GECOM'S 2003 ACTIVITY REPORT

3-5 YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) has developed a plan for the next three to five (3-5) years after careful consideration of its mandate and a serious concern to improve its operational efficiency and effectiveness in light of the criticisms resulting from the 2001General and Regional Elections.

The principal features of the 3-5 year Development Plan are as follows:-

(a) The creation of a permanent and unified organizational structure to enhance continuity and to cultivate principles such as unity of command, delegation of authority and responsibility within an operational framework.

(b) The development and implementation of a new recruitment and appointment policy for permanent as well as temporary staff. This addresses principles such as transparency, equality of opportunity, impartiality and freedom of choice within the context of the Constitution of Guyana.

(c) The design of a training programme targeting system skills, supervisory management and motivational training for rigorous implementation at all levels.

(d) The urgent and widely perceived need to establish infrastructure for building capacity, institutional strengthening and developing sustainability of the Permanent Secretariat. The essence of this proposal is the provision of a modern complex to house the Permanent Secretariat. Part of this

infrastructure includes an in-house print and copy shop which should have been in place for the elections, 2001, but is yet to be constructed.

(e) The provision of additional infrastructure to ensure a process of decentralization which will facilitate continuous voter registration in all ten (10) electoral districts of Guyana.

(f) The extension of the Elections Commission's operational capacity to include a Public Information and Public Relations Unit as well as a Media Monitoring Unit.

(g) Support for the upgrading of the Information Systems Department as far as new technology is concerned and the building of capacity to:

Improve management capability;

Create a database network linking all regions;

Rationalize all registration forms and documentation processes with the hope of making them more computer and user friendly; and

Update the Central Register on an annual and continual basis.

(h) The introduction of a system for the continuous production of new National Identification Cards, the correction of inaccurate or unacceptable cards on a continuous basis and the distribution of all cards in a timely manner.

(i) The development of intensive and highly specialized training modules for:

- Those involved in the receipt, checking and publication of nominations;

- Those involved in the management and conduct of the Poll;

- Those involved in the documenting, checking, reporting and publication of election results.

(j) The development of a comprehensive logistics plan for the distribution, storage, security and collection of registration and election materials,

(k) Ensuring the availability of electoral accouterments, such as computers, fax machines, photo-copiers and polling materials, especially those items such as security paper and electoral ink that are not readily available in Guyana.

(l) The introduction of a Code of Conduct for all staff employed by the Commission. The code outlines commitments, responsibilities and requirements by which all staff of the Commission must conduct themselves.

(m) The consolidation of the Election Laws, incorporating all the amendments hitherto made, in order to make it user friendly for all and sundry that have to apply them in their official capacities, and also, to make it more intelligible to those who want to know the extant laws insofar as they relate to Parliamentary, Regional and Local Government Elections.

(n) The Commission is also working with its staff and stakeholders to make certain that adequate time is provided to address concerns and issues pertaining to its image and confidence building in the electoral process. In

this respect, it seeks to cultivate a full "state of readiness" before undertaking "high risk" activities like registration and elections. Much time and effort are directed at developing awareness and staff orientation for whatever tasks are to be eventually untaken.

GECOM's 3-5 year plan was influenced by its cognizance of the need to continue to work towards a culture of impartiality, and to develop self-regulatory codes of conduct for both the Political Parties and the Media. In this context, the Commission is concerned that while much was achieved in the past, there is still a lot more to be done, since the Commission in the past, had no way if imposing sanctions against any of the players who broke the rules. It is hoped that legislation will shortly be in place to address such issues.

In the development of the 3-5 year plan, the Guyana Elections Commission has demonstrated a firm commitment to facilitate an election process that is free, fair, transparent and acceptable to all stakeholders. In order to be able to achieve this, the Commission feels that a two (2) pronged approach is necessary. Firstly, to ensure that the technical shortcomings of 2001 Elections are eliminated or remedied and that, wherever necessary, all other technical improvements are effected and secondly, to initiate a process of consultation and confidence building at all levels of society so that the outcomes of elections can result in greater stability and inclusiveness throughout Guyana.

JOB EVALUATION EXERCISE

Consequent upon the creation of GECOM as a Permanent Commission, the need for a well-structured and efficient Secretariat was recognized as the foundation for the satisfactory delivery of the responsibilities of the organization. This required the establishment of an appropriate organogram, ranking of the various jobs/positions with respective functional descriptions, relevant function charts and linear responsibility matrices for each department/section within the organization, and appropriate reward and appraisal schemes for the continuous monitoring of job related performance and review of achievements.

In order to achieve the above organizational needs, the Commission undertook to conduct a Job Evaluation Exercise with external expertise in the form of a Consultancy. As a result of the Consultancy being advertised, S. V. Jones Associates was contracted to do the Job Evaluation Exercise.

The overall purpose of undertaking the Job Evaluation Exercise was to provide a consistent framework within which differentials in content and value of the jobs and positions within GECOM could be established and maintained. It aimed to establish the jobs and positions within a hierarchy, using a process of comparisons against defined standards and identifying the degree to which common factors are found in different jobs.

The Consultant was required to (1) establish the relativities of the positions within the existing organogram, and (2) establish comparisons in Guyana. This entailed the following:-

- Review the Organogram and analyze Job Structures in terms of defined levels of authority, responsibility and accountability.
- Conduct comprehensive analyses of existing jobs/positions and their respective requirements, in collaboration with the relevant incumbents.

- Prepare job/position descriptions and evaluate job content on the basis of agreed Compensable Factors.
- Conduct a compensation survey of comparator organizations with a view to establishing appropriate relativities in the design of the new compensation structures.
- Design and develop grade/salary structures that objectively recognizes the pertinent differentials in the value of the respective jobs.
- Formulate and implement the necessary adjustments to staff salaries and benefits.
- Complete a Job Evaluation Procedures Manual.

Upon completion of the Exercise the Consultant submitted five separate reports which are currently being studied by the Commission with a view to implementing appropriate recommendations.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Prior to the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) being a permanent body, it was guided by the rules of the Public Service, due to the Secretariat having been governed previously by the Ministry of Home Affairs. With the establishment of the Commission as a permanent body with overall responsibility for the Secretariat, the need for establishment of Rules of Procedures to guide the various functions of the Commission/Secretariat became apparent. This led to the development and approval of the following Rules of Procedure.

1. Rules of Procedure for Recruitment and Appointment of Staff.
2. Rules of Procedure for Staff Development and Training.
3. Rules of Procedure for Disciplinary Process.
4. Rules of Procedure for Promotion
5. Rules of Procedure for Finance.
6. Rules of Procedure for Public Relations.
7. Rules of Procedure for Utilization of Large Sums of Money at GECOM Locations

Rules of Procedure for Recruitment and Appointment of Staff.

GECOM recognizes that its future is dependent on the quality of its staff. In this context, the Commission developed the Rules of Procedure for Recruitment and Appointment of Staff with the aim of ensuring that all positions are occupied by personnel who have the qualifications, knowledge, skills, experience and potential to contribute the organization's achievement of its strategic objectives.

Having been provided with the legal authority to recruit and appoint personnel under terms and conditions determined by the Commission via the Elections Laws Amendment Act No. 15 of 2000, the GECOM developed and approved the Rules of Procedure for Recruitment and Appointment of Staff.

GECOM's Rules of Procedure for Recruitment and Appointment of Staff consistS of the following sections:-

1. Legal Framework
2. Staff Recruitment Policy
3. Recruitment Procedure
    - Job Description and Person Specification
    - Advertising
    - Shortlisting
    - Interview Procedures
4. Use of References
5. Medical Examinations
6. Documentation
7. Contract of Employment
8. Induction
9. Probation
10. Confirmation.

The Rules of Procedure for Staff Development and Training also takes into consideration GECOM's Constitutional obligation under Article 162; Sec. 1 (b) which commits it to abide by the principles of impartiality and fairness. In this context, no employee or applicant receives less favourable treatment or consideration on the grounds of age, disability, race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, sex, marital status, trade union membership or non-membership, or are disadvantaged by any conditions of employment or requirements which cannot be justified for operational reasons.

Rules of Procedure for Staff Development and Training

GECOM values and actively encourages staff development. The Organisation believes that quality staff development, which provides all staff with the opportunity to contribute more effectively by developing their particular abilities and skills, is integral to its performance and reputation.

The Rules of Procedure for Staff Development and Training sets out a framework for overall staff development at GECOM, and is intended to serve as the basis for policies that address specific aspects of staff development.

Recognizing that staff development encompasses both development and training, and that most staff development activities are a combination of these, GECOM focuses training in the area of skills and knowledge directly connected to a particular position of occupation.

As a matter of principle, GECOM is committed to staff development which:

1. encourages and assists all staff to develop their skills and knowledge to improve individual and organizational performance and job satisfaction;
2. assists the Organisation to achieve its strategic aims;
3. ensures equitable access for all staff to development opportunities appropriate to the individual's needs;
4. promotes voluntary participation except where required for organizational, legislative, industrial, or health and safety reasons;
5. makes use of existing staff expertise wherever appropriate;
6. recognizes the development of staff as a joint responsibility shared by individual staff members, supervisors, managers and the institution; and
7. ensures adequate resourcing, planning, participation and rewards to ensure high quality training and development activities.

The Rules of Procedure for Staff Development and Training provides for GECOM's Human Resources Department to, develop a training plan each year, based on the Commission's needs and relevant evaluation of current and future operational activities. Such a plan would always include internal and external activities as may be appropriate.

GECOM's research into current concept of best practice in staff training reveals that most organizations measure and assess training inputs rather than outputs – how training was conducted rather that the benefit gained through the training.

Recognizing that staff training is not a stand-alone process, but one that adds value to the entire corporate process, GECOM has developed a best practice model for training.

Rules of Procedure for Disciplinary Process

The Rules of Procedure for Disciplinary Process was developed to establish disciplinary procedures to guide the fair and uniform enforcement of GECOM's Code of Conduct. The rules of procedure are applicable to any employee who violates the Code of Conduct. Procedures allow for fact finding and decision making in the context of GECOM as an independent and autonomous organization. It encourages employees to accept responsibility for their own actions and, overall, intends is to provide adequate procedural safeguards to protect the rights of the individual employee as well as the legitimate interests of GECOM.

The Rules of Procedure for Disciplinary Process is designed to clarify the rights and responsibilities of management and employees. It also addresses the organisation's relationship with unions in the context of employees becoming subject to disciplinary action because of being unable to meet or maintain the required standards governing their conduct and performance of duties.

The objectives of the Rules of Procedure for Disciplinary Process are:

a) to provide a fair and well-defined framework for dealing with disciplinary matters;

b) to protect the interests of both GECOM and its employees; and

c) to provide for full and speedy consideration of all the relevant facts so that disciplinary action can be applied equitably and expeditiously by management.

The Rules of Procedure for Disciplinary Process has been developed in the following sequence:

1. PRINCIPLES

2. INITIATION OF CHARGES

3. DUE PROCESS AND EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

4. INTERIM ACTION

5. ADJUDICATION AND HEARING OPTIONS

6. THE HEARING PROCESS

7. ABSENCE OF ACCUSED OR LACK OF COOPERATION

8. FINDINGS OF THE BOARD OF INQUIRY

9. DISCIPLINARY PENALTIES

- First Written Warning
- Second Written Warning
- Final Written Warning
- Dismissal or suspension in Lieu of Dismissal
- Gross Misconduct
- Right to Appeal
- Purpose
- Grounds
- Procedure
- Findings
- Appeal against First, Second and Final Written Warnings
- Appeal against Dismissal or Suspension in Lieu of Dismissal

10. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

11. NOTES FOR GUIDANCE:

- Records of Disciplinary Action
- Trade Union Officials
- Criminal Offences Outside Employment
- Employees to whom the full Procedure is not Available
- Gross Misconduct
- Examples

Rules of Procedure for Promotions

GECOM developed and approved Rules of Procedure for Promotion to provide greater opportunities for promotion from within, and to improve the upward mobility potential for qualified staff at the Commission/Secretariat. This Policy is designed to provide equal employment opportunities to all employees of the Commission. The procedures, which provide for the filling of regular position openings, have been developed to encourage and support career advancement of GECOM's employees, apart from providing effective placement of job applicants. The primary objective is the selection and placement of the most suitable applicant for each position/opening. In accordance with this policy, selection for the filling of vacancies from the human resource base existing at the Commission, shall be based upon job related factors which shall include, but are not limited to, relevant work experience, performance history, applicable education and or training, required skills, knowledge and abilities.

Rules of Procedure for Finance

The Rules of Procedure for Finance was developed and approved by the Commission in the form of a Manual. The Manual contains procedures that must be followed by the staff of the Finance/Accounts Division in the execution their day-to-day functions, and in view of the need for adequate performance. The Manual also provides guidance for senior officials of the organization in the context of the procedures which must be followed in the execution of the

different types of operations within the Finance/Accounts Division. The Rules of Procedure for Finance addresses the following areas of operations.

1. PETTY CASH BOOK

2. RELEASES

3. SALARIES

4. PREPARATION OF PAYMENT VOUCHERS

5. EXAMINATION

6. VOTES

7. CHEQUE WRITING

8. CHART OF ACCOUNTS (COA)

9. BUDGET VARIANCES

10. BANK RECONCILIATION

11. ADVANCE

12. FLOW CHARTS
    - Flow Chart for Payments
    - Flow Chart for Salaries
    - Flow Chart for Cash Received by GECOM

Rules of Procedures for Public Relations

Acting on the belief that public enlightenment is a necessary condition for promoting and preserving democracy, the Guyana Elections Commission established a permanent Public Relations Unit. In this context, it is the duty of the Public Relations Unit to provide all stakeholders with fair and comprehensive accounts of the Commission's policies and activities with timeliness, thoroughness and accuracy.

The primary purpose of dissemination of information therefore, is to serve general welfare by informing people about the policies and activities of the Commission, thereby enabling them to make informed judgments on the issues at hand. Complying with the public's right to know of events regarding the execution of the responsibilities of the Commission is the overriding mission of its Public Relations Unit.

In Guyana, where social stability rests (partially) upon the agreement of the people that elections are conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner, it is essential that the Public Relations Unit, as the medium through which information is released to the public, maintains high standards of efficiency, impartiality and integrity. The Rules of Procedure for the Public Relations Unit of GECOM seek to promote compliance with these principles by providing a framework for regulation.

The Rules contained herein are intended to develop, preserve, protect and strengthen the bond of trust and respect between the Guyana Elections Commission and all stakeholders.

The Rules of Procedure for GECOM's Public Relations Unit are described in five parts, namely; Issuance of Media Releases; Hosting of Press Conferences/Briefings; Website Maintenance; Responding to Queries/Comments (from stakeholders); and a GECOM Newsletter.

VOTER EDUCATION

During April 2003, the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) deputed a consultant to advise the newly created Civic and Voter Education (CVE) Division of the Guyana Elections Commission on the preparation of a voter education program, in view of forthcoming local government elections. The consultancy focused on the development of following:

a) a methodology for GECOM's voter education campaigns

b) job descriptions for all positions in the CVE Division

c) a CVE Manual including operation plan and procedures for the CVE Division.

The Consultant was deputed by IFES based on the recommendations of a previous Consultancy in February 2002, when an IFES team was sent to GECOM to conduct an institutional assessment and provide technical advice to the Elections Commission. In its Report, the IFES Team had recommended the creation of a Civic and Voter Division located in the current Operations Department, with responsibility for the development and delivery of Civic and Voter Education.

The Civic/Voter Education Consultant found that the Division, although created as per the recommendations, was not fully operational. Although the final version of GECOM's organogram foresees permanent positions for a Voter Education Officer and a Voter Education Assistant, the CVE Division was staffed with one person, namely a Manager who is a former Returning Officer. The organogram also foresees the hiring of fourteen Voter Education Assistants to work in Guyana's ten Administrative Regions.

The Consultant reviewed some observation reports from the 2001 elections; options for current electoral reform and major aspects of the legal framework; and the GECOM Report and Recommendations. The Consultant was also provided with a Voter Education Unit

Report as well as proposals for a Voter Education programme submitted by a private agency. The Consultant also had the opportunity to meet with the Commissioners, key senior staff members within GECOM and Representatives of international organizations like United Nations Development Programme, National Democratic Institute and United States Agency for International Development.

Upon completion of the consultancy, a report was presented to the Commission for appropriate consideration of the recommendations and relevant implementation. In the report, the Consultant was very specific in pointing out guiding differences between Voter Education and Voter Information as follows.

Objectives of Voter Education:

- To inform, educate and induce desired changes in the electorate.
- To motivate the electorate to cast an informed and valid ballot.

Usual topics considered by Voter Education:

- The stake of the forthcoming election: the mandate of those who will be elected and the scope and limits of their prerogatives;
- The changes made to the electoral legal framework: what the voter should know to comply with the new requirements; and
- The rights and responsibilities of the citizens: to be informed and provided with equal facilities, to enjoy security before, during and after polling day, to register on time, to fulfill all requirements to be allowed to cast a secret ballot, and to have the assurance that his/her ballot will be counted honestly according to the law prescriptions, accept the results.

Method:

- The best and more efficient is the proximity approach where a facilitator explains the actual electoral process and answers voters questions.

- The production of appropriate material - visual or audio - to support meetings.

Objective of Voter Information:

- Provide voters with all the necessary logistical information related to Election Day.

Usual topics considered by Voter Information:

- Where, when and how to register.
- The steps required inside the polling station for voting.
- How to mark a ballot.
- Documents required for voting.
- Where to vote.
- Opening hours of the polling station.

Method:

- Conventional support used in any nation-wide campaign of public interest: leaflets – posters – stickers – banners – radio and TV spots – newspapers, etc

The specific recommendations of the Consultant are as follows:

- To reflect on the educational mission of GECOM with external Stakeholders.

- For the Commissioners to advocate for early approval of all changes to the laws currently under discussion.

- To contribute in the development of the public interest mission of the state-owned media
- To consider the voter education experience.
- To develop links with civil society organizations on the electoral and civic issues.

- To contribute in the development of a voter education section on GECOM website.

PROPOSAL FOR THE UPGRADE OF FORMS USED BY THE GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION (GECOM)

- Mr. Robert Berglund, IFES Consultant (14 February 2003) -

Executive Summary & Aims of the Consultancy

All people involved with GECOM agree on one point. That some of the systems are archaic and require updating. Forms are not user friendly and require unnecessary information. GECOM is operating within a system that is out of date. It is also recognized that officers of GECOM, in their endeavor to improve the processes used by the Elections Office, have completed valuable work.

In summary, the Consultancy aimed at:

- Identifying Legislative change so that Forms are not prescribed. Legislation should only require what information is required to be recorded without prescribing the actual layout of any form. Legislative change is required. However, it is recommended that in consultation with political interests, legislation should be divided into two Bills. The first would be administrative changes, which would include matters relating to Forms. The second Bill could be of a more fundamental change that may require a consensus approach.

- Redesign, and where practical, amalgamate all Forms used in the administrative, enrolment/registration and election processes. Standardize the size of all Forms to letter size and give forms a corporate image. Forms should also take advantage of the technology available, which includes Optical Code Recognition (OCR) and the ability to key from image. Forms should be divided into three categories, Election Forms (EF), Enrolment Forms (ER) and Administration (AD).

The report had three attachments.

Attachment ‘A’ is the proposal to amend the Representation of the People Act and the National Registration Act. The Legal Officer Ms. Octive-Hamilton has this information in electronic format for her examination and technical advice.

Attachment B is a list of all current Forms, their present purpose, and the number of the Form, which will replace them.

Attachment C will be copies of the new Forms. Electronic versions of these forms are with the DCEO, Mr. Benn, from the Operations Section and with the IT System Analyst, Mr. Chung who has the technical expertise to make any suggested updates. Although the operational area should have easy access to the master copy of Forms, it is suggested that the master copy be kept in the IT area as the source for eventual printing.

It is recognized that the Forms system re-design will take priority over the education consultancy tasks on this occasion.

General Comments and Recommendations

- It is in the interest of the Commission for every person working for GECOM, and people who are working within the system, to embrace change. Countries that do not constantly review their procedures and processes can end up with a system that is stagnated. The end result could be an embarrassing election result that erodes the electorate’s confidence in democracy.

- It is suggested that GECOM have a heading for all Forms and letterhead. A proposed model that may be used by GECOM in the future is included in the Proposal of the Consultant. It aims at giving GECOM’s Forms a corporate image. It is recommended that this banner heading, or one decided upon by GECOM be adopted. There may even be a staff competition to come up with a simple and effective banner heading. Most versions of forms should be in black and white as colour escalates cost.

- This report concentrates mainly on forms and legislation. However, as part of the secondary task of the Consultant, mention is made of training and education issues.

- All national election and registration forms and systems used by GECOM have been examined and the proposed forms will allow for greater efficiency. GECOM should have three types of forms to allow for efficient operation; Administrative form (AD), Enrolment forms (ER) and Election forms (EF).

- Every attempt was made to minimize the number of forms used. However, because certain tasks must follow a correct procedural path it is not always possible to make forms perform numerous tasks i.e. a person applies for a proxy vote, they are then advised that the application was successful, the list of proxy voters must be given to the Regional Returning Officers (District Registrar) and there must be a later form that allows the cancellation of a proxy vote.

- Legislative changes will be required for the National Registration Act, Election laws (Amendment Act), the Representation of the People's Act, and the various Acts under which Local Government Elections are conducted. Time constraints have not permitted a detailed examination of the Acts governing Local Government Elections to be made during this Consultancy, but I believe the work done in the first two areas can be extrapolated to include local government electoral administration reform. It is with some regret that time did not allow much work in this area as local government elections are due this year.

- As a priority the Acts covering the conduct of Local Government Elections should be examined to consolidate them into one Act. GECOM should ensure that during this period of (suggested) consolidation the changes to the conduct of elections be examined by their legal officers to ensure greater efficiency of Local Government Elections.

MODERNIZING THE VOTER REGISTRATION & ELECTORAL PROCESS AND ENCOURAGE BEST PRACTICE

Consultancy

Forms Specialist, Mr. Robert Berglund – a Consultant deputed by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) - conducted a study of Guyana's existing legislation on statutory forms, with a view to recommending a list of criteria with which new legislation, while empowering GECOM to devise appropriate forms, enjoins GECOM to devising such new forms related respectively to voter registration and to elections results compilation.

Initial Set of New Forms for Voter Registration

The Consultancy required that the Forms Specialist provide a redesigned set of Forms for Voter Registration for the following purposes:

1. Accurate capture of the information necessary to register new voters; and

2. Accurate capture of the information necessary to amend the recorded particulars of already registered voters whose particulars need to be changed.

The Consultancy necessitated the redesigned Forms to satisfy the following requirements simultaneously:

1. Appropriate security features designed to ensure authenticity;

2. Features designed to facilitate speedy and accurate transmission of information on forms into GECOM's computerized system of registered voters, with particular reference to the avoidance of multiple registration;

3. Ease of use (e.g. user-friendly unambiguous language) by GECOM officials whose responsibility it is to complete the forms;

4. Minimization of the total number of types of forms required to capture the information specified above;

5. Ease of storage in an easily cross-referenced storage and retrieval system that minimizes the possibilities of loss or misplacement of forms, and maximizes the ease of replacement of lost, misplaced, or mutilated Forms; and

6. Ease of comparison with information from statutory bodies, with particular reference to the Registry of Births and Deaths and the National Insurance Scheme.

Initial set of Redesigned Forms to record the Results of Elections.

The Consultancy required that the Forms Specialist provide a redesigned set of Forms to record the results of elections for the following purposes:

- Accurate capture of the information, related to the results of voting in the elections, in accordance with the relevant electoral laws; and

- Accurate and easy transmission of the information captured, in the above, into manual and computerized systems used to determine the overall results of the elections.

The Consultancy also necessitated that the redesigned Forms should simultaneously satisfy the following requirements:

1. Appropriate security features designed to ensure authenticity;

2. Features designed to facilitate speedy and accurate transmission of information on the forms into GECOM's manual and computerized systems for determining the overall

results of elections, with particular reference to the need to provide the public with electronic copies (e.g. CDs) with the detailed and summarized results;

3. Ease of use (e.g. user-friendly unambiguous language) by GECOM officials whose responsibility it is to complete the forms;

4. Minimization of the total number of types of Forms required to capture the information specified above; and

5. Ease of storage in an easily cross-referenced storage and retrieval system that minimizes the possibilities of loss or misplacement of lost, misplaced, or mutilated Forms.

Deliverables

The deliverables of the Consultancy were as follows:

(A) An improved set of key registration and electoral forms for future use; and

(B) Recommendations for legislative changes associated with the amalgamation or redesignation of the respective forms.

Workshop

A Workshop titled "***Modernise the Voter Registration & Electoral Process and to Encourage Best Practice***" was organized by the GECOM to discuss the way forward relative to modernization of the electoral process. In this context discussions centered on the recommendations of Mr. Robert Berglund - IFES Consultant, as contained in the "***Forms and Education (& Training) Assessment Report"*** which he presented to the Commission. Participants at the Workshop included GECOM's Chairman, Commissioners and Managerial and Supervisory Staff.

The objectives of the workshop were to consider the recommendations of the "***Forms and Education (& Training) Assessment Report"*** with the aim of:-

1. Reviewing statutory and non-statutory Forms currently used by GECOM for registration and election purposes;

2. Examining the extent of prescribed and other statutory forms, assess whether they needed to be prescribed, and consider whether other forms need to be prescribed in the future;

3. Determining the "best" regime of Forms applicable in the current circumstances to facilitate efficient and accurate voter registration and elections results compilation;

4. Identifying examples of good practice and design for incorporation these into future developments; and

5. Recommending new legislative mechanisms that allow GECOM to modify the Forms from time to time in accordance with technological best practices and Guyana's circumstances.

The main features at the Workshop were presentations by Officials of the Operations Department and the Legal Officer. Their presentations were based on studies and assessments of the findings and recommendations of Mr. Berglund, as contained in the "***Forms and Education (& Training) Assessment Report".***

The following recommendations were made as a result of intense discussions on the presentations from the Officials of the Operations Department and the Legal Officer:-

1. National Identification Numbers should be computer generated for security purposes.

2. All statutory and non-statutory Forms should be bar-coded and numbered.

3. The Operations Department should modify the Forms recommended by Mr. Berglund, with assistance/guidance from the Information Technology Department.

4. GECOM should have legislative powers to determine the Forms.

5. The Berglund Report should be totally disregarded and a new and complete exercise should be conducted internally at GECOM with the view of achieving the desired results.

6. Legal Experts should be briefed on the need for review of the relevant legislations and modification of the forms.

7. Efforts should be made to source of funds to pay for a project which would involve consultation with Legal Experts to review the existing legislations and make recommendations for modification.

8. Accommodation for the "date of application" and "signature of applicant" should be assured on the "Registration Application Form/001".

9. The Operations Department should meet with suitable representatives of the Attorney General's Chambers to discuss the proposed modifications/amalgamations to the statutory and non-statutory Forms and readjust the Forms recommended by Mr. Berglund accordingly.

10. Form 002 should be modified to be computer friendly.

11. Criteria for exemption from taking of photographs for the National Identification Card should be developed.

12. Recommended modifications should be sent along with a covering letter to Mr. Berglund for his perusal and comments.

13. The proposed Form to replace Form 9 should be computer friendly.

14. GECOM's Legal Officer should review the current system of delivery of notice for removal of names from the Voter's List.

15. ER 004-009 was not dealt with by the Officials of Operations Department during its assessment of the Berglund Report. This should be done.

16. With reference to EF 004 it was suggested that the responsibility of a candidate should be for the individual as well as for his/her party. The declaration should ensure knowledge of the legal course.

17. Steps should be taken to prevent improper submission of names to support candidates.

18. The certificate of employment given to GECOM's temporary employees during elections should be a separate form.

19. The phrase "and is entitled to vote therein" should be included on the Certificate of Employment.

20. The issue of members of the disciplinary services having their names on two different lists should be examined in the interest of transparency.

21. Organisations that provide essential services should be considered for the voting facility which is granted to employees of the Transport & Harbours Department. This consideration should also include employees who work in Regions other than the one in which they reside and for shift workers.

22. The name of EF 008 should read "Notification of Cancellation of a Proxy".

23. Notice of the "poll" should include the Act under which it is being served.

24. All Forms should be produced in multiple copies as is deemed necessary.

25. The designation of all election officers should be added where provision is made for their signatures.

26. The law should cater for the possibility of mistakes at all levels of the electoral process.

AUDITING GECOM'S DATABASE

Having received a letter from the PNCR, dated July 15, 2003, which highlighted several concerns that the voter registration database at GECOM had been compromised, the Commission took a unanimous decision that the matter should be pursued in a manner which would ensure that the concerns of the Party were appropriately dealt with. Consequently, "GECOM approached the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) for assistance in conducting a forensic audit of the database. This resulted in Mr. Dalle Vedove being assigned to do a forensic audit of the database.

Prior to his arrival, GECOM had received a tentative proposal from IDEA indicating that at the end of the audit Mr. Dalle Vedove would hold a workshop at which he would present the methodologies used for the audit as well as his findings.

The Commission had felt that Mr. Dalle Vedove should meet with all of the Parliamentary Political Parties, right at the commencement of the audit exercise, to find out the specifics of the concerns raised by the PNCR in its letter to the Commission, and those of the other Parliamentary Political Parties if they had any. It was felt that if this was not done, Mr. Dalle Vedove would not be in a strategic position to determine the appropriate methodologies to be used for the audit. This position was intimated to Mr. Dalle Vedove who concurred. In this context, a meeting was held in GECOM's Boardroom on October 2, 2003. This meeting was attended by the following persons:-

Dr. Steve Surujbally – Chairman, GECOM
Mr. Haslyn Parris – Commissioner, GECOM
Mr. Lloyd Joseph – Commissioner, GECOM
Mr. Robert Williams – Commissioner, GECOM
Mr. Gocool Boodoo – Chief Election Officer, GECOM
Mr. Calvin Benn – Deputy Chief Election Officer (Operations), GECOM

Mr. Alwyn Edwards – Operations Manager – GECOM

Ms. Sandra Khan – IT Manager – GECOM

Mr. Roy Dalle Vedove – Expert in Forensic Database Analysis (IDEA)

Mr. Mohammed Sattaur – Representative, PPP/C

Mr. Ronald Harsaywack – Representative, PPP/C

Mr. Martin Webster – Representative, PNC/R

Mr. Sherwood Lowe – Representative, PNC/R

Mr. Donald Trotman – Representative, GAP/WPA

Mr. Edwin Glen – Representative, GAP/WPA

Mr. Narvan Singh – Representative, ROAR

At the meeting, Mr. Webster was invited to illustrate the specifics of the PNCR's concerns, which he proceeded to do, and to which responses were provided by Mr. Dalle Vedove. The full text of the meeting is available from Dr. Surujbally.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Dalle Vedove had suggested that Mr. Webster should provide details of the events registered in the log that gave rise to his concerns as raised by the PNCR in its letter to the Commission. He said that he would then study the stated concerns and relevant details, and added that he would present the methodologies used to arriving at his findings, as well as his findings, at a workshop which was scheduled for Friday October 10, 2003.

Upon the completion the auditing exercise titled "AUDITING GECOM'S DATABASE" a Workshop, themed "Enhancing Confidence in the Electoral Roll", was organized at Ocean View International Hotel on October 10, 2003, to facilitate Mr. Dalle Vedove's presentation of his findings to the PNCR, GECOM and the other Political Parties in Parliament on the accuracy, security and integrity of the Master Registration Database.

Participants at this Workshop were as follows:

Dr. Steve Surujbally, Chairman – GECOM

Mr. M. Mc Doom S.C., Commissioner - GECOM

Mr. Parris, CCH, Commissioner - GECOM

Dr. K. Mangal, Commissioner - GECOM

Mr. L. Joseph, Commissioner - GECOM

Mr. M. Shaw, Commissioner - GECOM

Mr. R. Williams, Commissioner - GECOM

Mr. G. Boodoo, CEO – GECOM

Mr. C. Benn, Deputy CEO (Operations) - GECOM

Mr. K. Lowenfield, Deputy CEO (Administration)

Mr. A. Edwards, Logistics Manager – GECOM

Ms. Sandra Khan, IT Manager – GECOM

Mrs. H. Octive-Hamilton, Legal Officer

Mr. A. Chung, Systems Analyst/Programmer – GECOM

Mr. K. Baksh, Database Administrator – GECOM

Mr. V. Persaud, Public Relations Officer – GECOM

Mr. Roy Dalle Vedove, IDEA

Mr. R. Singh, Representative – ROAR

Mr. N. Singh, Representative – ROAR

Mr. D. Trotman, Representative – GAP/WPA

Mr. Edwin Glen, Representative – GAP/WPA

Mr. Martin Webster, Representative – PNCR

Mr. S. Lowe, Representative – PNCR

Mr. A. Collins, Representative, TUF

Mr. M. Sattaur, Representative – PPP/C

Dr. F. Anthony, Representative – PPP/C

The objectives of the Workshop were to

1. explain the methodologies used in auditing the Systems Security of GECOM's Master Registration Database;

2. discuss the findings of the 2001 and 2003 audits of the 2001 Master Registration Database;

3. discuss issues and concerns, raised by stakeholders, regarding GECOM's Master Registration Database; and

4. improve the level of confidence among stakeholders relative to the accuracy and security of the Master Registration Database.

At the Workshop, Dr. Surujbally had recalled that the Commission had agreed unanimously that necessary action should be taken to allay the concerns raised by the PNCR, via a swift and thorough investigation by an international, independent and trusted Database and Forensic Expert. As a consequence of that decision, the Commission had requested IDEA to help in the recruitment of a competent Database Forensic Expert.

The Chairman had said that in light of the allegations, the previous role of IDEA and the high level of technical expertise required to investigate the allegations effectively and independently, IDEA had decided to accede to the request of the Commission. This resulted in Mr. Dalle Vedove being deputed to Guyana to conduct the forensic audit of the GECOM Master Registration Database. This information had been passed on to all the Parties represented in Parliament.

The Workshop proceeded with Mr. Dalle Vedove displaying visual presentations to discuss relevant activities recorded in the Security Log, and providing answers to questions from the participants.

At the beginning of his presentation, Mr. Dalle Vedove gave a background to the Information Technology used at GECOM in order that the Participants without adequate IT knowledge would relate to the discussions in a meaningful manner.

In dealing with the concerns raised by the PNCR, Mr. Dalle Vedove had divided them into six incident types which were categorized as follows

1. Anonymous Logons
2. Failed Logons (attempted hacking)
3. Hacking the Administrator Password
4. User Privileges
5. NTLMSSP Privilege Evaluation Vulnerability
6. Write Access to a User Directory.

Anonymous Logons

Mr. Dalle Vedove had explained that "anonymous logon" also known as "null session connection" is a mechanism that allows an anonymous user to retrieve information over the network, or to connect without authentication. He said that the anonymous logon was a normal part of the functioning of any Windows NT system. He further said that while "anonymous logon" can present a security threat, evidence of an "anonymous logon" on its own did not indicate unauthorized access.

In the events that the PNCR identified in the Security Log, there were five instances of anonymous logons of which Mr. Dalle Vedove said two occurred during startup and were necessary for the system to initiate the process required to run the network and the database server. He added that the remaining three instances occurred when the Security Accounts Management (SAM) system was initiated for the purpose of changing a password. Mr. Dalle Vedove described those entire occurrences as normal in the operating of an NT network.

Failed Logons (attempted hacking)

Mr. Dalle Vedove said that out of the nine different event codes associated with failed logons under the Windows NT System, the PNCR was concerned about two. He said that "hacking" a password is not a trivial and easy exercise, adding that there were two (manual and automated) approaches that can be adopted, when an attempt was being made to find a user password through the password authentication system.

Mr. Dalle Vedove said that both of the incidents identified by the PNCR relate to the same user who appeared to have had a logon time restriction. He added that in both instances, the user had been logged on when the time restriction came into effect and that the user's attempt to continue to work after the time restriction generated the security events which the PNCR was concerned about.

With reference to the instances of logon failure (unknown user or bad password and account logon time restriction violation) identified by the PNCR as having been attempted, Mr. Dalle Vedove said that his investigations revealed that the failed logon attempts did not constitute attempted "hacks".

Hacking the Administrator Password

Mr. Dalle Vedove said that the PNCR, in its research on the Internet, had found a website giving detailed explanation of the process that makes it possible for a user who had physical and logical access to a workstation or server on the network to change the administrator password on the workstation or server without having the administrator password. He said that he had conducted tests, which confirmed that that the process when applied, permited a user who has physical and logical access to a workstation or server to change the administrator's password without knowledge of the password. Mr. Dalle Vedove further stated that when followed, the process generateed a distinct pattern of events in the Security Log that made this security risk (hacking the administrator password) clearly identifiable. He added that he searched the Security Log and that there were no patterns that were consistent with those that were generated by a hack (hacking the administrator password) of this nature.

He said that he did not believe the hack (hacking the administrator password), identified by the PNCR (for the period covered by the Security Log of the GECOM Server that was provided to the Stakeholders), took place. However, he suggested that GECOM implements event monitoring software that protected against this type of potential threat.

User Privileges

Mr. Dalle Vedove described "user privileges" as privileges that were issued to a user, which determineed the levels of authority that a user had over the resources within the domain e.g. a user can be given authority to access and read files and data in the domain, but may not have the permission necessary to update or change the files of data. He said that in this way it was possible for the system administrator to ensure that users access only that information that they should, and only users that needed to change data were allowed to do so.

Conceding that indiscriminate allocation of user privileges was a security risk, he said that the Security Log recorded the user privileges that had been allocated to each user as they logged unto the domain, and that this mades it possible to identify whether users had been granted privileges beyond those that they required.

Mr. Dalle Vedove said that the PNCR had identified 64 events from the Security Log that gave rise to their concerns. He said that of the 64 events listed, 27 were the user privileges that had been granted to the Administrator. He added that it was implicit in the functions of the Administrator that all the resources within the domain were available to the administrator and therefore the granting of privileges to the Administrator did not compromise the security in any way.

Mr. Dalle Vedove said that of the remaining 37 security events, the only user privilege that were granted to the users was Bypass Traverse Tracking, which was switched off by default to prevent logging of users accesses of the files in the domain, since this privilege was used so frequently that auditing its every use would flood the log. He said that his investigations revealed that there was no evidence in the Security events that the PNCR had highlighted that the granting of user privileges was a security risk.

NTLMSSP Privilege Evaluation Vulnerability

Mr. Dalle Vedove said that the PNCR based one of their concerns on a Microsoft advisory warning that it was possible for a user to elevate his or her privileges to that of the Administrator on any workstation or server by running a malicious code that took advantage of a flaw in the

NTLM Security Support Provider (NTLMSSP). He said that the NTLMSSP service was a normal part of the functioning of a Windows NT system and evidence of its operation on its own was no indication that this flaw may have been exploited.

Noting that there were five incidents (involving fourteen events) in the extract of the Security Log that the PNCR provided to GECOM where the NTLMSSP was invoked, Mr. Dalle Vedove said that none of the incidents occurred on the server. He said that the first two incidents appeared to be failed drive mappings, while the remaining three occurred when the user changed his/her password.

Mr. Vedove said that his investigation of the extract of the Security Log that was provided by the PNCR gave no evidence that the flaw in the NTLMSSP service was exploited in any way.

Write Access to a User Directory.

Mr. Dalle Vedove said that the PNCR's concerns on "write access to a user directory" were based on an article published on the Internet exposing a flaw under Windows NT that, if exploited, would allow a malicious user to run unauthorized code undetected on another user's computer.

During relevant explanations, Mr. Dalle Vedove said that the Window NT operating system, in starting up, runs a number of standard programmes. He said that under normal circumstances, these programmes will be resident in the system directories which were not accessible over the network to any other user. He added that the (Internet) article suggested that if a "Trojan Virus", with the same name as one of the standard programmes that are launched at startup, is placed in the root directory which can be accessible to other users over the network, the operating system will launch the "Trojan Virus" in precedence to the standard programme, thus undermining the security of the system.

Mr. Dalle Vedove said that the tests he had conducted had proven that the Windows NT operating system launches programmes in the system directories in precedence to those in the

root directory and that the risk that a “Trojan Virus” could be placed in another user’s root directory and launched undetected by the victim at startup does not exist.

The question and answer session of the Workshop was conducted in a very cordial atmosphere with active participation from Mr. Webster and Mr. Sattaur. During this session, Mr. Webster repeated the concerns of the PNCR, and was very adamant in his enquires as to whether Mr. Dalle Vedove, having concluded the audit, felt that the integrity of the database had been breached, in the context of the concerns of the PNCR. Mr. Dalle Vedove responded by stating emphatically and then writing on the flip chart “**it did not happen**”.

Winding down to the end of the Workshop, Mr. Webster and Mr. Dalle Vedove sat together over the Security Log in an effort for the latter to provide explanations relevant to the concerns of the PNCR, and at the end of which, Mr. Webster seemed to be satisfied.

At the end of the Workshop Mr. Dalle Vedove said that the audit was undertaken with the same level of detail that the term “forensic” implied, namely that it was capable of withstanding the scrutiny of a court of law. He said that in the process, he had investigated all the evidence

- The Secretariat had played around with ideas which could come to serve as the beginning for the evolution of an approach.
- GECOM may have to draw upon the experiences of sister CARICOM territories in terms of how their respective systems for registration evolved.
- While there was a framework within which GECOM intended to operate, the "nitty-gritty" involved would have to be worked out in consultation with all the stakeholders.
- GECOM has a wealth of raw material which needed to be digested, refined and considered in greater detail in view of adding some more meat to the framework in terms of the evolution of a model which could truly match the circumstances and the context in which GECOM operated.
- It was hoped that by working in consultation with the stakeholders, the Commission could develop a model in a proposal format in keeping with the suggestions presented at the Workshop, in a timely manner, to take further with the implications clearly understood as to how the stated issues should be treated in the context of voter registration in Guyana.

Comments were invited from the stakeholders. Responses were as follows:

1. Mr. Glen emphasized the need for GECOM to consult with "John Public" from the initial stages of the development of any model for Continuous Registration.
2. Mr. Parris underscored the importance of Mr. Glen's point by recalling the misrepresentation of the nature of the Workshop on a news item the previous night.

Mr. Boodoo posited that all of the thoughts expressed on the issue of Continuous Registration would be emphasized. He said that the thoughts expressed were not conclusive and that the Workshop should be considered as initial to the whole consultative process to ensure that all interested groups get the opportunity to make an input. He said that it was hoped that, as a result of the consultative process, there would be collective ownership of the outcomes.

Objective 6 – *Determine/discuss the frequency/regularity with which the Voters' List should be published and its period of currency.*

- This objective, although stated, was premature of some ways since it was not something that could be dealt with currently.
- The stakeholders were the ones who would have to determine this issue during focus on the whole legislative framework especially as it related to financial and other implications which impinged on how often the Voters' List should be published.
- There were too many implications inherent in the process which required careful attention/consideration of all the ramifications and implications by the stakeholders, since they were the ones who would have to make the resources available.
- It was only when this issue was well thought through that GECOM would be in a better position to pronounce on this objective.
- The Commission was cognizant of the need for this issue to be addressed, and will resurrect it at the appropriate time.

Comments were invited from the stakeholders. None responded.

Objective 7 - *Discuss/determine the groundwork necessary for the establishment/implementation of Continuous Registration in Guyana.*

- Continuous Registration requires a very supportive infrastructure which need not necessarily be material and financial alone.
- It requires understanding, education, cooperation, collaboration, compromise and consensus.
- The stakeholders need to agree in order that collaborative work could proceed if the effort was to succeed in achieving desired results.
- There would be times when compromise would have to be worked out, as there are times when work would have to be as a result of consensus.
- A population that does not understand the context of the operations of the system for Continuous Registration could result in mass confusion. Therefore, the Commission would have to take on the task of educating the populace about the advantages of Continuous Registration.
- There is a tremendous cost related to Continuous Registration, especially as it relates to a foregone conclusion that there is need for computerization. This cannot be circumvented.

- There is a great need for well-documented and standardized procedures as well as for an informed public.
- There is also a great need for well-trained personnel to institute the procedures on behalf of the Commission – people would have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.
- Training would have to take into consideration that the Commission does not have unlimited resources.
- Procedures for training in terms of Continuous Registration would have to be regularized, documented and given to all of the stakeholders, in booklet form, with a view to promoting proper monitoring of the system.
- All the points made at the Workshop were valid ones, which would be taken into consideration, in terms of the groundwork which needed to be done to make certain that a responsive and supportive infrastructure to carry forward any emerging proposal, if and when there was consensus on such a proposal.

Comments were invited from the stakeholders. The only response was as follows:

Mr. Glen recommended that the "Adult Education Association" be approached for assistance in terms of accessing personnel to conduct GECOM's training in terms of the conduct of any registration exercise.

In conclusion, it was noted that the amount of information received would serve to provoke thought on all of the ramifications that needed to be considered in terms of a proposal for Continuous Registration.

An undertaking to have a draft proposal circulated as soon as possible with the aim of getting further advice and suggestions from stakeholders was given.

GECOM INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OPERATIONS MANUAL

Introduction

In 2003, the Guyana Elections Commission requested that a comprehensive manual containing key policies and procedures for the professional, efficient and transparent operation of its Information Technology Department (GECOM/ITD) should be prepared. In this context, the GECOM IT Operations Manual was drafted with the assistance of IFES, through a Consultancy, and handed over to GECOM on December 1st 2003.

The manual is a living document – its contents must be constantly reviewed by the management of GECOM and by the staff within the ITD.

The IT Operations Manual is divided into eleven sections, which are described by the Consultant as follows:

1. **Introductions and Overview**.
   (This chapter)

2. **Organization Information**
   This section contains comprehensive information on the IT Department at GECOM. It includes an Organization Chart of GECOM showing the ITD in its institutional context. It contains the Job Descriptions and contact information for the personnel within the ITD.

   For those joining the department (whether as an employee, Contractor or Consultant), as well as those providing management or technical oversight, this section contains a copy of the ITD Strategic Plan, Budget and Workplan.

3. **General Security Policies**

This vital section contains seven important policies, to be approved at Commission level, which govern the operation of the ITD and the use of computers and information systems at GECOM. These documents are generally written in plain English and are vital reading for all staff who use, manage, develop or support computers and information systems at GECOM. Further, staff will be required to sign an agreement to adhere to the policies and to report any suspected breach of policy to their supervisor or a manager. This makes each staff member responsible, to an appropriate extent, for security at GECOM.

The policies in this section cover:

3.1 Acceptable Use of Computers
3.2 Passwords
3.3 Audit Trails and Event Logs
3.4 Internet Connectivity and Email
3.5 Provision of Data to External Entities (pending)
3.6 Development of Information Systems
3.7 Computer Incident Response

4. Systems Development Methodology

Some time ago, GECOM mandated the ITD Manager (ITM) to prepare a comprehensive Systems Development Methodology manual. This document is included in the IT Operations Manual as it governs, along with the relevant policy from Section 3., all development of databases, applications, reporting and other tools by the ITD for GECOM.

This section is required reading for anyone involved in any aspect of the use, definition, development, test, support or audit of information systems at GECOM. This includes those who manage departments which use such information systems.

5. Disaster Recovery

Recent history has shown that the ability if an organization to recover quickly from the disastrous loss of mission-critical information systems is directly related to three factors. First, the commitment of the management of the organization. Next, the amount of planning applied to Disaster Recovery (also known as Continuity of Operations) and finally, the resources applied to Disaster Recovery.

It is beyond the scope of the draft IT Operations Manual to arrive at a suitably comprehensive and tested DRP for GECOM. The manual therefore contains a detailed process which, if applied, will allow GECOM to develop a DRP appropriate to it's required recovery time, its available resources and the prevailing best practice.

This section should be read by all senior managers at GECOM and any other staff involved in any aspect of Disaster Recovery (not just in ITD but across the organization). Once the Disaster Recovery Plan is complete and tested, it may form the basis for similar plans for the rest of the organization.

6. Physical Security

Enterprise Security is a multi-layered endeavor. The first and most important layer of security is the physical aspect. This section of the IT Operations Manual specifies the policies and procedures which control who gets into the building. It further defines zones within the building and addresses procedures for short and long-term visitors to GECOM/ITD.

Anyone who works at GECOM/ITD, other GECOM Staff who have occasion to visit GECOM/ITD, visitors and contractors/consultants to GECOM who must visit or work at the ITD, as well as GECOM Security personnel, should be intimately familiar with the documents in this section.

GECOM/ITD will be the first GECOM department to implement Electronic Access Control Systems. The experience at the ITD will be valuable for the entire organization in due course.

7. Network Security

Another critical layer, Network Security is covered in-dept in Section 7. of the IT Operations Manual. At first is the GECOM/ITD Network Security Policy, covering local area networks, internet connectivity, e-mail as well as measures to enforce the policies. There is a high-level network diagram for reference. The section includes the United States National Institute for Science and Technology's guide to Intrusion Detection Systems for use by GECOM/ITD as they seek to deploy these sophisticated tools.

Section 7 is mainly for technical staff although GECOM Managers responsible for oversight of the IT Department should be familiar with the Network Security Policy.

8. Data Security And Integrity

Section 8 contains policy and procedures which address the computers, operating systems, applications and databases which are the primary components of the Information Systems at GECOM.

The GECOM/ITD Data Security Policy is highly specific and mandates that certain standards and best practice methods be applied to securing databases and applications (i.e. – software, whether operating systems or applications)

Specific Database Security procedures are addressed by two industry documents. The Microsoft SQL Server 2000 SP3 Security Best Practice document is the most up-to-date guide from the vendor of the Relational Database Management System (RDBMS) in use at GECOM. If all relevant steps in this guide are applied to GECOM databases, the security can be said to be fit for purpose. Additionally, the United States Department of Defense Information Systems Agency Security Technical Information Guide contains much relevant material to further strengthen database security at GECOM.

Applications Security is addressed by two Microsoft security documents (one for Windows 2000 Server, the second for Windows 2000 Pro Desktop Operating Systems) and two US DoD DISA STIGs (NT, Windows 2000 Pro, Desktop Applications).

Section 8 includes two procedures for the handling of computers and related communications equipment. The procedures for new computers detail the steps to ensure that new equipment is “locked” and hardened to the appropriate security level prior to deployment at GECOM. The procedures for old equipment ensure that equipment is “sanitized” and all sensitive information removed prior to return to GECOM Stores or disposal from the organization.

Section 8.6 includes procedures on the application of software patches, services packs and upgrades to the firmware operating systems and applications in use at GECOM. This activity is an important component in enterprise security as manufacturers release regular updates in response to identified vulnerabilities (as well as bugs or software malfunctions). The GECOM/ITD must ensure that its systems are kept up to date.

Section 8.7 contains procedures for keeping anti-virus software deployed at GECOM up to date. Without regular updates, systems are vulnerable to recently-developed computer viruses.

The detailed procedures to follows in the event of a suspected computer incident response are included in Section 8.8. While the high-level policy is outlined in Section 3.7, more specific and technically detailed instructions are included here. Aside from dealing successfully with a given incident, the key objective of a written incident response procedure is to ensure a consistent and transparent response mechanism.

Section 8 of the Manual is highly technical and aimed at the GECOM/ITD Staff and any technical personnel providing technical support, oversight or conducting audits at the department.

Section 9 – ITD Office Standards

This section will straightforward Environmental, Safety, Maintenance and Cleaning procedures.

Section 10 – IT Procurement

There are comprehensive Procurement and Stores procedures at GECOM. These, however, do not take into account the particular requirements of GECOM with respect to computer security (in particular) and technology procurement (in general). Section 10.2 offers suggestions for amendments to GECOM Procurement and Stores procedures to ensure (1) that all incoming computer and related equipment is first "hardened" to GECOM Security standards prior to deployment within the organization and (2) that the procurement of any computers or related equipment takes place with the full involvement of the IT Department – not just for security but also for evaluation of the suitability of the proposed purchases.

The Section on Technology Evaluation contains generic information on the systematic evaluation of IT products and services being considered for GECOM. This is an important activity which enhances the procurement process as well as ensuring that new technology is appropriate for GECOM.

Section 11. Glossary

A brief Glossary of terms – primarily in the area of systems development. The best sources for comprehensive glossaries are usually found on the World Wide Web.

A STUDY OF RECENT ELECTIONS TO DETERMINE SYSTEM FLAWS AND RECOMMEND A REVISED SYSTEM FOR THE COMPILATION, TRANSMISSION AND PUBLICATION OF ELECTIONS RESULTS

Background

The Guyana Elections Commission, in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programmed (UNDP) via Project GUY/02/M01: Reducing Electoral Tension: Promoting Confidence in the Electoral Rolls and Results; recruited a local Consultant to undertake a study in support of one aspect of the above named project, viz: To determine system flaws and to recommend a revised system for the compilation, transmission and publication of election results.

Scope of work

The Scope of Work of the Consultancy required the Consultant to:

(a) Evaluate extant legislation in relation to GECOM's responsibility for the compilation, transmission and declaration of election results;

(b) Identify areas in which extant legislation is inadequate to support the tabulation of results, transmission and declaration processes;

(c) Examine the prescribed procedures utilized at each level of the electoral process for the tabulation, transmission and declaration of election results with a view of determining their appropriateness for the particular context and circumstances;

(d) Offer technical assessments of electoral procedures and practices utilized in the last General and Regional elections;

(e) Determine the extent to which prescribed procedures outlined in law adequately address the demand for information after the close of poll;

(f) Advise on appropriate technological procedures/methods for accurate tabulation and quick transmission of electoral results;

(g) Recommend changes to the legislative framework to address current deficiencies;

(h) Provide technical advice for reforming electoral codes and reorganizing electoral procedures to break deadlocks and win the confidence of both government and opposition at election time; and

(i) Identify ways of strengthening the mechanics of the electoral process in an emerging democracy such as Guyana.

Work Plan

The work plan included the following activities:

- Review of extant legislation to determine regulatory framework for procedures identified above.

- Critical examination of Election Reports as well as reports from Consultants and Observer Missions on the Electoral Process in Guyana;

- Conduct survey for data collection/fact finding in order to obtain or update information for analysis;

- Interview GECOM Commissioners, Secretariat staff and other key players;

- Organize field visits and inspections as may be necessary;

- Initiate Consultative meetings with policy making authority, groups representing NGO's, public opinion and decision makers;

- Analyze key issues listed for study;

- Prepare key report for critical analysis by GECOM;

- Prepare final report on the Consultancy.

Deliverables

The deliverables of the Consultancy were as follows:

- An Interim Report outlining focus and methodology (end of two (2) weeks);

- A schedule of at least four (4) meetings to keep GECOM informed of progress;

- A progress Report at the end of the 4th Week of the Consultancy;

- A draft Final Report at the end of the Consultancy. (6th Week);

- A Final Report on the entire exercise (Two (2) weeks after the end of the Consultancy).

Time Schedule

The Consultant was expected to complete this exercise not later than eight (8) weeks after the signing of a contract.

PREPARATIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

During 2003, and in the absence of any knowledge of the system of local governance which is to be chosen by the Joint Task Force for Local Government Reform, GECOM prepared a draft plan of tasks (APPENDIX I) with relevant realistic timeframes, which would have to be completed with regards to the preparations for and administration of Local Government Elections. These activities listed will be further improved upon during the first quarter of 2004.

It must be noted that the draft plan, is an interim one which will have to undergo some changes based on the system of local governance that is to be chosen. Only when the system is known will the final and definitive list of activities and the concomitant timelines be documented.