ISE's State Effectiveness Program 2009-2010 Potential Collaboration with the Government of Australia

The Institute for State Effectiveness

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Summary of Organization: ISE develops and supports integrated approaches to state-building. It provides practical country-level design and implementation support to state-building processes, brings together networks and organizations to advance thinking on issues of state effectiveness, supports training for managers and leaders of state transitions and provides strategic and operational advice and toolsets to entities supporting post-conflict reconstruction, stabilization and state-building operations. The Institute has developed analytical frameworks for understanding and managing development challenges through learning and consultation across civil society, government, business and academia, and through field observation in the world's most complex development contexts. As a result, these frameworks bridge disciplines and provide frameworks that are understandable across varied cultures and organizations. ISE searches for innovative approaches that have practical relevance for donors and national governments, and it is uniquely placed to translate these approaches across country contexts.

ISE's work to date is now registering a significant impact on policy discussion, design, and practice. The team has written a number of articles and other publications on issues of state fragility, state-building, and globalization that have been published and quoted widely. Dr. Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart, the Chairman[1] and Director of ISE respectively, have also recently written a book entitled *Fixing Failed States*, published in May 2008 by Oxford University Press.[2] For example, the team has also been advising General Petraeus as part of his review of U.S. engagement in the CENTCOM area across Central Asia, South Asia, the Gulf and Arabia, and the Joint Forces and civilian parts of the USG on future capabilities and instruments to address state-building. ISE's ideas are now continually referred to by policymakers at the highest levels- the President of the World Bank, for example, mentioned ISE's concepts in two recent speeches on fragile states.[3]

Rationale for Collaboration: The threat of failing states- 40 to 60 nations that are acknowledged to have governments that are too weak to serve or even protect their people- is the central challenge to global stability and prosperity. In the past, band-aids have been offered addressing only the symptoms of this problem rather than a systematic approach that tackles the root causes according to a well thought out and organized blueprint. There is now an opportunity to address these gaps and deliver a framework that can help to improve accountability, avert conflict and ensure state effectiveness. This approach combines a reading of the dynamics and lessons of state- and institution-building to date in the new context of a radically different, globalizing world with first-hand, practical experience of the world's most difficult developmental challenges.

ISE's reviews of experience in the field and the practices and instruments of aid organizations indicate that there are no actionable, systemic "how to" guides for state functions, in whole or in part, that are accessible and understandable to country leaders and managers. The governance problems that the most

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[1] Dr. Ghani is on temporary leave of absence.
[2] See www.effectivestates.org/resources.htm for a list of relevant publications and detail on work completed to date.
[3] See http://www.effectivestates.org/Papers/zoellick.pdf and http://www.iiss.org/conferences/global-strategic-review/global-strategic-review-2008/keynote-address/

fragile states continually face are not diagnosed through appropriate in-field stock-takings or measured using relevant indicators that understand governance vis-à-vis the central state-building endeavor. Although state-building is increasingly a policy priority, the lessons and knowledge that are developed through work on the issue are still not disseminated and shared in effective or diverse enough ways. Furthermore, the skills necessary to ensure that governance and accountability are sustainable over the long-term are simply not created by a technical assistance industry that duplicates rather than generates capacity and is incentivized to perpetuate its own external role in these countries. Finally, these skills, where they do exist, cannot be mobilized quickly enough to respond to the critical problems that fragile states face in times of transition. Hence the potential impact of this ISE program is significant.

ISE Work Program: Rebuilding and strengthening fragile and conflict-affected states is one of the critical issues of our times, yet current organizations and mechanisms cannot address this problem in a coherent manner. ISE is now seeking to codify and make available a set of tools and techniques to lay the basis for a community of practice for state effectiveness and accountability in these countries in the 2009-2010 period. The work program has the following components:

i) *Practical toolkits.* These handbooks and manuals outline the core functions of the state and lay out cutting edge advances and best practices for state capacity building and post-conflict reconstruction. These could be made available for use in campaigns abroad and for future scenarios where the international community may be responsible for the creation of safe, stable, and reliable governments abroad;

ii) *Country stock-takings*, to evaluate the sovereignty and efficacy of governments around the world and allow for comparison of reform modalities including a focus on issues such as institutional development, human capacity creation and other rivers of positive change;

iii) *A Sovereignty Index*, as a tool to measure state functionality. This will highlight the most and least effective functions and interdependencies to diagnose the drivers and constraints to state effectiveness, published in an annual index;

iv) *Training courses for leaders and managers* within international organizations through courses, skills modules, and the development of networks for knowledge sharing. ISE will also develop a curriculum and training center to generate a new community of practice for state-building;

v) *Dissemination, advocacy and outreach*, through keynote speeches, seminars, briefings, documentaries and advice to a range of governments, international organizations, and networks. ISE is now frequently called upon to convene and facilitate dialogue to develop new pathways forwards and bridge from concept to implementation at the highest policy levels.

vi) *Open-source software tools*. ISE is working with a community of software developers to create open-source, open-standard software for governance and state-building;

vii) *State-building facilitation support.* ISE assists transition processes in fragile contexts through targeted reform advice and ideas on implementation mechanisms. The *establishment of a Rapid Reaction Facility (RRF)*, will allow rapid mobilization of ISE staff to deploy to fragile and conflict-affected contexts when there is significant contextual change.

Funding of Oversight Modalities: ISE has developed a small consortium of core partners to support this work. This consortium includes a small group of bilateral governments committed to the state-building and accountability agenda, including the governments of Norway, UK, and Canada (with several further governments actively exploring membership at the moment) and a small group of philanthropic foundations, including Carnegie Corporation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Compton Foundation, Smith Richardson Foundation and OSI. Core support for ISE's activities of this type allows

ISE as an organization the maximum degree of flexibility and responsiveness to allocate resources to its priority areas.

Progress to Date: Working in collaboration with systems-thinkers, information architects, designers, lawyers, political scientists and economists, ISE has now developed a range of tools that allows it to combine contextualized analysis with comparative perspectives to provide actionable policy advice on issues of state effectiveness. The program has seven overarching goals and objectives:

i) *Creation of Practical toolkits.* Based on articulated demand from country leaders and managers, ISE is undertaking the production of a set of "how to" handbooks for the creation of specific functions of the state. Each handbook will summarize the system elements, rules, procedures, organizational structure and processes for operation of that function, and techniques for creating capability in different contexts. The handbooks will be based on the following key elements: codification of ISE's internal knowledge based on its years of fieldwork and research; case studies of successful transitions; case studies of challenging contexts; and techniques adapted from the business administration field. Each handbook will include guidance on how to build National Programs- a set of implementation vehicles designed to create institutional capability- in the specific areas. In 2009 and 2010, handbooks will be produced for the following functions, selected as a result of ISE field analysis that indicates that it is these functions that emerge as preconditions for the effective functioning of other parts of the system[4]:

- *National Accountability Systems.* The sub-functions of a successful finance system will be codified and explained, including budget, treasure, procurement, accounting, auditing and programming.

- *Security (monopoly on the means of violence).* The key issues and trade-offs in building a security force will be explained, including across the organizations of army, policing, criminal justice and intelligence, and the issues of civilian control in decision-making.

- *Infrastructure Management.* The tasks of designing, supervising, procuring, managing, operating and maintaining infrastructure will be explained. The issue of designing infrastructure in a carbon constrained world, and appropriate design and technology to minimize environmental impact will be placed centrally in this module.

- *Human Capacity Development.* The task of equipping new generations for leadership, management and professional and vocational roles will be explained. Approaches to building the skill sets needed to nurture future generations to fulfill the roles of public servants and citizens and to compete in the global market will be explored. Options for taking advantage of in-country, out-of-country and distance learning training will be described.

- *Creation of Citizenship Rights and Obligations.* The task of creating programs that connect to citizens and develop decision rights and vehicles for community participation is critical to the state-building challenge. This handbook will explore the dimension of citizenship in weak state

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[4] This methodology is based on a multi-year program on institutions, organizations and political economy of reform and change management previously run by the ISE team at the World Bank in the late 1990s, consisting of a large number of anthropologists, sociologists and business thinkers; partnerships with universities; reviews of World Bank strategies, programs and projects; case studies from more than 90 countries; and the development of tools in conjunction with the business community. The materials were not published as September 11th and the ensuing move of the team to Afghanistan placed the program on hold. To update and release this material in useable form will require a dedicated team and a separate program will be developed for this.

contexts and programmatic vehicles for enhancing citizenship rights. At the core of this approach is the National Solidarity Program, a program designed by the ISE team and now active in 23,000 villages across Afghanistan. This module will explore design options and modalities for such programs.

- *National Administrative Systems*. The task of creating organizational capability at different levels of government- centre, province, district, municipality, village- is central to the task of creating governmental capability. This handbook will provide key design options, approaches and indicators for the creation of governmental capability at all these levels. It will include options for leveraging new information technologies for information flow, storage and sharing, in such ways as to increase transparency, and therefore citizenship participation in decision-making, and accountability.

ii) *Country Stock-takings*. Ten cases of successful transformation will be carefully mapped in terms of their processes and drivers of transitions. The set of cases provisionally selected are: Spain, Chile, Turkey, Poland, Lithuania and Singapore. Each of these case studies presents a useful basis for learning, as it will allow for similarities and differences across regions and countries to be identified. A further set of countries that have made some progress towards state functionality will also be examined when the capacity and resources are in place to do so. This set of cases will include countries such as Rwanda, Cambodia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Mozambique and Uganda. Aspects to be examined in detail for both sets of countries will include: the drivers of domestic leadership; the ways in which technical assistance and international firms can be effectively deployed; the dynamics of the accession process; the dynamics of regional security; how creation of institutional capability took place; the governance processes that drove change of rules; how a domestic construction industry and managerial capability for infrastructure was created. Through historical analysis and in-country interviews with key stakeholder groups, and the leaders of these transitions, the critical drivers of successful transformation will be identified and the policy implications of such drivers investigated. The products will be publications of 20 pages each, a series of workshops, a documentary film, and a final consolidated publication. The learning involved will also provide the basis for South-South learning to be facilitated, between leaders and managers who have recently experienced successful transitions and those intending to embark on such a process.

- *Analysis of the case of Singapore* indicates the importance of a strategic vision, movement away from aid dependency and a focus on service industries. Singapore also invested great effort to attract international investment from multi-national corporations, systematically develop human capacity with a particular focus on nurturing a cadre of managers and leaders with the specific skills necessary to support economic development, and carefully design infrastructure and combat corruption. The government was used as the key mechanism for strategy development and policy implementation and a dynamic social contract ensured that these reforms were both sustainable and successful.

- *Examination of the process of change in the American south* shows that investment in education, public infrastructure, political openness and reconciliation, receptivity to new ideas and technologies, and efforts to embrace globalization have all supported rapid economic and political development. These efforts to develop a highly business-friendly and service-oriented environment, along with strong leadership, constant re-evaluation of the role of the state, and a focus on the budget as the central instrument of policy have transformed the region.

- *Investigation into the transformation in Ireland* has shown that efforts to attract new technologies and position itself as the IT center of Europe, diversification of economic

activities and the development of an amenable regulatory environment have allowed Ireland to experience unprecedented economic growth. Intelligent use of external funding, such as European Structural and Cohesion Funds, to support a coherent economic and social development agenda, and long-term development vision and spatial planning processes have also supported Ireland's transition to peace and prosperity.

- *Investigation into the transformations of the 1980s and early 2000s in Spain* was undertaken in partnership with Citpax, an organization in Madrid, to document the mechanisms and approaches used by Spain in partnership with the EU to introduce democracy and prosperity after the Franco regime.

iii) *Maintenance of a Sovereignty Index*. The Index is an original tool for measuring – objectively and universally – any country in the world's Sovereigny Gap: how far short a state falls in performing its basic functions from the capacity presumed by the *de jure* sovereignty that it is accorded in international relations. The Index is comprised of several indicators for each of the ten functions that a state should perform in the modern world, ranked by the relative effectiveness of each of their institutions across state functions.[5] By highlighting the most and least effective functions and interdependencies between functions, we are able to diagnose precisely what drives or constrains the effectiveness of a given state and then tailor strategies for that particular state. ISE will update and publish the index on an annual basis for all countries based on a high-level desk review. The Index will then partner with domestic institutes to build the index in more depth, across an initial 12 countries. The index protocols have been created and the index has been piloted in an initial three countries. The Index will be launched in various fora and updated on-line.

ISE has developed a first draft version of the State Effectiveness Index implementation plan based on continued discussion with, and refinement of ideas by various partners and stakeholders, previous fieldwork carried out in Tajikistan in 2006, and fieldwork in Nepal, Kosovo and Afghanistan in 2007. This stage of work has included an extensive review of existing indicators to identify strengths and weaknesses; development of a prototype scorecard to delineate sub-functions of the state; and identification of options for aggregating, ranking and mapping data. The State Effectiveness Program, through ISE is now in the process of discussing and finalizing index data modeling modalities, data management programming, software, visualization tools, project development, personnel structure and dissemination techniques with various partners including research groups, academic institutions, technology companies and commercial organizations.

Methodology: Development of the index will take place in three stages. Throughout each stage, a series of rigorous consultations and feedback sessions will take place with the World Bank, UN and other organizations to ensure methodological soundness and efficiency of implementation:

- Stage I of the project, an initial experimental phase that has already taken place, developed a prototype scorecard to delineate sub-functions of the state; devised appropriate methods for measuring the performance of those sub-functions; conducted an extensive review of existing indicators to identify strengths and weaknesses; and identified options for aggregating, ranking and mapping data. The methodology was then tested in three pilot countries;

- Stage II of the project will build on phase I through work to devise methods to identify interdependencies between state functions; identify policy applications; and determine optimal ways to sequence and prioritize reform based on the data collected. The scorecards will be

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[5] See Ghani, A. and Lockhart, C. 'An Agenda for State-Building in the 21st Century' (*Fletcher Forum for World Affairs*, Winter 2006, Vol 30:1) available www.effectivestates.org for details of the ten functions of the state as envisioned by ISE.

piloted in a further nine countries for a total of twelve country samples, and further workshops will be conducted to review work and next steps with key stakeholder groups (World Bank, UN, finance and development ministries, civil society actors, corporate leaders, NGOs).

- Stage III of the project will involve the compilation of scorecards and the construction and maintenance of an index for the full range of countries; further rigorous country analysis and deepening of the methodology; and ultimately, planning and delivery of training courses in diagnostic approaches and preparation of state-building strategies. The pace and modalities for implementation of this phase will depend heavily on input and suggestions received during consultations and review workshops, and on experience during the preliminary phases.

iv) *Creation of Training Programs.* The Institute will provide training for leaders, managers, and staffers for international organizations working in the field of state- and institution-building. Leaders and managers of state transformation will be equipped with analytical and diagnostic tools to lead and manage their countries through transformative processes. The Institute connects leaders and practitioners with sources of expertise from a range of relevant countries and areas of expertise, such as technology, security, political economy, and design. ISE is also helping to catalyze a network of universities and think tanks to promote understanding and key skills among professionals and students to prepare the next generations to tackle such challenges. The Institute also offers training and advice on skills to the staff of international organizations. Specifically, ISE is planning to develop training and background materials, simulations, and a video series; establish networks of professionals; facilitate regular briefings; sponsor workshops and conferences; and advise on and develop curricula for universities and training centers. The Institute will also create open-source software to build capacity within governments and international institutions through knowledge and lesson-sharing. (Further detail below)

v) *Dissemination, Advocacy and Outreach.* Outreach and the dissemination of ideas is critical to the success of state-building, which benefits from publications and other media, web-based tools, workshops, conferences and presentations that spread and refine ideas and bring together different communities to share experiences. Workshops are held by ISE as required, taking advantage of World Bank, DAC, UN and other international meetings to reduce the costs of convening relevant stakeholders. A small consortium of ISE partners will meet regularly to be briefed on the outcome of research.

Over the last year, ISE has supported development of the following outreach and dissemination activities both to spread the ideas developed, and to allow these ideas to benefit and evolve based on inputs from other individuals and organizations:

- *Events dealing with issues of development, politics, economics and globalization,* including the World Affairs Council, Advocates for International Development (A4ID), the Atlantic Council and several presentations and the American Bar Association's World Justice Project, the Brookings Institution, the Council on Foreign Relations, a Managing Global Security event, the Global Philanthropy Forum, the Skoll Forum, several meetings at Wilton Park, the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor, Ditchley Park, the World Economic Forum, Club Madrid and the Global College in Winnipeg, Canada.

- *Governments and parliaments,* including the European Parliament, the US Department of State, the US Senate and House major committees, Senators and Congressmen and –women, the Governments of Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, the UK and Spain.

- *Foundations*, including the Smith Richardson Foundation, the Gates Foundation, the Novo Foundation, the Tides Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, the Ford Foundation, the Omidyar Network, the MacArthur Foundation, Comton Foundation, Wilton Park meeting of foundations, the Open Society Institute, the European Foundation Center's annual meeting of foundations, the US peace and security funders' network;

- *Military organizations*, including the US Department of Defense, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the NATO Defense College, National Defense University, and NATO Headquarters;

- *International organizations*, including the World Bank, the IMF, United Nations and many of its agencies, the UN Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor, the UN Democracy Fund, the African Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank;

- *Academic institutions*, including The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at Washington University, Scranton University and Stanford University;

ISE has also conducted the following outreach and dissemination activities:

- *Publications* in the Financial Times, the Washington Post, Europe's World, Prospect, Open Democracy, Slate, Newsweek, and the Independent; *television appearances* on RTK, the public service broadcaster in Kosovo, BBC World, Bloomberg Television, CNN, CBS, and C-SPAN; and *radio appearances* on National Public Radio, Illinois Public Radio, Seattle Radio, America Abroad Media, and PRI;

- *An ISE book tour for Fixing Failed States*. The book tour included numerous talks, discussions, radio and newspaper interviews and meetings across the United States in cities such as Washington, DC (World Affairs Council, Security for a New Century, Politics and Prose) and New York (Oxford University Press, Carnegie Council), Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Toronto, London, Brussels, Istanbul, Kathmandu and Kabul among other cities;

- *Preparation for a small annual meeting on state-building*. Preparations for a workshop to review and consolidate learning in the field in the autumn of 2009 are underway. The meeting will bring together national reformers with experts and policymakers in the fields of development, technology, business and academia to discuss state-building strategies and experience;

- *The development of working groups*. Preparations are ongoing to establish working groups on different aspects of state-building, including working groups on law and national accountability systems. These groups will include highly experienced experts and practitioners in the relevant fields who can be brought together to consolidate learning and mobilize action;

- *Development of documentaries on state-building*. ISE is currently discussing the idea of developing documentaries of its fieldwork with various production houses and media outlets;

Moving forward, ISE staff will continue to provide keynote speeches, participate in conferences, write papers , articles and books on aspects of state-building and state functionality, and conduct television and radio interview on these issues. ISE will continue to catalyze and facilitate the state-building agenda, by entering into high level discussions and convening conferences, workshops and seminars to advance the debate, develop new concepts, and bridge from concept to implementation.

As part of this process, a small annual meeting on state-building will be held to review and consolidate learning in the field.

vi)   *Creation of open-source software.* The Institute is seeking to leverage existing open-source technologies to design software that will allow leaders and managers of state transitions around the world to contribute to online resources for state- and market-building. ISE has conducted a mapping of approaches to the use and development of technology for improving state-building and governance outcomes through open-source software, and has discussed approaches with a variety of systems thinkers and information architects in a number of organizations on the west coast of the United States, including academic institutions such as the Naval Postgraduate School; think-tanks such as the Center for Science and Environment, Technology Entertainment Design (TED) and Fortune Brainstorm; and private companies such as Google, Microsoft Humanitarian Systems, Boeing, Systems Dynamics, Oracle, SAS, Forterra Sytems Inc, IBM, General Electric and Citrix.

vii) *State-building Facilitation Support and Establishment of a Rapid Reaction Facility (RRF).* The ISE team has assisted transition processes in Afghanistan, Nepal, Southern Sudan, Kosovo, and Lebanon. Requests to assist the leadership (domestic and diplomatic) have recently come from a range of additional countries, including Liberia, Haiti, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Ghana, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, and Pakistan. ISE understands that solutions for national reconstruction cannot be taken "off the shelf" and implemented the same way in each country, and so complements the theory embodied in the manuals and training with practice. Because of this, ISE makes its first priority to join together domestic stakeholders to ensure that stabilization processes aren't hindered from the outset by excluded groups or by blindness to domestic concerns. To support this approach, ISE has developed a set of tools that allow rapid (ten day maximum) assessments of country stability and the condition of state institutions (see methodology below). While most of ISE's country work is budgeted on a specific case-by-case basis, tailored to the needs of the country concerned, there are occasions where ISE is asked to respond to a country and mobilize a team very rapidly, typically within two to three weeks. It often takes three to six months to mobilize project financing, so on these occasions, ISE either has to meet the costs of fieldwork out of its core budget, or forego the call for help and decline to assist. To address this, ISE will create a small facility to be able to respond to such requests and respond to calls for advice on a timely, responsive basis.

State-building facilitation support involves use of these techniques in country contexts. The RRF will use and refine these techniques for rapid support and will also be developed based on in-depth analysis of how other similar units and organizations have worked successfully elsewhere within the humanitarian, development and business worlds. The core staff for the RRF has already been identified and well-qualified individuals from a broad cross-section of sectors and fields have agreed to participate as soon as funding is available. The support systems will be developed as funding is forthcoming. ISE country work in transitional scenarios includes a seven step process that combines analytic and academic perspectives to cross-cut operational silos and mental models:

- *Critical Stakeholder Inquiry*, which involves reading patterns and identifying issues and blockages to positive change through validation with up to one thousand stakeholders in a country context;

- *Aid System Analysis*, through which ISE identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the aid system in a given country and provides recommendations for change;

- *Institutional and Organizational Analysis,* through which the degree of functionality of state institutions is ascertained and the key linkages or problems identified;

- *Preparation of a National Vision,* with a national visioning team, to generate forward momentum, create cross-cutting ties between and among citizens, communities, the private sector and policy makers, and provide a medium through which to connect discussions within formal and informal authority structures;

- *Design of National Programs*, to provide a central vehicle for supporting government functionality across state territory in an effective and transparent manner, and to revive and build the state apparatus and a system of democratic governance with the active participation of the citizenry;

- *Facilitation of a 'Double Compact,'* or international agreement, to create a mutually reinforcing system of rights and obligations, and therefore accountability, between government and citizens and between government and the international community;

- *Preparation of a Donor Conference,* including advice on coordination, support to leadership in outlining resource mobilization strategies, advice on the parameters of the relationship with the international community, and input towards effective communication strategies.

Moving Forward: There is now demand from members within the existing partners' consortium to develop closer modes of collaboration with ISE and provide further support. This may include biannual meetings with ISE staff and partners, as described above; attendance at the ISE annual meeting on state-building; online interaction and discussion with other consortium members and ISE staff on a regular basis; access to ISE resources, including country reports, manuals, index research, training resources and manuals, papers and books; e-mail newsletter updates; and where useful, collaboration with ISE's field-work on the ground. Over the 2009-2010 period, it is expected that highlights of ISE's work will cover, at a minimum:

i)   Development of six handbooks on functions of the state;

ii) Carrying out of country stock-takings in ten cases of successful transformation;

iii) Testing the Sovereignty Index in a further five countries and holding workshops with key groups;

iv) Developing training modules for various functions of the state, recruiting trainers, developing curricula and launching two training courses;

v)   Publishing various papers and articles, participating in numerous conferences and hosting an annual state-building workshop;

vi) Developing and operationalizing a first version of the open-source software for use by state-building practitioners;

vii) Providing state-building support in eight countries and operationalizing the RRF;

viii)   Facilitating several high level meetings, workshops, dialogues and design workshops, including its annual conference.

ISE is also launching a new program on Market-building to complement its State-building work, focusing on the fundamental building blocks of the market.

ISE would welcome participation of and support from the government of Australia. A budget for 2009-2010 is attached as Annex II. Funders contributing at a level of $1 million or above per year are entitled to become patrons of the organization, with a greater level of engagement in goal and priority-setting. Multi-year commitments are always much appreciated as they allow for a higher level of predictability for ISE. Details of the exact configuration of support and a budget for work over the 2009-2010 period can be discussed further with ISE management as required. ISE would also be delighted to explore partnering on one or more specific program or activity, including perhaps a conference or series of conferences on new paradigms for state-building.