

Supplementary Background Information for the Papua New Guinea Electoral Support Program (Phase 3)

1. Papua New Guinea is an independent state with a modified Westminster system of government and universal suffrage for all citizens over 18. Administratively it is divided into 18 provinces, one autonomous region (Bougainville) and the National Capital District (NCD). Two new provinces (Hela and Jiwaka) were created in 2009, however there is no Provincial Governor yet for either province, and the boundaries are still to be fully determined. Each province has a number of districts, which also constitute the 89 electorates for the single chamber national parliament. A Provincial Governor heads each Province and is also a member of the national parliament, elected during the national election held every five years. Each district comprises three or four local level governments (LLGs), each made up of around 20 wards. LLG councillors are elected through LLG elections every five years. The presidents of each LLG are elected by the councillors and are also members of the provincial assemblies.
2. In total there are 89 districts/electorates, 298 LLGs and 5,873 wards. Political allegiances are largely based on the local and personal ties of men. Consequently the majority of Members of Parliament (MPs) have localised and small support bases within their electorates.
3. The foundation law for electoral matters is the Constitution, which provides for the establishment of an independent Electoral Commission to conduct elections, and ensures that the Commissioner is an independent constitutional office holder. The major operational law is the Organic Law on National and Local-Level Government Elections (No.3/1997) (the Election Law). The voting system used for the six elections since Independence has been 'first past the post'. However, following amendments to the law just prior to the 2007 national elections, all national elections and by-elections, now use the LPV system.
4. The PNGEC has a staff establishment of 78 positions (74 filled). The Chief Electoral Commissioner heads the PNGEC and is supported by two Deputy Electoral Commissioners; one with a responsibility for Operations and one with a responsibility for Corporate Services. Most positions are based in the head office in Port Moresby, including the Election Managers for NCD and Central Province. The other provinces each have an Election Manager located in the main provincial centre.
5. Election Managers are supervised by three operations managers based in Port Moresby who report to the Director of Election Administration. Elections are administered by the PNGEC from Port Moresby, assisted by Provincial Administrations involving the election managers and seconded provincial government staff. The PNGEC appoints Returning Officers (ROs), who are usually nominated by the Provincial Administration. However, as these officials are not employees of the PNGEC, the Commissioner's only effective sanction is to refuse an appointment or to revoke an appointment.
6. Since 2000, the PNGEC's workload and the complexity of issues that it deals with have increased, including:
 - (a) Introduction of LPV in 2007;
 - (b) An increase in the size of Parliament, including the Provincial Governors' seats;

- (c) Possible introduction of reserved provincial seats for women in national parliament;
- (d) Potential increased competition for elected positions in national parliament in the lead up to the 2012 linked to high revenue investment and economic development projects, such as the Liquefied Natural Gas Project (LNG Project); and
- (e) The establishment of two new provinces.

7. Phase 1 of electoral support to the PNGEC, managed by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), commenced in April 2000 and involved strengthening the capacity of the PNGEC to plan and conduct the 2002 national elections. Following what is generally considered to be an extremely difficult national election in 2002, AusAID reviewed the ongoing relevance and possible future shape of Australia's electoral support program to PNG.

8. Phase 2 of the Electoral Support Program (ESP2) had an additional focus of improving broader electoral systems. ESP2 is being implemented through a contractual arrangement commencing in 2005 and ending in 2011. The 2007 national election, supported by ESP2, was seen as a significantly improved national election compared to 2002. In January-February 2010, AusAID commissioned an independent evaluation of ESP2, which recommended: a stronger strategic focus on electoral environmental factors; future electoral support to increase its sub-national focus and engagement with civil society; and stronger links between research, evidence and Program activities for the Program to successfully address key electoral challenges.

9. ESP2 support has had a significant impact on contributing to improvements of the 2007 national elections, supporting the introduction of Limited Preferential Voting (LPV) through awareness activities, domestic observation, and training electoral officials and CSOs. ESP2 is relevant to the development priorities of Government of PNG and Government of Australia and the program design is based on sound analysis and so the program of support will be extended to support the PNGEC throughout the 2012 National Elections, as has been requested by the PNGEC. A new design process has not been undertaken, and the existing design document has been provided as an annexure to the Request for Tender.

10. The draft Scope of Services in the Request For Tender does however reflect the following changes to the existing program:

- (a) modifications to the Program's focus;
- (b) a stronger strategic focus on electoral environmental factors to complement technical responses and election event related support;
- (c) support to sub-national electoral administration needs;
- (d) support for civil society engagement, including to strengthen GoPNG electoral coordination focus;
- (e) relevant information about Program impact beyond technical elements; and
- (f) stronger links between research, evidence and Program activities for the program to successfully address key electoral challenges.

11. The 2010 evaluation found that openness and enhanced managerial capacity of the PNGEC created a greater demand for improved accountability and awareness of institutional growth. Increased acknowledgement, primarily at the national level, of the potential resources available to the PNGEC through Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) was also due to persistent efforts of the ESP2. ESP2's work on supporting the Interdepartmental Elections Committee (IDEC) was seen as beneficial in supporting deliberate coordination on electoral processes. Overall the evaluation noted that the electoral support work with the PNGEC has contributed to improvements in the PNGEC's organisational capacity, which will have an impact on the role of PNGEC in the system of governance within PNG.
12. The future work and scope of the electoral program will be assessed alongside other activities in the Democratic Governance Program portfolio and other aid activities in PNG to avoid duplication, in particular the recently commenced Strongim Pipol Strongim Nesen (SPSN) Program (details of this program are provided in paragraphs 14 onwards below).
13. At all stages of the Electoral Support Program is it recognised that the Government of Australia's involvement in electoral support to PNG must never constitute external interference in PNG's domestic processes and politics. Australia's engagement is to support the PNGEC, which makes all decisions around the administration of elections, as per its constitutional responsibilities.

Strongim Pipol Strongim Nesen Program

14. Strongim Pipol Strongim Nesen (SPSN) is an AusAID Program operating from 2010 – 2014 “to enable civil society, together with the state and others, to better meet the needs and priorities of men, women and children in communities across PNG”. New directions introduced by SPSN include:
 - (a) supporting key institutions with core and operational funding allowing more flexibility to respond to emerging opportunities;
 - (b) involving a broader range of men and women from private sector and government (particularly the Department For Community Development, Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs, and relevant provincial, district, and local level agencies) as well as informal customary, women's and family groups;
 - (c) addressing the strengthening of local governance arrangements in more depth; and
 - (d) creating opportunities for national networks to address issues that impact on democratic governance such as civic education, social inclusion in development, local level government strengthening, gender equality, and peace, conflict and development issues.
15. A Contractor was selected to perform management services for implementation. The Contractor operates primarily as a facilitator and enabler of other parties for the delivery and implementation of the SPSN itself (rather than being the main direct implementer of outputs and activities).

16. SPSN has five main objectives and components.

- (a) *Component 1: Strengthened practice and promotion of democratic governance by Key Partners:* This Component will support AusAID's direct engagement with four existing (and up to five new) Key Partners. These Government of PNG (GoPNG) and civil society Partners will enter into a strategic partnership relationship with AusAID, to strengthen and extend both AusAID and each Partner's contribution to democratic governance. A partnership agreement between AusAID and each Key Partner will articulate the aim of the partnership; respective roles and responsibilities; mitigating risks; communication protocols; joint decision-making principles and approach to performance measurement. It is anticipated that Key Partners will progressively improve their systems, capacity and human resources, leading to increased sustainability.
- (b) *Component 2: Communities working together to address identified priorities:* This component provides a range of grants to communities and eligible organisations in order for them to undertake activities in support of improved democratic governance. This could include funding for local community development; linking communities to government at all levels; improving service delivery; capacity building; and networking and strengthening of the enabling environment (including public awareness, legislative and policy reform). This SPSN will establish and maintain operational mechanisms for the implementation of small, medium and large grants. These grants will be aimed at local organisations and communities and involve mobilising and supporting a network of locally based resource men and women. To improve the effectiveness of the grant applications and outcomes, the SPSN will undertake organisational capacity assessment and development for local groups, as part of fostering inclusive, participatory planning processes for grant activities. These grants processes will link with, and strengthen, GoPNG's own policies and systems as appropriate. It is anticipated the grant scheme will improve policies, outcomes and awareness of good democratic governance at local, provincial and national levels. A large number of local initiatives will be supported, targeted at improving services, opportunities and capacity. There will be increased awareness of GoPNG and donor funding options and avenues to meet local priorities and needs will better empower local communities to advocate their position. Importantly, the process of engaging communities and organisations in inclusive planning and implementation will develop a cohort of communities and individuals who have a stronger appreciation of, and respect for, the principles of democratic governance.
- (c) *Component 3: Improving local governance in selected geographic areas:* This is designed to stimulate inclusive, participatory planning and lead to improved local governance practices. The focus will be on identifying and addressing local development priorities and establish links and engagement with men and women within government, communities, development partners and the private sector. It will build on existing systems and processes as part of modelling an approach that empowers stakeholders to initiate and maintain improvements in services, opportunities and local circumstance. SPSN funded initiatives will be based on demand, opportunity and need, with technical assistance and capacity building provided. Over time, the focus on inclusive identification of local needs and priorities, and meeting these through targeted support, can increase community and government awareness of the positive impact that applying sound democratic governance principles can make. The tangible outcomes of the funding will assist

in strengthening GoPNG's systems and policies. Democratic governance principles and lessons learned can be transferred to other aspects of PNG community and individual life, or modelled in other geographic areas, enabling more effective partnerships between GoPNG agencies, NGOs, CSOs and PNG private organisations at the local level.

(d) *Component 4: Strengthened collaboration of men and women stakeholders for the promotion of democratic governance:* This will promote dialogue and engagement among stakeholders across PNG on democratic governance principles and practice. It will support men and women within informal networks of government and non-state actors to work together, strengthening collaboration between civil society, the private sector, GoPNG and donors. The Component supports priorities that emerge in thematic areas (e.g. gender equality, conflict prevention, local governance reform) and steadily build a cohort of advocates who apply principles of good governance in agencies and organisations. Over time, the SPSN will encourage groups and individuals to share and learn from their experiences and strategies, with these being promoted across participating organisations, agencies (i.e. GoPNG, NGOs and CSOs) as well as with other donors. This greatly expanded network will enable influential individuals and PNG organisations to advocate for, and implement, inclusive processes and practice, better governance and dialogue, and improved access to services.

(e) *Component 5: Strengthened human capital of men and women for the practice of democratic governance.* This component complements organisational capacity building in other components by supporting the professional development for men and women at all levels of society. The SPSN will provide and fund training and professional development for men and women, as well as contracting local PNG institutions to provide education and qualifications in community development and democratic governance related topics. Over time it is expected several thousand individuals will receive the benefits of training, courses, professional development initiatives and mentoring. The large numbers of beneficiaries from this Component will be well placed to advocate and support improvement in democratic governance principles and practice across a large number of PNG agencies and organisations.