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Support to the National Electoral Commission

2016-2018

Country: SIERRA LEONE

Project Document

Project Title:	Support to the National Electoral Commission 2016-2018
UNDAF Outcome:	Capacity of democratic institutions strengthened to enable good governance
Related Strategic Plan Outcome:	Citizen expectations for voice, development, the rule of law and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance
Expected Project Outcome:	Improved National Electoral Commission (NEC) capacity to administer technically sound, inclusive and sustainable electoral processes that are capable of garnering public trust and confidence.
Total Project Budget:	USD9,039,907
Implementing Partner:	UNDP Sierra Leone

The United Nations and its development partners have supported successive elections and participation of the people of Sierra Leone in elections in 2002, 2004, 2007, 2008 and 2012. International support for these elections has been instrumental to overcoming the divisions of the country's eleven-year civil war, which ended in 2002. Sierra Leone has made important gains in the consolidation of its post-conflict democracy and towards self-sufficient administration of its own elections. A challenging timeline, including new unprecedented tasks for the country's Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), led to a request from the National Electoral Commission (NEC) for electoral cycle support in the run up to the 2018 elections.

The Project, managed by UNDP as a multi-donor project, is expected to contribute to two main intended outcomes:

- 1) National Electoral Commission's (NEC) capacity strengthened to administer technically sound, credible, inclusive and sustainable elections; and
- 2) Public confidence and participation in electoral processes Improved.

The Government of Sierra Leone is committed to fund the majority of the elections budget that is estimated at more than USD40 million. UNDP and its development partners will complement Government resources with technical and material support to the NEC to support their work on meeting their responsibilities for key electoral processes.

For the Government of Sierra Leone:

**Minister
Ministry of Finance and Economic Development**

Signature: -----

Date: -----

For UNDP:

Resident Representative

Signature: -----

Date: -----

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Situation analysis

Background

Sierra Leone has made notable progress in consolidation of peace and democracy since the end of its civil war. Following the Lomé Peace Agreement, the United Nations heavily supported the successful elections of 2002 through the provision of technical, organisational and logistical support. The National Electoral Commission (NEC) was completely restructured and the staffing entirely changed in 2004 with UN support. The NEC successfully managed the administration of peaceful elections in 2007 and 2012, with declining levels of international involvement in the management of each election.

However, the growth of electoral administration capacity is not complete and the NEC as an institution remains fragile; the country does not yet have the ability to manage or fully fund electoral processes itself. A number of constraints still impede the NEC and its partners from holding elections that fully meet internationally acceptable standards without international assistance. These include resource and capacity constraints coupled with the compressed time frame and complex electoral processes expected in 2017-2018. At the time of writing, these have included the implementation of a boundary delimitation exercise; implementation of possible chiefdom de-amalgamation; fresh registration of all eligible voters; a referendum on a new constitution; and holding of presidential, parliamentary, local council, village head, and paramount chieftaincy elections. The short time frame for all of these processes will require adequate resourcing and capacity coupled with strong and timely management by the National Electoral Commission and well-organised collaboration with partners and other stakeholders for successful elections to be delivered.

While the electoral cycle has run from 2012, the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Sierra Leone in 2014 led to delay and disruption in electoral administration, in common with many other public bodies. EVD led to the postponement of the national population and housing census twice which consequentially required delaying the required boundary delimitation process until 2016. Other delays were caused to the planned process of civil (population) registration as well as the constitutional review process. These delays compressed much action that could have occurred in 2014 and 2015 into 2016, and in many cases further delays have pushed these into 2017.

In 2012 it is estimated that international donors met 94% of the NEC's costs for the election. While there is a clear wish for the Government of Sierra Leone to increase their commitment, the amount of government funds available for the electoral processes of 2017 and 2018 remain unclear. The electoral calendar for 2017 and 2018 is also not yet finalised, and is not entirely within the control of the NEC. While the parliamentary and presidential elections are due in early 2018, other processes and functions may yet derail the timetable.

In previous years, the NEC has conducted a voter registration exercise across the country; electoral law requires the finalisation of the register six months in advance of the election. However, for 2018 uncertainty arose after the Government decided to establish a national civil register based on biometric data, with any subsequent voters' register to be extracted from this civil register. New legislation created the civil register and a National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA). However, delays in establishing the NCRA and procuring the necessary equipment to collect biometric population data in the field meant that as 2016 progressed, time ran out for a standalone civil registration to happen in time for the NEC to meet its voter registration deadline.

In late 2016 a decision was taken that NEC and NCRA should jointly conduct data collection fieldwork using the equipment procured by the Government on behalf of the NCRA to register Sierra Leone citizens over 16 years of age; the NEC will then use this data to create a preliminary voters' register for exhibition and objection. This

first phase of fieldwork is slated for March 2017 and subsequently the NCRA will conduct fieldwork to register non-citizens and children. There is some political opposition to the NEC being required to work with an entity, the NCRA, that is not an independent body in its registration efforts. The NEC is confident that it has made arrangements and agreements that protect its independence and the integrity of the voter registration process.

Previous Electoral Support

Sierra Leone has benefitted from substantial support for the elections and electoral processes held after the end of the civil war in 2002. The Lomé Peace Agreement of 7 July 1999 explicitly recognised that the lack of a legitimate, elected government was one of the key causes of the civil war and made it clear that credible, competitive elections were central to the post-conflict stabilisation of Sierra Leone. The United Nations provided significant support to the national elections in 2002: the UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and UNDP supported the complete restructuring of the National Electoral Commission and provided institutional and capacity development for electoral processes in the country leading up to the 2002 electoral cycle. Further electoral assistance was provided by UNDP to the two electoral cycles of 2007-2010 and 2011-2014, in partnership with the relevant missions established by the UN Security Council (UNIOSIL and UNIPSIL). The 2018 elections will be the first national elections since the civil war to take place without the presence of such a mission.

UNDP's Support to Electoral Reform and the National Electoral Commission project focused on providing technical and financial assistance from 2005-2007 for the seven outputs of the NEC's reform process: restructuring of the NEC, staff capacity development at NEC; infrastructure development; setting up IT Systems; reviewing electoral laws and regulations; supporting boundary delimitation; and assisting voter registration. The directly executed project was developed based on the experience of the period 2001-2004, which demonstrated that capacity building of NEC had not been achievable while the NEC and UN were simultaneously preparing for and running the national elections.

UNDP's Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011-2014 Project was developed in 2010; the Steering Committee broadened the project to focus beyond the NEC, with UNDP and the United Nations Integrated Peacekeeping Mission in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) managing different components within the project. The project supported key processes that led to the successful administration of the 2012 elections and supported capacity-development per the electoral cycle approach after the elections.

While the 2011-2014 project successfully delivered a large amount of material and advisory support to the EMBs, the project was less successful in supporting NEC capacity building in the run up to and after the elections. The Final Evaluation of the Project found that "this assistance was not sufficient for sustainability of these achievements or to enable the NEC to successfully manage future national elections without the support of the international community." Although the project made important efforts, the project did not manage to develop and implement a comprehensive capacity development plan that emphasized sustainability for EMB partners as part of the eventual exit strategy for these institutions from international assistance. Efforts late in the program towards improving NEC work processes and planning were then slowed by the EVD epidemic and a consequent lack of momentum at the project and at NEC.

Current Situation

On 18 August 2015, through a letter to the UN Resident Coordinator, the NEC requested UNDP's financial and technical assistance for voter registration, the conduct of the expected constitutional referendum and the

conduct of the presidential, parliamentary and local council elections, including if necessary a second round of voting in the presidential election.

In December 2015, the United Nations Focal Point for Electoral Assistance in the Department of Political Affairs approved the provision of electoral assistance to Sierra Leone, to consist of a UNDP electoral cycle support project and complementary efforts under the UN Resident Coordinator to promote peaceful and tranquil elections. The decision followed internal UN consultations with UNDP, the United Nations Office for West Africa, DPA Africa II Division, the Peacebuilding Support Office and UN Women.

Since the approval was received, the UNDP Country Office in Sierra Leone developed a standalone proposal to support boundary delimitation in 2016 and partnered with Irish Aid on this work. This proposed document thus does not include work on boundary delimitation as it is covered by the separate project – and largely complete as at January 2017 - but the work done under the boundary project will be considered as part of the wider support to this electoral cycle.

Similarly the lack of certainty around the timing and scope of the proposed constitutional referendum at the time of agreeing this project means that direct support for the referendum processes is not included in this project. UNDP has developed a separate stand alone project to harness international support for the conduct of the referendum. That project will be managed and delivered by the team established under this project.

A separate project is being developed by the UN Resident Coordinator's office to undertake various conflict prevention and mitigation activities. This project will include some elements of election-related programming that have previously been within wider UNDP electoral projects, specifically support to planning and training for electoral security actors, improving the mediation abilities for political dialogue of national independent commissions, including PPRC, and efforts to establishing early warning systems to prevent electoral violence (including electoral violence against women). The project will seek funds from the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

The electoral and conflict prevention projects will work closely together and the Chief Technical Advisor for the SNEC project will remain the senior UN electoral advisor in Sierra Leone, contributing electoral expertise to the conflict prevention project as required.

Development partners have already moved to commence projects with civil society partners in support of the electoral process. Areas covered in these projects include civic education (including such education for marginalised groups); civic dialogue efforts; domestic electoral observation; media development; media monitoring and supporting women's participation as voters and candidates. Accordingly, this project does not include work in these areas with civil society, but the project team will continuously look for synergies and opportunities for the NEC and this project to work with civil society in pursuit of shared goals.

UNDP consultations with development partners indicate that the level of donor funding in support of the administration of the 2018 elections will be significantly smaller than in previous cycles. This project, therefore, has prioritised areas where donor funding is most likely to prove both catalytic and sustainable. Should additional needs be identified and matching resources become available, the Technical Committee can recommend modifying this project document accordingly.

Project Strategy

This Support to the National Electoral Commission Project in Sierra Leone is informed by past NEC, UNDP, and development partner experience in the country, and by plans already in place for election-related programming with civil society.

Due to the late start of the project (more than half way through the five-year electoral cycle) the project has prioritised the supporting national capacity for electoral processes through assistance to the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and improving the sustainability of key processes and approaches; specific attention is paid to areas of weakness identified in previous electoral observation reports. Efforts will be made to build sustainable national capacity though this may be limited by the challenges of the electoral timetable.

The project will concentrate on supporting capacity building and participation in two main areas:

Delivery of key electoral processes: Supporting the institutional and management capacity of the NEC to deliver key processes: voter registration, results management, and voter information.

Inclusive participation: Expanding levels of electoral and democratic awareness and participation through increasing the inclusiveness of NEC work with a particular emphasis on expanding the participation of women and persons living with disabilities.

Moving forward in both of these complementary elements is critical to the achievement of enduring enhancements in democratic practice in Sierra Leone. Working in these two areas, the Project will correspondingly contribute towards the achievement of the following upon completion in 2018:

Outcome: Improved National Electoral Commission (NEC) capacity to administer technically sound, inclusive and sustainable electoral processes that are capable of garnering public trust and confidence.

More electoral advisory staff is proposed for this electoral cycle relative to the one that implemented the previous project. One of the lessons learned from the previous cycle, also noted in the final independent evaluation of the project, was that the lean team of CTA and Project Operations Manager was not robust enough to provide sufficient technical assistance to key partners. This contributed to the limited capacity building of key actors and made project management more challenging. Rather than two professional staff, the Project proposes four long-term international roles to engage with the NEC over the project life span:

- Chief Technical Advisor to provide overall management and oversee all electoral technical assistance and project operations (P5);
- Electoral Operations Advisor (P4) to lead output two and the electoral operational elements of outputs four; training elements to be shared with the Gender and Inclusion Advisor;
- Gender and Inclusion Advisor (P4) to lead output three and the voter information elements of outputs four; training elements to be shared with the Electoral Operations Advisor;
- Information and Communications Technology Advisor, to lead output one and support the ICT elements of outputs two and four. This is likely to be a consultancy position due to the difficulty of recruiting such expertise on staff contracts.

Additional consultants will be engaged as needed by project operations to perform such tasks as IT development; design of training programmes, graphic design; ballot paper and forms design; and inclusive design. Consultants will be under the overall management of the CTA and work with the relevant electoral advisor.

They will be supported by the Project Management Unit which also reports to the CTA:

- Project Operations Manager (P4) to lead the Project Management Unit and oversee all project financial, procurement and reporting work;
- Research and Reporting Officer (International UNV);
- Finance Officer (SC);
- Procurement and Asset Associate (SC);
- Finance and Administrative Associate (SC);
- Project Drivers (SC)

Electoral advisors and consultants will be embedded in the NEC. The PMU will be located at the UNDP Country Office and work closely with the Country Office Operations Team to ensure dedicated support to key UNDP financial, procurement, and reporting requirements of the project.

Project Components

The narrative below describes the project's components. The outputs are based on the priority needs of the country for the current electoral cycle; the existing capacity of NEC in Sierra Leone to manage the electoral processes required in this electoral cycle as well as the findings of electoral observers.

Output four, support to the conduct of the 2018 elections, is focused on supporting the preparation and enabling work of NEC headquarters, and relies heavily upon the Government of Sierra Leone meeting its commitment to fund the field operations of the NEC. Additional activities can be added to this output by the Technical Committee if development partners wish to broaden their support.

Annual project work plans will be developed for agreement by the Technical Committee, providing more detail on activities and approach.

Output 1 Establishment of the Register of Voters supported

The development of a timely, transparent, credible register of voters is critical for successful elections and referenda; and the NEC requested support in the preparation of the provisional voter register, exhibition, and correction process, resulting in a final voter register. An accurate register of voters is particularly important because of the regional distribution of support for leading political parties in the past, leading some parties to see registration as the most contested element of the election.

Under the Public Elections Act, the registration of voters must take place six months before an election. Therefore, to meet the expected schedule of a February 2018 poll, the register must be finished in August 2017. Due to this timing, this output will need to cover all elements of the project: NEC capacity, inclusion and trust-building initiatives. In the remainder of the project, these will be separated into different outputs to reflect their on-going and cross-cutting nature.

At previous elections the NEC has run a standalone registration process. For the 2017 registration, a series of decisions and discussions has led to a change in process, though the NEC remains responsible for the compilation of the voters' register. The NEC will now partner with the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) to collect biometric data from the voting age population – Sierra Leone citizens over 16 years of age – and will undertake a de-duplication process of collected data, all using equipment already purchased by Government. Fieldwork is expected to commence in March 2017. The project will procure stationary and forms for use in registration centres; all remaining costs for the registration fieldwork operations will be met by the Government of Sierra Leone.

NEC requested IT assistance in managing the next phase of work, when the NEC will have raw registration data. The NEC will need to construct a preliminary voters' list and move on to an exhibition and objection period. To do this they require a central data centre to be established and bespoke software to be developed. No Government funds have been allocated for these tasks.

1.1 Support to voter registration data centre

In order to meet these needs the project will deploy an experienced ICT Advisor to work with NEC on all IT-related elements of this work. Working with the Chief Technical Advisor for Elections the ICT Advisor will

ensure NEC can plan the entire process of extraction and compilation of population data and its transformation in the preliminary voters' register. The ICT Advisor will also provide critical assurance to the NEC in the design and implementation of their data management strategies. UNDP will also engage a software developer(s) who will modify the 2012 voter registration database for use in 2017; the ICT Advisor will supervise the developer(s) and quality assure their work.

The project will also procure ICT equipment for a central data centre in Freetown for the processing of the voter registration data. This requires servers and various related elements as well as consumables. The data centre will be in an existing premises that has suitable power and connectivity arrangements in place. This data centre will be re-used by the NEC as a Results Processing Centre during any electoral events in the life of the project.

1.2. Support voter information activities on voter registration

The Sierra Leonean public has not been informed of the plans for the field registration and related processes. The UNDP project will support the NEC to develop a voter information strategy and implementation plans, as well as to mobilise and inform civil society on the voter registration process. The project will support NEC in the design and production of voter information materials and the conduct of voter information workshops that can be customised to meet the needs of young people and women, who have been marginalised in past elections.

In reflecting on the 2012 elections, the NEC particularly identified the need to improve the breadth and reach of its public information and outreach efforts. Subsequently the NEC has published a strategy for improving the electoral participation of people with disabilities. The NEC has requested assistance in customising voter information messages around registration to meet the needs of disabled people. The project will support the NEC to deepen relationships with disabled people's organisations to aid in the design and distribution of appropriate voter information materials to disabled people as a first stage of collaboration. If funds allow, the project can deepen its support for voter information if agreed between UNDP, NEC and donors.

1.3 Support printing and exhibition process for provisional voters' registry

The NEC has also identified the need for support in printing the preliminary voters' list. The project will work with the NEC to identify the best strategy for this, which is likely to be the procurement of suitable printers and related supplies. The NEC also requires support with forms and materials to be used in field registration centres during the exhibition period.

Output 2: Results management processes agreed and system developed

The process of collating and certifying electoral results is one of the most complex tasks at any election; it is also the most important, as it governs the ultimate translation of individuals' votes into elected offices at every level or to referendum results. A results process must be easy to implement by the temporary staff in polling stations, capable of delivering certainty and confidence to electoral participants and transparent to all electoral stakeholders, from voters themselves to domestic and international observers. While many may see polling as the crux of an electoral process, it is the counting of votes and collating of results that will ultimately govern whether an election is successful and its outcomes accepted.

An election results management system (RMS) is defined as the process by which an election authority counts, tabulates, aggregates and announces the results of an election, which starts immediately after the

closing of polling and ends with the final results. Intrinsic to any successful RMS is the continuation of transparency right through to the end, including during and after votes are counted.

From UNDP (2015) *Electoral Results Management Systems: Catalogue of Options*

In 2012 the NEC experienced difficulties in the run up to the election in terms of the design and delivery of a results management system. With assistance from the UNDP electoral team, an *ad hoc* system was developed very late in the process when other planned support fell through, and this was used at the regional level, with results centres in the four regions supported by local processes. Various issues with transparency, efficiency and effectiveness were identified by the NEC itself with this process, and noted by international and domestic observers, along with measurable gaps in the understanding of the system and its procedures at all levels of NEC staff. The NEC committed to improving the process and developing a new system for use at the 2018 elections.

However, it is important to remember that a results management process is more than the IT system that supports it. In 2012 the EU Electoral Observation Mission noted the following serious concerns:

The intake of results at tally centres revealed that many presiding officers did not follow correct procedures for the filling out of the reconciliation and result forms (RRFs) and packing of material. A high number of RRFs arrived at the tally centres in unsealed envelopes, missing essential data and the stamp and signature of the presiding officer.....The process of clearing RRFs from quarantine was very time consuming and slowed down the overall tallying process considerably. Furthermore the regional tally centre procedures for clearing RRFs from quarantine did not clearly specify what steps have to be taken in order to clear a RRF from quarantine and when the polling station results had to be recounted. As a result, decisions taken in this regard by the respective regional tally centre were not consistent and often poorly communicated to the agents and observers present. This led to a reduced level of transparency and credibility of the tallying process.

Such concerns can only be addressed through careful process design and development of comprehensive procedures which are then actualised through training, guidance and supervision for all staff involved in counting ballot papers and reporting results. While this output includes support for IT system development, it also includes substantial support for the development of procedures and training. Sufficient funds must be allocated by NEC and Government to ensure this training reaches all field staff for this output to have a national impact.

The development of new processes and systems for results management is the key electoral operational output of this project. Accordingly, the output should start early in the project's lifespan and any new process be ready to use at the first electoral event of the project's life. Due to the large amount of ICT-related assistance already received by NEC in output one and in previous projects, and the short timeframe between the project's commencement and expected electoral events, the Technical Committee will receive a report of findings from the activities under 2.1, and take decisions on the shape of further work in this output, before any activities will be undertaken in 2.2 or 2.3.

2.1 Support consultation on and definition of a new results management process

To begin, the project will support a process of discussion and consultation of this topic. Training and information will be provided to NEC Commissioners and staff on the topic of results management, based on the 2015 UNDP

guidebook [Electoral Results Management Systems: Catalogue of Options](#), its accompanying [e-learning course](#) and the relevant [BRIDGE](#) module.

A streamlined information process will also be offered for key results management stakeholders: political parties, domestic observation groups and the media. The NEC will be supported to develop a policy document for use in consultations with these stakeholders, and opportunities sought to build consensus on the way forward among electoral stakeholders.

2.2 Development of IT solution for results management system

NEC's vision is for the development and use of a district-based IT system for tally and transmission of results, with results centres in 14 locations. Such a system is suggested as being able to increase the speed and efficiency of the results management process while improving transparency and accountability. However, the Government does not plan to fund the necessary software and hardware that such a system demands and the NEC has limited capacity to spearhead such a project themselves.

While the final model of any new system would only be finalised following the consideration and consultation discussed above, the project makes provision for the development or procurement of a results management software system for the NEC, though any such work is subject to both the finding of work under 2.1 and a positive decision from the Technical Committee. A results management IT system should be a product for the NEC to use for many years and will need to accommodate all the different types of electoral events that NEC needs to run. The exact sequencing of the development of electoral event modules would need to be decided at the beginning of the development process and will depend on wider electoral decisions.

If developed, the results management software would be the second software developed for NEC under this project. In addition, numerous pieces of software have been developed since 2007. Each time international partners have provided the necessary support in both design and development of the software. If undertaken, the process for the results management software will this time include an explicit component of training and capacity development for NEC in defining software needs, specifications development, quality assurance and acceptance procedures, recognising the need for such skills in a modern EMB, even if development is still to be outsourced.

This output would, if authorised, provide expertise in both the electoral and IT components of a results management system to support the NEC's national results management centre. No IT equipment or networking will be purchased for the national results management centre as the NEC will use the equipment and site developed for voter registration under output one.

2.3 Support for implementation of results management process and IT system

As noted above the IT system is only one element of a results management system, and if the 'human' element does not provide accountability and accuracy the IT system is not capable of restoring this. A crucial element of support will be the development of comprehensive procedures for results management, which will then be mined to produce training and guidance materials for staff who will count and report results from polling stations to the national results centre, as well as information materials for political parties and electoral observers. These procedures and materials will be produced in a 'master' format, able to be customised for the specific electoral event that is being conducted.

Again, as part of the project's capacity building process, an explicit component of this element will be training for NEC staff on procedures development and training design.

Output 3: NEC capacity to conduct inclusive elections increased

The NEC has requested support in improving the inclusiveness of their work. UNDP has focused, in many electoral projects, on increasing the participation of women and under-represented groups in electoral processes. Under the previous electoral project, somewhat limited attention was directed to inclusion and this project aims to provide more targeted support while mainstreaming inclusion issues into the NEC's work. NEC themselves have made a commitment to improve the inclusiveness of Sierra Leonean elections, as evidenced through the establishment of the Gender & Disability focal point in NEC and the publication of a disability access policy. The project will therefore provide expertise and support for the deepening of the NEC's commitment.

3.1: Improved gender inclusiveness of Sierra Leonean electoral processes

While women clearly remain under-represented in elected office in Sierra Leone, the status of women as voters and electoral administrators is less clear. In recent years, methodologies have been developed to evaluate the inclusiveness of elections from this perspective. The project will support the work of NEC's Gender Unit to mainstream gender equality throughout Sierra Leonean electoral processes.

As a first step, NEC will be supported to undertake an assessment of the gender-openness of electoral processes in Sierra Leone. Initial training for NEC Commissioners and staff as well as relevant civil society partners will take place using the Gender and Elections BRIDGE module and the joint UNDP-UNWomen guide to [Inclusive Electoral Processes: a guide for electoral management bodies on promoting gender equality and women's participation](#). This guide also features a suggested methodology for the gender assessment; case studies from other electoral gender assessments will also be drawn upon¹. A gender assessment team drawn from NEC and civil society, supported by UNDP expertise, will conduct the assessment.

The assessment's findings should include recommendations for NEC and the project will be able to support NEC in addressing these through this and other outputs. A renewed gender policy will be developed. Provision is included for both expertise and activity funding in implementing the agreed outcomes of the assessment, such as through training. The project will also support NEC to advocate for assessment findings that require action by other Sierra Leonean actors. Further details will be elaborated once the assessment is complete.

3.2: Improved inclusion of people with disabilities in Sierra Leonean electoral processes

Sierra Leone ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010 and in 2011 enacted a Persons with Disability Act. For the 2012 elections NEC directed efforts to improving the accessibility of electoral processes and information, but has identified this as an issue on which they require further support. In 2015 the NEC published a Disability Policy with the aim of ensuring the right to electoral participation for persons with disabilities.

In the Disability Policy the NEC sets out various elements of the electoral cycle that should be modified or re-considered to meet the electoral needs of people with disabilities, and the project will support NEC to move forward on this commitment.

Under the guidance of the Gender and Inclusion Advisor, the project will engage a national Disability Advisor to the NEC, working with the staff of the Gender and Disability Unit. This person will both provide a disabled people's perspective into the work of the NEC and assist the NEC in devising an action plan to prioritise key elements of the policy. We will then support implementation of the action plan during the project's life.

¹ Published examples include [Libya](#), [Moldova](#) and [Nepal](#)

Output 4: Conduct of 2018 elections supported

4.1 NEC supported to manage enabling actions for conduct of the 2018 elections

The NEC has requested the Government of Sierra Leone to make amendments to the Public Elections Act, based on their experience at previous elections, and for the legislation to be changed in time for implementation at the 2018 elections. If the Act is so amended, this will require a wholesale revision of NEC procedures and guidance materials.

The project will assist the NEC to review and revise its operational training for these elections, incorporating any new legislation and the outcomes of work in output three on inclusive electoral processes and the results management system developed under output two. This will include development of a new master trainers' curriculum, and then the design of materials for the cascade of training from headquarters to district and temporary staff. The costs for the production of materials and delivery of training will need to be met by NEC using Government funds.

4.2 NEC supported to deliver inclusive voter information campaign

The project will provide assistance to NEC in the design and production of electoral voter information. The exact nature of this support will need to be defined by NEC and the project team for agreement in Annual Work Plans but is likely to include support to a process of defining election messaging by NEC, training for NEC staff to participate in community radio programs; production of jingles; design of posters, billboards and the like. Materials will also have to be developed for use at a presidential second round, if this is required. The project will meet the costs of devising and designing materials while the costs of placing and producing voter information will be met by NEC using Government funds. Again, this work will be informed by work underway in output three.

4.3 Design and procurement of sensitive electoral materials

At previous elections in Sierra Leone international assistance has included the provision of sensitive electoral materials, and this has been found to contribute to public and political confidence in the elections. The NEC has a substantial store of re-usable equipment that will be used at all electoral events under this project, such as ballot boxes and equipment boxes. UNDP has substantial expertise in the procurement of electoral materials using in-house expertise of the central Procurement Support Unit. The project would be able to provide expertise in the design of ballot papers and electoral forms, as well as the procurement of ballot papers, ballot box seals, results forms (in accordance with the products of output two), tamper evident envelopes for transmission of results and indelible ink for marking voters' fingers. Training in ballot paper and forms design will also be provided for NEC staff.

4.4 Post-event reflection and evaluation

In line with international good practice, the project will support a program of district and national workshops to document lessons learned from the elections, with a particular focus on the inclusiveness of the elections. Advisory support will also help NEC undertake its own internal lessons learned exercise.

Output 5: NEC planning and management capacity strengthened

The NEC is to be commended for being willing to identify for themselves that improvements could be made in their planning and management capacity. They had been keen to undertake such work in the last phase of the previous electoral project, but this was another casualty of the disruption caused to the public sector in Sierra

Leone by EVD. Supporting EMBs to undertake such work is a core goal of UNDP electoral assistance. However, in the current context of Sierra Leone it is recognised that it would be extremely difficult to deliver a large programme of such work in the time remaining before electoral events.

Nonetheless, the project will look for opportunities in 2018 to deliver such assistance once the NEC has delivered the required electoral events. Initially, the CTA will work with NEC to review the 2014 capacity assessment and identify key areas for support. The Technical Committee will receive a proposal for activities to be conducted after the elections. This output will also provide resources for participation in opportunities that may be identified as the project proceeds, such as incoming placements or exchanges from other EMBs, participating in wider UN training and the like. The Technical Committee will be required to approve the work plan for this output.

Due to the need to focus on the immediate electoral work, this output remains undetailed at project inception. The Technical Committee will spend time on discussing and agreeing the use of the resources provided here. While the size of this output may appear small, the project design is such that project staffing resource is largely focused on supporting and advising the NEC. The CTA will be based at the NEC, as will the Electoral Operations Advisor, Gender and Inclusion Advisor and the ICT Advisor. A core element of these posts is to provide on-going coaching and mentoring to NEC counterparts. These core posts will be supplemented by additional consultancy expertise as required.

Output 6: Project Management

The CTA will be responsible for developing all job descriptions for the project, drawing on those used in previous Sierra Leone projects and those available from the UNDP online toolkit for electoral assistance, for consultation with NEC and development partners. A staffing plan will be presented to the Technical Committee that identifies the timing and modalities of recruitment of staff and consultants and takes advantage of the speed offered by use of the UN single electoral roster and UNDP rosters for both staff and consultants. The proposed Project Management Unit (PMU) will manage the recruitment (for staff roles) and procurement processes (for consultants) with the support of the UNDP Sierra Leone country office.

6.1 Project reporting and evaluation systems to provide accurate financial and narrative reports and meet UNDP regulations.

A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) consultant will be engaged to develop a project M&E framework that meets UNDP corporate requirements and the needs of the Steering Committee, Technical Committee and development partners. The M&E system so established will be the responsibility of the Chief Technical Advisor with the support of the Project Operations Manager and the Research and Reporting Officer. Provision is also made for the engagement of an external evaluator in 2018, should the Technical Committee so decide. In accordance with UNDP regulations, provision is also made for the conduct of a project audit for each year of operation.

6.2 Electoral readiness assessment

If the Technical Committee considers it necessary, the project will field a small mission to assess the readiness of the NEC and the project to respond to the electoral event calendar. Such a mission would be drawn from UNDP, UN EAD and an EMB in the region. The mission would provide most value if it was deployed after the voter register was finalised but before any electoral event, so in mid-2017. The report from the assessment would provide the Technical Committee with information to re-prioritise and possibly amend the project in time to assist in the delivery of electoral events; it can also examine the project management approach used and recommend any modifications.

6.3 Project management arrangements ensure on-time delivery of project activities and timely financial and narrative reporting.

The PMU will manage all project operational tasks, under the management of the Project Operations Manager and the overall leadership of the Chief Technical Advisor. Support will also be provided by an International UN Volunteer and a national officer for project financial management and reporting processes. National staff will undertake day to day financial and administrative tasks as well as support the management and maintenance of project assets.

Partnership Strategy

The Support to the National Electoral Commission project will be implemented in close partnership with the NEC. UNDP will provide technical assistance, identified equipment and materials and be responsible for the overall coordination and monitoring of the project and reporting. NEC will be responsible for securing Government funds for electoral operations not covered in this project; these are substantial but are included in NEC's existing budget documents.

The project strategy and budget is designed in anticipation of the contributions, including financial, of development partners that development partners can contribute financial resources to the project through standard cost-sharing agreement modalities. The CTA Elections, as project manager, will work closely with development partners to coordinate the provision of assistance, to ensure that there are no overlapping activities and to maximise the impact of the project. In addition, development partners will play an important role in monitoring the project through their membership on the Steering and Technical Committees.

The project will benefit from the wider expertise of UNDP in identification of technical experts from existing rosters to provide technical assistance and the central procurement function for procurement of sensitive materials and any other materials that are not available in the country.

Management Arrangements

This document is the product of consultations between development partners, UNDP, and partner institutions both before and after the request to the UNDP for assistance by the National Electoral Commission. These discussions were preceded by the experience of implementing two previous electoral projects (2006-2010 and 2011-2015), including the evaluation of these Projects.

Steering Committee

To support the efficient mobilisation and utilisation of international assistance to the electoral process, UNDP will support a Steering Committee for the Electoral Process, chaired by the Ministry of Finance and co-chaired by UNDP, and composed of:

- Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, (MOFED)
- National Electoral Commission (NEC)
- National Registration Secretariat (NRS)/ National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA)
- Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC)
- Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)

- 2 representatives of civil society nominated by the National Election Watch (NEW)
- Sierra Leone Judiciary
- Office of National Security (ONS)
- Sierra Leone Police (SLP)
- Development Partners supporting this project, the boundary project and other electoral related interventions such as those with civil society
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Member bodies will be encouraged to nominate a high level participant for this Committee, but membership is institutional so alternate members should also be identified to allow the Committee's work to proceed efficiently. This Committee is already in operation, under the leadership of the Minister of Finance, and the project will provide the necessary support for its work to continue.

The Technical Committee discussed below will report to this Steering Committee on progress and implementation with the UNDP electoral cycle project. Other members will be encouraged to report their work related to elections to enable the Steering Committee to have a fuller picture of the electoral environment. In this way the Steering Committee will support the wider coordination of international assistance to the elections.

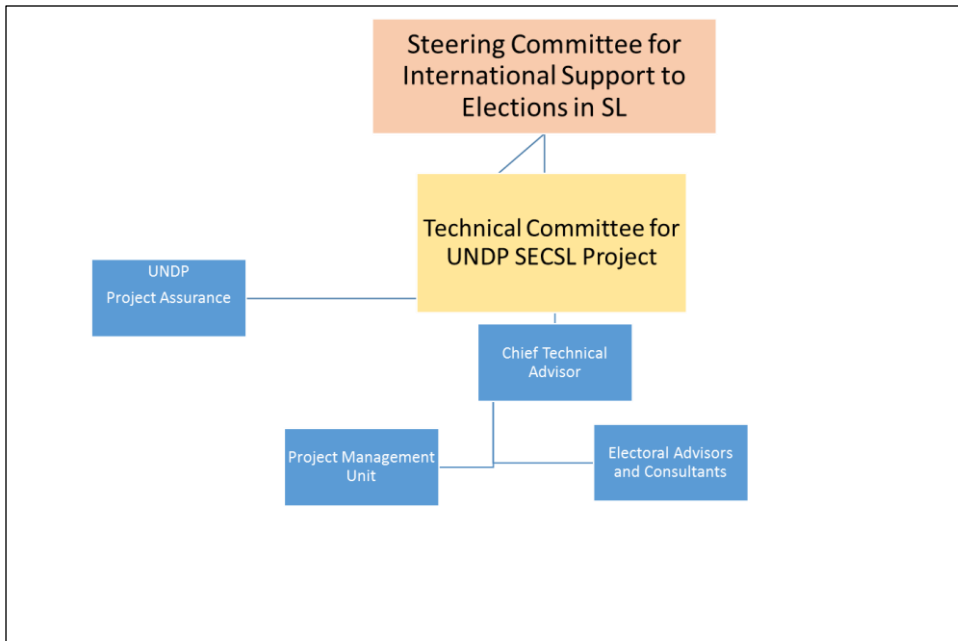
The Steering Committee will be asked to formally agree to this project document, upon a recommendation of the Technical Committee.

Technical Committee

A Technical Committee for the Support to the National Electoral Commission Project will be formed to provide operational oversight of the project and enhance the role of the NEC in guiding and directing international assistance specifically designed for NEC. Once the project is initiated, this Technical Committee will perform the role of Project Board for this UNDP project and be responsible for making management decisions for the Project, including recommendations for UNDP approval of project revisions. Such decisions must adhere to UNDP rules and regulations. Project reviews by the Technical Committee should be made at regular intervals or as necessary. The Technical Committee, with the advice of the CTA, will make decisions as necessary to prioritise activities in this document based on the availability of funds, NEC priorities, and donor preferences. This Committee should be chaired by the NEC and include all partners providing funds to the Support to the National Electoral Commission Project, a representative of the Ministry of Finance and a civil society representative, along with UNDP.

The Project Management Unit will serve as the secretariat for the Technical Committee.

It is the Technical Committee's role to determine whether the pace of progress of the Project is appropriate and whether decisions required for smooth implementation of activities are being taken (including decisions required by the Government that affect Project implementation). The Technical Committee will report to the Steering Committee at each meeting on these issues.



This Project will be **directly implemented** by UNDP Sierra Leone in consultation with the National Electoral Commission. UNDP will establish a Project Management Unit under the management of the international Chief Technical Advisor which will include expertise in project operations and finance. The CTA will be responsible for overall implementation of the Project and reports to the UNDP Country Director and the Technical Committee.

The Chief Technical Advisor will be responsible for day-to-day management and decision-making for the Project, as well as ensuring that the Project produces the outputs and results specified in this Project document, in compliance with the required standards of quality, within the specified limits of time and cost and in line with UNDP rules and regulations.

The Chief Technical Advisor is responsible for ensuring the elaboration of an Annual Work Plan and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, as well as a Reporting Plan and Procurement Plan. She will be assisted in these tasks by the relevant electoral advisors and PMU staff.

Project Assurance will primarily be provided by UNDP (the Programme Management Support Unit and the Governance Unit). **Project Support** will be provided by the Operations staff of UNDP Sierra Leone. The Country Office may also engage regional and headquarters UNDP offices to support the project as required. In addition, UNDP will coordinate closely with relevant UN partners, most notably colleagues working on behalf of UNFPA to support Statistics Sierra Leone and UNWomen in work on women’s political participation.

On demand project support is also available to support implementation from a number of UNDP offices. UNDP’s Procurement Support Unit (PSU) will support international procurement processes in relevant outputs. UNDP’s global team of electoral assistance specialists can also provide support; relevant staff are located at headquarters, at the Regional Bureau for Africa and at the European Commission-UNDP Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance. The project can also call upon established UNDP arrangements for the identification of staff and consultants, including the use of rosters.

Budget and Financial Arrangements

This Project is a UNDP multi-donor project whereby partners operationalise their contributions to the project through third-party cost-sharing arrangements. Based on the principles of the Paris Declaration, this modality will ensure an increased degree of coordination amongst the contributing parties as well as a reduction in transaction costs through harmonised narrative and financial reporting.

The planned Total value of the Project is USD9,039,907 with total programmable costs are an anticipated USD8,370,285. Full implementation of all Project activities will hinge on the mobilisation and timely contribution of funding through voluntary contributions by development partners. UNDP Sierra Leone will assess the normal

UNDP Executive Board mandated 8% General Management Services (GMS) in addition to project implementation costs incurred locally. Any support provided through the UNDP Procurement Support Unit would incur a 4.5% fee for their procurement services. Budget revisions will be made when necessary; financial and programmatic reporting will be provided to Steering Committee members at least quarterly.

Performance Management, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Project will develop, use, and report on a rigorous results-based management framework consistent with UNDP's monitoring and evaluation procedures as well as policies. Additional procedures may be developed and agreed to by the implementing agents, project partners, and UNDP.

The Project will be monitored by UNDP management throughout implementation and, reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Technical Committee. The focus of M&E will be at the outcome level to understand the impact the Project has had on the electoral cycle while providing sufficient detail to account for output level work. To ascribe the relevant importance to these processes and to facilitate synthesis and interpretation of progress and performance, the Project will be guided by:

- (i) **Annual Work Plans**
- (ii) **Performance Monitoring & Evaluation Framework**, which defines the baselines, impact, outcomes and outputs with associated indicators and means of verification as based on the Project's Results and Resources Framework. Specific attention will be given to monitoring and evaluating progress against well-defined baselines and towards increased capacity of EMBs throughout the Project;
- (iii) **Performance Monitoring & Evaluation Plan**, which schedules all major M&E activities
- (iv) **Performance Monitoring & Evaluation System** with the tools to be used by the PMU in monitoring implementation. Systems will include assets and inventory controls, financial and narrative reports, risk logs and monitoring, and evaluations for generating feedback and lessons. The M&E System will also clarify the monitoring, review and evaluation roles and responsibilities at the different levels of the Project for internal monitoring. Tools that will be used for M&E include:
 - a. Brief Monitoring and Evaluation reports on current Project activities presented at each Steering Committee meeting by the CTA.
 - b. Regular Technical Committee meetings, which are a useful way of ensuring good planning, follow-up and results focus;
 - c. Quarterly and Annual Project Reports – both narrative and financial – that rate output to outcome progress and make decisions on policy issues;
 - d. An electoral readiness assessment; and
 - e. A final independent project evaluation to evaluate the implementation and the overall contributions of the project.

Plans for these processes and documentary results will be produced within the first three months of the Project for endorsement and approval by the Technical Committee.

All Project activities will be closely monitored by UNDP Country Office. To this effect, a Project Officer from the Governance Unit will also backstop the Project and support the Chief Technical Advisor in the attainment of the established Project outputs. The Project shall be subject to the internal and external auditing procedures laid down in the Financial Regulations, Rules and directives of UNDP.

Risk Management

The project will use a bespoke risk management framework, full details of which will be presented to the Technical Committee in the early life of the project. The project team will draw up a draft project risk register for circulation and discussion with Technical Committee members before its presentation to that Committee for adoption. It is envisaged that the register could be in two parts – one presenting high level strategic and political risks, and the other technical risks relating to project implementation, but this will be a decision for the Technical Committee.

The CTA will submit a review of both parts of the risk register to every Technical Committee meeting, detailing mitigation actions undertaken or proposed. At any stage the Technical Committee can:

- a) Seek additional information on any risk's definition, impact, probability and mitigation strategies from the project team, UNDP Sierra Leone or the NEC;
- b) Request the Chair of the Technical Committee to escalate a risk to the attention of the Steering Committee, UNDP or the NEC as relevant, for their advice and/or attention; and
- c) Request changes to the risk register.

In between Technical Committee meetings, the CTA will maintain oversight of the risk framework and mitigation strategies. On any occasion where the CTA escalates or enquires as to documented or potential risks with the Chair of the Technical Committee between Committee meetings, the membership of the Committee will be advised by email of the discussion and its outcome.

Due to the lack of certainty about the underlying electoral environment at the project's commencement, the PMU will also support the Technical Committee's oversight of project risks through scenario planning exercises to examine the impact of different electoral calendars and events.

Legal Context

This Project document shall be the instrument referred to as such in Article 1 of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) between the Government of Sierra Leone and UNDP, signed 21 December 1977. Consistent with Article III of the SBAA, the responsibility for the safety and security of the executing agency and its personnel and property, and of UNDP's property in the executing agency's custody, rests with the executing agency.

The executing agency shall:

- a) Put in place an appropriate security plan and maintain the security plan, taking into account the security situation in the country where the Project is being implemented; and
- b) Assume all risks and liabilities related to the executing agency's security, and the full implementation of the security plan.

UNDP reserves the right to verify whether such a plan is in place, and to suggest modifications to the plan when necessary. Failure to maintain and implement an appropriate security plan as required hereunder shall be deemed a breach of this agreement.

The executing agency agrees to undertake all reasonable efforts to ensure that no UNDP funds received pursuant to the Project Document are used to provide support to individuals or entities associated with terrorism and that the recipients of any amounts provided by UNDP hereunder do not appear on the list maintained by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999). The list can be

accessed via <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1267/1267ListEng.htm>. This provision must be included in all sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered into under this Project Document.

Indicative Budget Sheet

An indicative budget breakdown follows.

UNDP's standard 8% GMS (management costs of UNDP) are also included, and the budget also accommodates implementation costs at the local level. In addition, procurement undertaken by the UNDP Procurement Support Unit will require a management fee of up to 4.5%; this fee is included in the estimates.

Since the full funding for the Project is uncertain, UNDP and the Government will continue to liaise with development partners regarding resources. The Technical Committee for the project, with the advice of the PMU, will make decisions to prioritise activities in this project document based on the availability of funds and partner priorities.

Expected Outputs	Indicative Activities	2016												2017												2018												Anticipated Budget	
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	Budget Description	Amount USD																
Output 1: Establishment of the Register of Voters Supported	<i>Baseline:</i>	1.1.Support to voter registration data centre																																				Information Technology Equipment	342,809
		1.2 Support voter information activities on voter registration																																				International Consultants	260,000
	<i>Indicator:</i>	1.3 Support printing & exhibition processs for voters' registry																																				Material & Goods	729,764
																																						Printing and Publications	257,068
	<i>Target:</i>																																					Professional Services	129,867
																																						Staff Salary - International	36,750
																																						Staff Salary - National	18,900
																																						Training, Workshops and Conferences	82,992
																																						Contractual Services, Companies	35,000
																					Output One	1,893,150																	
Output 2: Results management processes agreed and system developed	<i>Baseline:</i>	2.1 Support consultation on and defintion of a new results management process																																				International Consultants	180,000
	<i>Indicator:</i>	2.2 Development of IT solution for results management system																																				Printing and Publications	77,000
		2.3 Support for implementation of results management process and IT system																																				Professional Services	150,000
	<i>Target:</i>																																					Staff Salary - International	191,988
																																						Training, Workshops and Conferences	11,000
																				Output Two	609,988																		
Output 3: NEC capacity to conduct inclusive elections increased	<i>Baseline:</i>	3.1 Improved gender inclusiveness of Sierra Leonean electoral process																																				International Consultants	4,000
		3.2 Improved inclusion of people with disabilities in Sierra Leonean electoral processes																																				National Consultants	60,000
	<i>Indicator:</i>	3.3 Improved facilities for NEC inclusion and outreach work																																				Printing and Publications	2,000
	<i>Target:</i>																																					Staff Salary - International	397,950
																																						Training, Workshops and Conferences	230,000
																				Output Three	699,950																		
Output 4: Conduct of 2018 elections supported	<i>Baseline:</i>	4.1 NEC supported to manage enabling actions for conduct of the 2018 elections																																				International Consultants	158,500
		4.2 NEC supported to deliver inclusive voter information campaign																																				Material & Goods	2,970,000
	<i>Indicator:</i>	4.3 Design and procurement of sensitive electoral materials																																				Printing and Publications	75,000
		4.4 Post-event reflection and evaluation																																				Professional Services	15,000
	<i>Target:</i>																																					Staff Salary - International	436,425
																				Output Four	3,759,925																		
Output 5: NEC planning and management capacity strengthened	<i>Baseline:</i>																																					Training, Workshops and Conferences	60,000
	<i>Indicator:</i>																																					Learning Costs	75,000
	<i>Target:</i>																																						
																				Output Five	135,000																		
Output 6: Project Management and Support	<i>Baseline:</i>	6.1 Establishment of project reporting and evaluation systems to provide accurate and timely financial and narrative reports																																				International Consultants	26,000
	<i>Indicator:</i>	6.2 Electoral readiness assessment																																				Professional Services	130,000
	<i>Target:</i>	6.3 Project management arrangements ensure on-time delivery of project activities and timely financial and narrative reporting																																				Staff Salary - International	641,244
																																						Staff Salary - National	151,200
																																						UN Volunteers	105,000
																																						Travel	15,000
																																						Training, Workshops and Conferences	5,000
																																						Implementation Lines	198,828
																				Output Six	1,272,272																		
Total Programmable Costs																						8,370,285																	
UNDP GMS (8%)																						669,623																	
TOTAL PROGRAMME COST																						9,039,907																	

Annex 1 Draft Risk Log

The following potential risks have been identified which may influence the implementation of the Project. A risk log is proposed to make explicit the analysis, monitoring, and reporting on these risks to Project success. The risk log will be expanded in the first month of the project and then updated – including by the inclusion of new and emerging risks - and included in technical committee meeting documents for potential discussion.

Description	Category	Probability (P) and Impact (I)	Risk management strategy and measures	Responsible Party	Identified	Updated	Status
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A risk register is under development and will be agreed by the Technical Committee early in the project life.

Annex 2: Communications and Visibility Strategy

The CTA, with the support of the Project Operations Manager and the UNDP Country Office, will develop and implement a communications and visibility strategy for the project for agreement by the Technical Committee in the early life of the project.