any program, but this is even more so for ESP given the high risk presented by the forthcoming national election in 2012. Early and regular communication ensures not only effective and efficient program management, but also acts as a risk management strategy by identifying, discussing and addressing emerging risks as they arise.

The Communications Strategy further details the Program's approach to communications and is based on the principles of: *Whole of Government coordination, Flexibility, Consultation, and Training and Support.*

Broadly speaking, Program communications can be divided between internal and external stakeholders, and formal and informal communications.

The following table illustrates the range of communication tools and processes available to the Program. This list is not exhaustive.

	Internal	External
<b>Informal</b>	Informal discussions, e-mails or other communications with ESP team as required.	Ad-hoc out-of-sessions Board meetings or communications Ad-hoc and / or issues based communications with AusAID
<b>Formal</b>	Weekly ESP adviser and PMO meetings Formal Communications such as e-mails	Program Board meetings IDEC Meetings Regular meetings with AusAID

The effectiveness, appropriateness and timeliness of the Communications Strategy will be assessed regularly and at least twice a year. Any changes will be communicated as part of the Six Monthly Report and on an exception basis.

## 5. Subcontract Procurement and Management

The procurement of goods and services through a sub-contracting arrangement will be guided by the principles of: *performance-based* activities, *additional services*, *affordability*, and *continuous improvement*.

Subcontracts will form a large portion of Activity Fund expenditure under the third phase of ESP. Subcontracts will be with a range of third parties including, but not limited to:

- › individuals (both international and local)
- › private organisations, such as local consultancies or research bodies, and
- › Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

While a standardised and minimum standard of quality will be applied to all sub-contracting partners, a tailored approach may also be applied depending upon the counterpart. For example, modified procedures or processes (such as additional training or coaching) may be developed and applied for CSOs.

Furthermore, sub-contracting and procurement will be governed by the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines (CPGs) and subject to Cardno's own ISO9001 certified Quality Management System (QMS). The combined effect of the CPGs and Cardno's QMS is an efficient yet thorough process which ensures: transparency, value-for-money, and accountability. All relevant staff, such as the ESP Contracts Officer and Finance Officer, are briefed at program or employment commencement on both the CPGs and the Cardno QMS. Ongoing monitoring and training is also conducted by Cardno Head Office staff to ensure continued compliance and application.

Cardno's QMS also includes a Corporate Fraud Control Policy, which is based on a zero-tolerance approach. Further details relating to Cardno and ESP's treatment of fraud, audit and financial risk are detailed in the Financial Operations Manual.

## **6. Personnel Recruitment and Management**

Due to the high-pressure and high-risk nature of ESP over the coming two years, the appropriate selection and management of personnel will be critical to the delivery of a successful program. Individuals will need to be selected appropriately to ensure they are both capable and aware of the likely workload and pressures. Similarly, ongoing management and support will be required to ensure that workloads are shared and managed and issues such as 'burnout' do not occur during critical work periods and especially in the immediate lead-up to the 2012 national election.

The Personnel Guidelines Strategy describes Cardno and ESP's approach to appropriate recruitment, management and retention. This includes our statutory obligations as well as our application of best practice models such as the Australian Public Service Commission's Employment Policy. The Strategy is based on the principles of: performance-based activities, flexibility, appropriateness, affordability and continuous improvement.

The Personnel Guidelines Strategy also describes Cardno's response to recent development and changes in AusAID's approach to the use of technical assistance and advisers. As this is an evolving issue, Cardno will continue to engage regularly and frankly with AusAID (regarding ESP and other programs) on the implications and challenges of implementing the new Adviser Remunerations Framework.

The Personnel Guidelines Strategy also outlines Cardno's approach to unique 'surge capacity' requirement under the ESP Scope of Services. This too will be reviewed regularly based on ongoing discussions with AusAID.



## 7. Partner Development

Cardno's approach to Partner Development is detailed in the Program's MEF. This approach is based on: Cardno's global experience in capacity building in diverse settings, AusAID guidance and policy, including the recent Adviser Remuneration Framework and related guidelines, the latest international capacity development theory and practice and our experience in managing and implementing the previous phase of ESP.

For the current phase of ESP, Cardno will continue the 'Core Support Team' model which is based on a strategic approach to capacity development beyond a standard adviser counterpart one-to-one relationship. This approach recognises the need to build capacity at multiple levels – at the individual level, at the team level and at the organisational level. While more demanding and challenging than a traditional one-to-one approach, this has multiple benefits including increased effectiveness, better value for money and most importantly increased sustainability over the long term.

For the majority of staff, and for the majority of the duration of ESP, the Program's support will focus on capacity enabling and capacity facilitation<sup>1</sup> approaches. At peak times in the lead up to the 2012 national election, capacity supplementation and capacity substitution will also be utilised when required as part of 'surge capacity'. This is further discussed in the MEF as well as in the Personnel Guidelines Strategy.

Cardno's partner development approach in ESP will be reviewed and updated at least twice a year. Any changes will be communicated as an amendment to the MEF as part of the Six Monthly Report.

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<sup>1</sup> AusAID. March 2001, Use of Advisers in the Australian Aid Program – Operational Policy: Adviser Planning, Selection and Performance Management

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## 8. Financial Management

Cardno is responsible for the financial management of all ESP activities and operations. Cardno's approach to financial management is guided by the principles of: *performance-based activities, appropriateness, affordability and continuous improvement*.

Program expenditure can broadly be divided into four main categories: activity funding, reimbursable operational costs, reimbursable personnel costs (long and short-term advisers, and local staff) and non-reimbursable costs.

Cardno forward funds all expenditure for ESP. Where costs are reimbursable, Cardno invoices AusAID monthly in arrears.

The Financial Operations Manual (submitted as the first milestone at Month 1) outlines Cardno's approach to financial management including the treatment of risk and audit. Cardno takes a zero-tolerance approach to fraud.

The ESP Activity Guidelines will be provided to all Program partners who will manage ESP funds through grants or sub-contracts. The Activity Guidelines detail, amongst other things, the minimum requirement for partners in terms of financial management and reporting.