



निर्वाचन आयोग, नेपाल
ELECTION COMMISSION, NEPAL



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Report on

Mid-term Evaluation of Five Year Strategic Plan (2009-2013) of Election Commission, Nepal (ECN)

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ACRONYMS

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
ECN	Electoral Commission of Nepal
EMB	Electoral Management Body
ESP	Electoral Support Project
EU	European Union
EVM	Electronic Voting Machine
FPTP	First Past the Post
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IT	Information Technology
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
NPTF	Nepal Peace Trust Fund
SP	Strategic Plan
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Assistance for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMERY

Background	<p>Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) enforced its five year strategic plan in 2009. The plan envisions that a mid-term evaluation be carried out in 2011/2012 to examine progress status of the plan and suggest proposals for improvement. This Mid-term evaluation has been carried out to meet that requirement. Electoral Support Project of UNDP provided both technical and financial support to this endeavor.</p>
Objectives	<p>The objectives of the mid-term evaluation included to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate the progress towards achieving targets as identified in the strategic plan.• Review the effectiveness of the interventions/activities and their impact on capacity building of the ECN.• Review sustainability of the achievements made by the ECN.• Review the implementation modality and monitoring mechanism of the strategic plan identifying any possible future interventions.• Develop recommendations for introducing appropriate changes into the strategic plan.
Methodology	<p>Review of related documents followed by intensive consultation through interaction meetings held first with ECN and then major stakeholders formed the basis for analysis of current status of the strategic plan.</p>
Strategic Plan	<p>The strategic plan was enforced on 8 February 2009. The plan consists of most of the elements that appear in a strategic plan. It has set 10 strategic goals and 53 targets to achieve the stated goals. An action plan was prepared and tasks were allocated to each of relevant divisions and sections immediately after ECN decided to implement the plan. An implementation and monitoring committee was formed under the leadership of one of the commissioners with the responsibilities of acquiring resources necessary for the implementation of the plan and oversight and monitor the implementation. The committee has successfully harnessed necessary resources towards implementation of the plan. The Government, donors and all stakeholders in one way or the other have contributed their share to the implementation process.</p>
Current Status	<p>ECN has made significant achievements in improving its capacity and electoral processes since the implementation of strategic plan in 2009. The key outputs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction of new electronic voter registration system• Submission of recommendations to Constituent Assembly on new electoral system and concept of ECN organizational structure keeping in view the political structure of Nepal in future• Draft legislations on electoral dispute resolution and electoral campaign financing

- Preparation of framework for future consolidated electoral legislation
- Ongoing construction of Election Information Center (EIC)
- Ongoing construction of resource centers at five strategic locations
- Conduction of BRIDGE Training for over 600 participants from ECN, other governmental organizations, civil society and political party representatives
- Feasibility study on GIS application in electoral planning and management
- Feasibility study on mobile polling centers and voting in brail scripts
- Considerable work towards achieving other 29 targets

The achievements so far made are admirable. It was a Hercules task to introduce new voter registration system in a situation of political transition. While whole political process in the country is preoccupied with peace process and constitution and electoral activities are in the least priority, ECN yet managed to draw support of the government, political parties, donors and other stakeholders to implement such a huge project involving every citizen of the country from every location. Without team spirit, commitment and dedication of the commission and its staff members, it would not have been possible to make this project happen. The achievements made in other areas especially in professional capacity building, establishment of Election Education and Information Center, and Resource Centers at five strategic locations are equally noteworthy. They have and will immensely enhance the capacity of ECN to deliver better electoral services in future.

The road ahead is, however, still bumpy. Out of 53 targets, 44 targets are yet to be met in the remaining period of over two years. Although considerable work has been carried out towards meeting 29 targets, 15 targets have still not been touched upon. More concerted efforts will be needed to achieve them in remaining period. Given the level of commitment shown in the reform process and support it has harnessed in the past, ECN can, however, achieve them within the plan period if a little more efforts are exercised. The additional exercise will need more coordinated efforts with renewed vigor to smooth over the hurdles underlying on the way to the targets.

The key issues and problems identified during the evaluation are primarily rooted at three interrelated levels. First is the plan itself - conceptual level. The goals and targets set in the plan are not well synchronized so that they can easily percolate through the system. The plan seems to have not adequately taken critical factors, such as existing organizational structure of ECN, human resource and funding requirements by targets and timeline for implementation, into consideration. As a result, the way the plan is framed does not match with the existing institutional set up. Second is implementation arrangement and management- institutional level. The plan in spirit is for decentralization of ECN activities and development of an effective monitoring and evaluation system, both of them critical in making the implementation of the plan a success. ECN has not been able to do justice to

this spirit. No serious efforts were made to decentralize the activities in the last over two years period as indicated by the policy and decision making patterns. Almost all policies and decisions are made at the commission level and even the divisions within secretariat have limited scope to influence the decision making process. On monitoring, little efforts were made to develop indicators and monitoring mechanism as envisioned in the plan. They should have been in the priority. Due to absence of these two key elements, implementation process has not been as balanced as the demand of the plan. Third is poor institutional memory- systemic level. This is true invariably with all government organizations. All these issues and problems combined with the fluid political situation in the country have contributed to achieve progress less than what was expected.

ECN has over two years to complete remaining tasks towards the targets. These can be achieved provided that the underlying issues and problems are appropriately approached.

Recommendations Key strategic recommendations include¹:

Review and revision of strategic plan: The goals and targets in the plan need to be reorganized to make them coherent. Resources required to meet each target is also need to be specified. Some critical issues such as security, gender and logistics have not been included in the plan even though ECN has been taking those issues into consideration when it implements its various programs such as recent voter registration and education program. Review and revision exercise will allow ECN to incorporate all missing elements, reorganize the targets in priority order and make it more comprehensive, coherent and easy to implement.

Revision of existing organizational structure: The existing voter registration division is recommended to be named as **Election Management Division** and the sections related to election management and operation such as voter registration, election, logistics, computer, trainings and voter education should be brought into umbrella of this division. This will tremendously help streamline the SP targets, coordinated implementation and retention of institutional memory to a large extent.

Sustainability assessment: ECN has been introducing new measures to improve the electoral process. They include electronic voter registration, electronic voting machine (EVM) and resource centers in strategic locations. They all are resource intensive ventures and need carefully designed maintenance plan in order to sustain them. A plan for feasibility study of EVM is already in place which is also expected to take sustainability issue into consideration and come up with a detailed maintenance plan. Such

¹ Please read the main text for more information on problems and proposed solutions under analysis and suggestion section of each goal.

sustainability assessment should also be carried out for new voter registration system including IT and resource centers, and a detailed maintenance plan should be put in place.

Strengthen institutional memory: Retention of institutional memory has always been a problem with ECN. A number of efforts have been made to introduce measures to retain competent staffs in ECN. No measure has so far worked. The efforts to create a core electoral team or election service should continue. These will take time, therefore, an immediate option is recommended to minimize the loss of institutional memory. ECN should immediately introduce handover-take over mechanism before any staff member is transferred and enforce strong record keeping system (hard copy synchronized with soft copy filling system). This will help retain institutional memory to a large extent. ECN should also consider expansion of its services to elections of professional groups, NGOs, user groups and even student unions. This can also be one factor to retain staff as they will have space to be engaged even beyond elections.

Establish Monitoring and Evaluation System: ECN should immediately establish a permanent **M and E Committee** under the leadership of one of the commissioner. One of the members of the committee is recommended to be drawn from outside ECN. He or she could be an independent professional, a representative from donor community or M & E expert from National Planning Commission. This will help minimize the conflict of interest and make the monitoring process transparent and effective.

Start Delegation of Authority to Divisions and DEOs: Given that the country is following to adopt federal system in near future, it is important that ECN takes the new situation into account in its institutional functioning. Building capacity of secretariat divisions and DEOs in decision making at their level can be a best starting point. For this, ECN should immediately do homework to identify areas in which the Divisions and DEOs can be delegated authority to allow them to make decisions at their own and influence policy making of ECN. One of the best entry points for this can be to authorize them to prepare their fiscal plans based on ECN strategic plan. This exercise alone can make a big difference in improving their capacity to make decisions and constructively influence future ECN policies.

Mid-term Evaluation of Strategic Plan of Election Commission of Nepal (2009-2013)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) is an independent election management body entrusted with mandate on holding free and fair elections maintaining professional integrity. The ECN was first conceived in the Interim Administration Statute of Nepal (1951) and established in the same year. The Constitution of Nepal (1962), however, did not have provision for an election commission and the task was entrusted to the Ministry of Panchayat. The first amendment (1967) reestablished the Election Commission as a constitutional body with mandate on organizing, administering and managing elections in the country. Apparently, ECN has organized several elections for governments at all levels under different political systems since its establishment. In this context, ECN is one of the most experienced EMBs in the region.

Sections 128-130 under Part 14 of the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) enshrined the provision of an independent election commission as a constitutional body and define the composition, structure, responsibility and authority of the commission. According to the provision, the commission consists of 5 members including the Chief Election Commissioner supported by a Secretariat headed by a Secretary of Government of Nepal.

ECN has demonstrated its competency by organizing and managing elections in the past. Despite the complexity, holding of Constituent Assembly elections in 2008 largely in successful manner is a recent testimony of its competency. Sustaining the competency and at the same time striving towards excellence, however, needs vision and mission and a clearly laid down road map to reach there.

Democratic elections are complex affairs by nature. Managing and organizing them in a professional manner without compromising the integrity needs hugely concerted efforts. It is more so in a society where democratic culture is not well founded, political civility is evolving and existence of resourceful externalities is prominent. Conceptualizing the complex potential political issues, putting them into operational perspective and coming up with a visionary plan² to set electoral affair in the right direction is a very challenging task, particularly in a political system which is in transition. ECN seems to have aptly recognized the challenges. In response, as one of the key approaches, ECN formulated its first strategic plan for five years (2009-2013) and is under implementation since last two and half years. The strategic plan has envisioned that mid-term and final evaluation be carried out in 2011-12 and 2014-15 respectively (Strategic Plan, Section 6.10.3, p-9). Accordingly, this Mid-term evaluation is carried out to gauge the progress made towards the goals set in the plan and identify the gaps, if any, underlying on the way to achieving them within the plan period.

² Visionary plan in this context signifies a plan that is achievable from every respect.

UNDP/Electoral Support Project (ESP) is also one of the providers both financial and technical assistance to carry out these activities outline in the SP. Terms of Reference for this Mid-term Evaluation were provided by ESP (Attached in Annex-1).

1.2 Purpose and Objectives

The main purpose of the mid-term evaluation was to assess the overall progress made so far in the implementation of the strategic targets towards the goals. In addition, the evaluation is also expected to assess intended impacts on the capacity of ECN taking into account the current changed context and the challenges being faced by the ECN. The study was also to suggest suitable ways to address any challenges encountered on the way to achieving the targets.

There were 5 specific objectives of mid-term evaluation. They were to:

- Evaluate the progress towards achieving targets as identified in the strategic plan.
- Review the effectiveness of the interventions/activities and their impact on capacity building of the ECN.
- Review sustainability of the achievements made by the ECN.
- Review the implementation modality and monitoring mechanism of the strategic plan identifying any possible future interventions.
- Develop recommendations for introducing appropriate changes into the strategic plan.

1.3 Methodology

The information for the mid-term evaluation has been emanated from the review of the strategic plan, annual reports (2065/066, 2066/067 and 2067/068), newsletters, workshop reports and decisions of ECN made over the last over two years, related technical reports produced by ESP (the list of documents reviewed is attached in Annex-2), consultation with key staff members representing each of the departments, donor representatives and ESP advisors. The analysis of information followed a formative approach.

This first draft was prepared based on the information obtained from the review and consultation meetings which was shared with ECN officials in specially designed interaction meetings held on 31 Oct 2011 and 3 November 2011. A second draft was prepared incorporating the comments which was shared with stakeholders in an interaction scheduled held on 18 November 2011. Relevant inputs obtained from the interaction have been incorporated in the final draft. The list of participants who attended both interactions is attached in Annexes-3 and 4 respectively.

1.4 Scope of Information Base

This evaluation is entirely based on review of existing and available documents. As documentation and institutional memory part of ECN is not as strong as the way it works and produces results, some of achievements made might have not been well reflected in the evaluation, although utmost efforts were made to fill this gap through interaction with key officials. The interaction with field level offices was confined to the valley, so the report did not have opportunity to get primary information to assess the impact of the interventions made towards achievement of the targets at the local level. This gap was, however, filled up by the findings of national level workshop of ECN key staff including District Electoral Staff which was organized on 14-16 August 2011. Although the information and findings were verified through close cross-sections, the actual evaluation was made by a single professional, which could have been multi-perspective if it were carried out by a team of more than one professional.

Since baseline data regarding the status of ECN capacity and work on which the targets were built on was not available, it was not possible to make temporal comparison of the progress made since the strategic plan was put in place. In addition, the targets, with exceptions, were open ended in terms of timeline and resources; therefore, the evaluation is largely based on achieved outputs rather than input output analysis, which is critical to draw inference whether the activities and investment are sustainable. Though the timeline of the SP was broadly drawn at the time of formulating the SP and its program but achievement of most of the targeted activities were critically dependent on the availability of resources

2. PROGRESS AS OF END OF SEPTEMBER 2011

2.1 Review of Strategic Plan

The strategic plan (SP) was built on experiences, feedback and recommendations from national (district to center) and international stakeholders and reports of observation teams. The plan itself was an outcome of rigorous interactions with stakeholders' upto the district level, workshops and focus group discussions undertaken to identify the gaps in the electoral process, best options available to address those gaps in the given context of Nepal.

ECN approved the plan and made decision on 2009/02/08 to implement it. ECN is widely viewed as pioneer in the government sector to formulate and put into implementation a five year strategic plan towards enhancing the capacity of the commission as an independent and professional institution to organize and hold credible elections. The SP document consists most of the elements of a SP including vision, mission, guiding principles, goals and targets and presents them in a succinct and clear manner. The SP has also duly recognized the strategic issues, challenges, strength; weaknesses; opportunities and threats, identified the stakeholders and established a broad outline of implementation arrangements.

Towards implementation of the SP, an action plan was prepared and implemented. This mid-term evaluation is primarily based on the action plan and progress made since its implementation. The matrix of strategic targets, action plan and status of the progress is attached in Annex-4.

Analysis and suggestions

The work of ECN to prepare and implement the SP is commendable and appreciative. As the following sections will reveal, ECN has made significant achievements since the implementation of the plan and even beyond it as many of the issues that ECN deals with were not incorporated in the SP. It is understandable, too. The SP concept was new to ECN and was a first initiative of its kind. SP used to be a tool of corporate organizations used to achieve their business goals. Its application in other organizations including government organizations is relatively a new occurrence. Thus the use of this approach in other organizations is evolving and reflection of the whole spirit of the approach in the plans is yet to be experienced. ECN SP is no exception in this regard. As one can notice, the SP can be re-organized and add other relevant targets to make it more comprehensive and coherent. And the concept of SP as such rests on the principle of dynamism and flexibility allowing ample space for continuous improvement and change with the changes in the context. Keeping this in view, the following suggestions are made towards making the SP more comprehensive and coherent.

Revision and addition: The current SP needs to be intensively reviewed and the goals and targets need to be reorganized to make them more consistent and coherent. While doing this exercise, other related elements of electoral process such as security, gender and logistics should be taken into account. Although except logistics, they are cross cutting issues of electoral process, they are critical in making elections successful.

Security is a critical element of successful holding of elections anywhere in the world democracies. This is also attested by the amount of money spent on security during the last Constituent Assembly (CA) Elections. The proportion of fund spent amounts to 44.41 percent of the total CA election cost (Yadav, 2010, p. 79) including the money spent by the political parties for their campaign exercise. It is apparently a huge amount. Higher security cost during CA elections is naturally associated with the security conditions of immediate post conflict situation of Nepal and the cost will significantly be reduced as the security situation improves in the country. In any case, security is certainly one of the yardsticks to measure the quality of elections and therefore should be a critical element of any election planning and management.

The plan has placed security agencies under stakeholders section. Security should indeed be one of the key strategic targets of the plan and the security agencies should be engaged in the process of planning and implementation of each key stages of election (key elements in the case of SP), such as voter registration, voter education and elections. The target of this element should be to promote free, fair and fearless electoral atmosphere. This is also important for designing a cost effective electoral security plan. ECN needs to add a security coordination unit in the existing organizational structure which can be lead by a Section Officer with experience in security planning and management. The unit should coordinate with all the security agencies on a regular basis and obtain security related input to overall electoral processes.

Gender sensitivity element is considered crucial in informed and active participation of voters in the electoral process. ECN has aptly taken this issue into account. Undertaking of gender mapping, training on gender and elections, and preparations towards establishment of new gender strategies are some of the examples of ECN efforts to make elections gender friendly. Incorporation of this element in the SP would ensure that the efforts are institutionalized; gender issues are well reflected in the electoral process and make implementation arrangements for the same in an organized manner.

All the relevant and practical targets for gender sensitivity should be identified during the SP revision exercise and incorporated into the SP. As gender is a cross cutting issue and dedicated unit would be necessary to make sure that the issues are duly addressed in each of the ECN activity so that gender targets are met. Establishment of a Gender unit in ECN would be a wise idea for this purpose. If this is not possible with the existing resources, the monitoring mechanism which is yet to be formed should make sure that gender issues are addressed in the planning and implementation of each activity such as HR, voter education, registration and elections leading to the gender targets and goals.

Logistics management does not prominently appear in the SP document as one of the key elements of the plan. The logistics components such as construction of warehouse, development of management inventory system, and decentralization of procurement have been placed under reform in management and information technology advancement goals, which appear to have made it difficult for relevant sections of ECN to conceptualize the chain of logistics issues and put them into an operational form.

Elections are the largest logistics driven events and, therefore, EMB's world wide place special importance on logistics management which includes logistics planning, procurement, storage, distribution and retrieval. With the introduction of new technologies, such as Electronic Voting Machine, in the election process, it becomes more complex to manage logistics if concerned staffs are not well trained on storage, distribution and maintenance of electoral materials. In fact it is logistics which makes a big difference in making elections successful or failure. It is, therefore, crucial to draw a clear map in advance as to how each and every registration/polling center would be equipped in time with necessary logistics.

In the case of the SP implementation, it is also important to have clarity on two aspects of logistics. First is related to logistics for reform programs. The second is related to implementation of election cycle. Both of them need logistics but in different form, types and volumes. As the logistics management approach and methods have significant cost implications, logistics for reform process and electoral cycles should be categorically specified as soon as possible as a part of SP implementation.

Resource allocation by targets is an imperative for both preparation of action plan and monitoring. The implementation of strategic plan without price tag to each of strategic targets in relation to human resources; time and technological considerations; would be very difficult to achieve expected results. The strategic plan has broadly identified the needs and estimated the total cost. The resources, however, have not been specifically assigned to the targets. This involves rigorous home work to prioritize the targets, estimate the cost, time and human resource requirement. As this requires intensive assessment exercise, ECN might not have considered this as important exercise as others such as continuous voter registration. It is also worth noting that the fiscal plans prepared after the decision of the commission to implement the plan have not all been emanated from the strategic plan. This is perhaps due to the timing of decision made to implement the plan. The fiscal year starts in mid July but the decision to implement the strategic plan was made in 8 February 2009, almost at halfway of the fiscal year.

Prior bench marking of the overall electoral situation in the country does not seem to have been established. As a result, the plan does not provide adequate information on the bench mark on which the plan was formulated, for example, the status of ECN at the time of the plan preparation in terms of its capacity, resources and underlying issues on the way to build ECN as an independent and competent organization to organize and hold credible elections. Although SWOT analysis presents a broad context of SP implementation and a number of challenges and risks have been recognized in the plan, they do not lead to the strategies rather they appear other way around. At the same time, the plan does not seem

to have identified and established the necessary mechanisms and instruments to tackle with the strategic challenges and smooth over the weaknesses and threats. If the plan had build upon an in depth analysis of overall electoral situation in the country and the forces setting election parameters in Nepal, it would have created a better ground for establishment of strategic targets in a priority order providing basis for allocation of appropriate resources to achieve each target within targeted period. It is never late. One of the steps of suggested revision can be to set up bench mark based on the current institutional capacity of ECN and evolving election parameters. The revised SP should thus be founded on real ground with practical instruments to implement it.

2.2 Goals and Strategic Targets

The plan has set 10 goals and corresponding strategic areas of actions to achieve those goals during the plan period. The targets are closely related to the election cycle but not specifically tied up with them.

Grouped together, they are largely post and pre-election targets leading to elections. The progress made and issues to be addressed under each target³ are discussed below.

2.2.1 Reforms in the electoral system and election process

Electoral system and process are foundation of management, organization and administration of elections in any given territory. It is more so in the case of Nepal where the electoral system and the process had been in transition throughout the history and has not yet firmly set. Evolving from first democratic elections some five decades ago and shrinking into elections under single party system and again expanding to democratic elections under first past the post (FPTP) electoral system after almost three decades. Even FPTP system could not last long and a parallel proportional system was introduced for CA elections held in 2008. The electoral system for future elections is yet to be ascertained and new constitution is due to establish it. Within this context, the strategic plan has set 15 targets and 68 planned activities to reform the electoral system and election process.

Except for three targets namely contribute to CA process by providing input on electoral system (6.1.1), reform in electoral legal framework and organizational structure (6.1.2) and formulation of consolidated legal framework incorporating basic electoral norms and standards (6.1.3), all the targets are mostly of technical nature ranging from introduction of Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) to reduction of distance from voters to polling center to 5 kilometers.

Some visible achievements have been made towards reforms in the electoral system and election process. They include a report submitted to CA with **recommendations on electoral system** and a statutory proposal on **organizational restructuring** to make the

³ The strategic targets are listed under section 6 in the plan document.

commission capable of handling ever evolving challenges. In addition, a competent team⁴ of national (from within the commission) and international professionals are working on drafting of electoral framework for future elections based on possible scenarios of electoral system likely to be adopted in the new constitution. A number of exercises have been undertaken at various levels towards building consolidated legal framework for Nepal. A draft on **development of Electoral Dispute Resolution Procedures for the Election Commission and Campaign Expenses** with technical support from UNDP/ESP has already been produced which can be enacted by the parliament after further discussion with relevant stakeholders once the new constitution is in place. Similarly, consultations at the political level through formal and informal venues are ongoing which is expected to build shared understanding on future electoral system. This consultation process has also provided ECN a good basis for preparation of consolidated electoral legislation.

Work towards **delimitation of distance** from voters to polling centers to 5 kilometers is ongoing. A data format has been prepared and sent to the district offices to collect the information for each of the polling centers. The district offices have started the work but not all have reported back. This is also pending full fledged operation of GIS unit. It is one of the activities of election section to expedite GIS work in the current fiscal year.

A preliminary report has been prepared to **reduce the voter processing time** to three minutes. Mock exercises on Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) were carried out in 15 districts with the aim to educate voters and estimate time taken to process the voters. The findings of the mock exercises are also expected to help undertake EVM feasibility study. Similarly, a feasibility study was undertaken to examine the possibility of introducing Braille script and the study has shown that it is possible in EVM machines but not in the ballot papers.

Data collection for construction of necessary structure for **wheel chair** to access into polling center in selected constituencies has been completed. As the structure is usable only during elections, the further work to arrange such structure is planned to be carried out just before next elections.

Feasibility study on **mobile polling centers** has been completed. As per the report findings, mobile centers can be established in **old age homes** but not in the hospitals due to practical reasons. The provision of mobile polling centers in the hospital is likely to disturb patients, they not necessarily come with identification documents, and may visit only for regular check-up, and above all the patients visiting hospitals not necessarily come from within the district/constituency in which the hospital is located. It is not practical for ECN to carry voters' list of the whole country to each of the hospital location which would be required if mobile centers are established in the hospitals.

Work on making **election staff more inclusive** and increased local participation, and feasibility study on pre-and absentee voting are yet to be initiated. As making the election staff inclusive is dependent on the availability of number of staff representing different

⁴ IFES has been providing technical assistance to the reform process through its project -*Nepal: Building Electoral Capacity, Promoting Electoral Legal Reform funded by Norway*

communities in the given constituency during the election time, this cannot be worked out now, although the guidelines on selection of election staff can be developed based on the past experiences. Budget has been allocated in the current fiscal year to carry out **feasibility study on the pre- and absentee voting**.

The process of presentation of identification document with photograph by the voters at the time of voting was successfully tested during last by elections. The process for including the provision in the legal framework has already been initiated.

ECN has not yet started work on three targets (6.1.13-15) namely carrying out feasibility study on in- and out-of-country voting for permanent and temporary residents, devising an appropriate mechanism for monitoring the campaign expenses and its actual implementation, and development of an effective mechanism to improve the quality of the domestic election observation.

Analysis and suggestions

ECN has made considerable efforts to reform electoral system and process since the implementation of the SP. The efforts have produced visible outputs. As the electoral system and the process is the foundation of elections in any democracy, more rigorous efforts are needed to make the best use of already produced outputs. It is the best opportunity for ECN to influence political process to adopt best electoral system in the new constitution from every respect.

Too many targets set to achieve electoral system reform goal seem to have blurred the focus of ECN. First, the targets need to be reviewed and rearranged. The targets from 6.1.4 onwards, except 6.1.12 and 14, either they **lead to HR goal or infrastructure goal**. They should be moved to under relevant goals. One additional target under electoral reform could be to review of other targets, identify the areas in which legal changes are necessary to materialize those targets and prepare **consolidated guidelines** for the implementation of targeted activities.

Electoral system and process is largely focuses on conceptual dimension and, therefore, the ECN intellectual resources should be centered on providing assistance to the political process in identifying a best electoral system for Nepal. Various options with cost benefit analysis can be developed and shared with the political parties at different levels for which ECN will require to have issue based interaction events with the political parties. This would not only facilitate the political process to adopt a best electoral system in the new constitution but also ECN to have prior understanding and strategies on how to implement the adopted electoral system effectively and efficiently by building a team of shared understanding within ECN. This would also provide ECN an opportunity to have more frequent interactions with its stakeholders and interlocutors' contributing to enhance their confidence on the EMB.

2.2.2 Reform in the Electoral Rolls

The strategic plan envisages four targets to reform the electoral rolls. Decentralization of collection and updating of electoral roll, initiation of electronic voter roll with photograph, increasing the accuracy of voter roll to more than 95 percent and establish necessary infrastructure to have continuous voter registration closing only for 75 days prior to elections were targeted to achieve within the SP period. Since the implementation of the SP, reform in electoral roll has been the main thrust of ECN and the results of the efforts are already visible. Despite political obstructions over the ECN provision for presentation of citizenship certificate to be eligible to register, the first nationwide phase of the voter registration process has been completed due to cooperation from all stakeholders including the Supreme Court and donors. Over 9.5 million voters have been registered as of 6 September 2011. In terms of spatial coverage, all the VDCs and Municipalities have been covered in 64 districts. As the registration was halted in 193 VDCs and 8 Municipalities of remaining 11 districts due to technical and political reasons, a plan has already been put in place to mobilize teams to those VDCs and Municipalities to provide opportunity for the voters to register. The consolidation of registers by district and country and cleaning of data is ongoing and expected to be completed in next 5-6 months. The voter registration process has already been made continuous and all district offices have been tasked to provide this service throughout the year.

Apart from biometric data capturing, the provision for continuous and out of district registration are the special features of the new registration system. This provision has and will immensely help minimize the possibility of voters being deprived of their voting right due to their absence from the residence during registration drive. Once up and running, this system is expected to represent one of the most advanced voter registration system providing clean and accurate voter register in Nepal. Even though out of district registration facility has been introduced, electorates are not turning up to the registration locations in the numbers ECN has anticipated. Special program to attract the elites and young voters for the registration is thus needed.

Commensurate amendments in the law need to be made to sustain new registration system. Towards this end, ECN has already prepared draft amendment and put them in the process for approval which is expected to be in place before the end of current fiscal year. Work towards decentralization of voter rolls updating process beyond district offices is pending formation of elected local bodies although preliminary preparations for decentralization is ongoing.

Analysis and suggestions

ECN has put tremendous efforts to create a clean and accurate voters roll since the restoration of multiparty system in 1990. Perhaps this is one of the areas of electoral process which has received huge amount of resources in the last 20 years after electoral security and yet the search for an appropriate system for creating a clean and accurate

voters roll continued. As a result, ECN has now introduced electronic voter registration system following the earlier drives for voter ID and family card systems.

The adoption of electronic voter registration system with capacity to capture biometric data is ambitious but achievable. ECN has already proven it. Once up and running in a sustainable manner, the system is anticipated to significantly increase accuracy in the voters roll and effectively discourage fraudulent voting, which had been a grave problem in the past elections. ECN deserves accolades for making this happen.

The journey, however, does not end here. In order to make new registration system sustainable, both the government and ECN need to work very hard until the system is fully utilized and well established. Given the level of commitments and support from all the stakeholders that ECN enjoyed during implementation of the new registration system, it can be safely inferred that there is a high possibility the system will be sustained. It is important to highlight here that this is the only service of the commission that ensures voters' right to participate in the elections and the quality of service does matter for them.

The government and ECN are fully aware that the success of new system lies on whether the register is used for distribution of National ID and linked it with vital registration system. Failure to make multipurpose use of data, as it was envisaged in the plan, will not only impact the future elections but also discourage the electorates at large to participate in the elections and will create room for suspicion over the vision and mission of the commission. It is worth noting here that they have bitter experience with voter ID and family card system introduced by ECN earlier. It will also have significant impact on the image of ECN which it currently enjoys as one of the competent organization capable of doing its business independently.

Both the earlier projects were appreciated in improving the voters roll and a huge amount of resources were poured into. Despite the appreciation and allocation of huge resources by both the government and donors, the outputs of the drives could not find continuity. The reason in both cases was very simple: the lack of ownership on the part of government in general and ECN in particular coupled with the lack of appropriate strategies to handle such very sensitive and important projects. If the ownership were there, all the issues that hindered the success would have been easily smoothed over and the projects would have been successful and immensely contributing the current project. The case of new registration system is, however, not the same. This time ECN owns the new system and so does the government to a large extent.

The electronic registration system is complex and challenging not only because of the technology involved but also because the way project was conceived, developed and implemented. It was a negotiation between the government and ECN to implement the project with the aim to create multipurpose database which could later be used for distribution of National ID Card to the citizens and linking database with vital registration system so that the voter register is automatically updated in future. The new system is not affordable to update register only for electoral purposes in the long run. The success of the project will, therefore, largely depend on the government's willingness to continuously drive

to distribute National ID Card which the voters can use also as voter's identification document during the elections. Logically, the government should have distributed the National ID Card first and ECN should have used the database for the purpose of creating voters roll. The government was not in a position to take up such an ambitious drive in a situation of political transition. In the given situation, it was an understandable decision of ECN to take up the project. Now, the ECN has to take also the onus of making the project successful by also encouraging the government to utilize the database to distribute National ID Card at earliest possible and work together to link this database with vital registration system.

Apart from making the government moving, there are other challenges that demand concerted efforts to make the project sustainable. They range from sustained maintenance of technology to employment and retention of competent human resources. The annual ECN workshop on evaluation of electronic voter registration held in 14-16 August 2011, enumerates 53 issues/problems encountered during the exercise. They are rooted in four areas namely financial resource management, administration, technology and logistics management and also have proposed 59 recommendations to address the issues/problems. They need to be carefully reviewed and necessary arrangements need to be made to address them in a priority order. Although the recommendations at first sight seem to have been made mostly to smooth over the weaknesses in the project management and are operational in nature, many of them are equally relevant to make the electronic registration system sustainable. For example, recommendations for provision of regular training to the technical staff, professionally strong monitoring unit at the ECN, clear guidelines on financial management and decentralization of activities to the district level are critical in sustaining the system. In addition, the following issues need to be critically examined and practical ways to tackle them need to be identified and adopted.

- **Retention of IT Personnel:** Retaining competent IT personnel at the district is a challenge, and without them it is very difficult to sustain the electronic registration system. They are highly demanding professionals and retaining them with current government recruitment and remuneration policies would be almost impossible. As identified by the participants of the annual workshop, the symptoms of difficulties in maintenance of the IT at the local level have already been surfaced. Currently, UNDP/ESP recruited IT experts at the regional level are providing IT support but this is a short term solution to address day to day technical issues at the local level. This solution will not serve to make the system go in the long run. Various alternatives need to be examined to address this problem. **One of the options is to make provision of special recruitment and salary policies for IT personnel with signed commitments to serve for some years.** The ECN should put every effort to establish and make operational the electioneering business sustainable with respect to the use of modern technology. It is understood that once the system is established and the users of the system at the local level are trained to use the system, high level technical support for continuous operation of the system may not be needed. However, skilled human resource on ICT for back up support at least from regional or provincial level will have to be made available.

- The current **software** capability is reported to be inadequate to achieve services to meet ECN policies; particularly the data consolidation, cleaning and voter records transfer needs. Efforts are being made to improve the system with ESP technical support. A critical examination followed by a comprehensive test of the software and maintenance capacity building within ECN is of paramount importance to sustain the electronic voter registration system. Alternative ways should also be explored to produce voters roll, clean data (if AFIS is difficult to use with the software) and transfer of data so that voters' roll could be produced for election likely to take place in near future even if the software fails to provide all these services.
- **Completion of voter registration** in the VDCs and municipalities that have not been covered so far due to technical and political issues should be in high priority in order for ECN to be ready to hold elections any time in future. The management issues highlighted during the annual evaluation workshop should be addressed before start of voter registration drive in the remaining VDCs and municipalities. This would not only raise the morale of the participants of the workshop but also be an opportunity for the commission to test the ability to address the problems.
- The success of the project will obviously depend on the software **application of voter list** by National ID Data Center. As reported by the IT section, software presently in use can not serve this purpose. Preliminary work towards introduction of an application layer has already been carried out with the support from ESP/UNDP. The proposal with cost and time implications is already in place. As it takes time to develop the layer, the ECN should take decision at earliest possible to develop and introduce the layer.
- There is also a need for an upgraded Information and Communication Technology section (the current computer and printing section should be converted into ICT section) in the central office of ECN and provision of regional/provincial ICT professionals with specific responsibilities in three areas namely a) Software maintenance and upgrading, b) Hardware maintenance and operational responsibility, and c) Access control as data and system security

2.2.3 Improvements in Voter Awareness

The SP established three targets leading to improved voter awareness. The first target is to make voter education program as a regular program and reach out to over 95% of the voters. There is a general consensus within ECN that the voter education should be a key activity of electoral process and it should be launched on a regular basis in different languages spoken in different regions of the country. Accordingly, all the means and venues were used to educate voters during the voter registration drive. They included radio jingles, posters and pamphlet, poem competition, TV Ad and drama. As targeted, posters were produced in 17 different languages to educate people on voter registration process. No program was developed in sign language. As the third target is to increase the

participation of voters to above 66 percent during the elections, planned activities are expected to be implemented before the elections.

One of the planned activities was to create a dedicated voter education unit within ECN. It has not yet been materialized. For effective and efficient implementation of voter education programs, a well equipped and dedicated unit is a must.

Analysis and suggestions

Better outcomes of elections are dependent largely on quality decision of voters to vote as it determines the representation in the government. And voters can make quality decisions only when they are well informed of the impact of their voting decision in their day to day life. ECN can contribute significantly to promote such ability in the voters by providing intensive civic and voter education programs for which it needs a dedicated, well equipped and resourceful civic and voter education unit. Currently, this is missing.

In order to meet this requirement, there are two options with ECN. One is to create a voter education unit within existing organizational structure. The other one is to incorporate civic and voter education activity as one of the major activities of Election Information Center (EIC) and arrange the organizational structure accordingly. Developing EIC also as a civic and voter education center is the best solution. Since the organizational structure of EIC is yet to be finalized, it is the right time that ECN incorporates this into the structure.

2.2.4 Human Resource Development

The SP sets five targets to achieve this goal. All of them except arrangement of ECN staff at 200 centers in the next elections are related to development of electoral knowledge, skill and attitude (KSA) in ECN staff. This is the best attended goal. Almost all staff members have received training in one or other subject since the implementation of the SP. BRIDGE course has been launched as a program to train staff members within ECN and representatives from other stakeholders. BRIDGE course has been conducted at all levels and 629 including representatives of civil society and political parties have already been trained. BRIDGE training has made a big difference on the part of staff members in understanding the complexities involved in elections and develop skills to manage them.

Analysis and suggestions

ECN has aptly focused on human development issue. Election business is in fact as complex as democracy. In the absence of competent human resource, no plan can be materialized. It is much more important when EMBs take SP approach, which requires shared understanding of vision, mission and goals, to organizational functioning. Thus the quality human resource matters in successful implementation of SP. ECN has, however, been suffering from poor retention of trained and skilled human resource. Despite huge efforts made to train the staff, retaining the trained staff in ECN is a huge challenge. As there is no election service for recruitment and development of election cadre, the ECN

staffs administratively belong to the government and they can be transferred to other ministries at any time even though there is a practice that they complete a term of at least two years before they are transferred to new ministry. A study with ESP financial support was commissioned to closely examine the retention issue as per the target set in the SP. The report has recommended for creation of a core electoral team from within the bureaucracy and has proposed criteria and framework for creation of such team. The follow up on the recommendations is, however, pending the decision of the new government to halt new recruitment until the next decision.

This is the most challenging issue that has impact on every aspect of ECN performance. No matter what levels of efforts are made to build the capacity of ECN, they will neither be effective nor efficient unless there is a strong institutional memory retention mechanism in place.

There are a number of options to address this issue. The first option is to create a separate electoral service. This issue has been discussed at different occasions but has not yet evolved into a shape due mainly to limited scope of career development. It is likely that this option will take a shape when state restructuring in the form of federal structure takes place. The second option is to go with creation of electoral core team from within bureaucracy as suggested by the retention study. This also does not seem feasible in immediate future given the government's policy to halt new recruitment **for unspecified time** and some practical issues such as the long process involved in the creation of team.

Both of these solutions have their pros and cons. The electoral service is practiced in many countries but attracting competent people (which happens by default in the current system) into service is a real challenge especially in countries like Nepal due to limited career options. Creation of core team is a good option but this needs voluntary commitment on both parts of bureaucracy and individual employees.

In a given situation, enforcement of strong turnover record system with inbuilt mandatory take-over/hand over and entry orientation by outgoing employee at least for a week seems to be the best option available to ECN at the moment. The outgoing staff should not be released without signature of new comer attesting that he/she has received entry orientation from the outgoing employee. This system will also face one practical problem. As there is no strong practice of concurrent transfer-exchange in the government bureaucracy, the position remains vacant sometimes even for years after a staff is transferred from ECN. ECN has to work with government to ensure that there is a replacement of staff at least a week ago before the incumbent staff member is transferred from ECN to other ministries so that hand-over/take-over process is duly completed. This rule should be applied to positions at least section officer and above, and positions such as logistics. It should be combined with enhanced memory recording provisions such as manual file keeping synchronized with electronic filing, and personnel tracking system that maintains contact address of trained personnel transferred to other ministries. Adoption of this system alone can make a big difference in retaining institutional memory.

2.2.5 Reforms in Management

The SP has identified six targets for reform in management. They are related to decentralization of preparation of electoral register, procurement of non-sensitive materials, determination of locations of polling centers and election management, build capacity to complete preparation within 90 days of election and keep information of all polling centers in the Geographic Information System (GIS) at district level.

Some measurable achievements have been made towards meeting the targets. The district electoral offices (DEO) have already been entrusted with the responsibility to prepare electoral register for the respective districts. As a first step to decentralize procurement procedures, DEOs were authorized to procure non-sensitive materials at the district level during electronic voter registration drive which is reported to have helped enhance the procurement capacity of DEOs. Exercise on analysis of possibility of preparation of logistics to be able to organize elections within 90 days is on going. Similarly, a data format for collection of information for polling center data has been prepared and dispatched to the district. A plan is in place to train district offices on how to collect information, and use of GIS for processing, storage and analysis of data. As per the plan, these tasks will be completed during this fiscal year. Work on developing clear procedures on determination of polling centers by local authorities has not been progressed much due mainly to absence of elected local bodies.

Analysis and suggestions

ECN has aptly recognized the need for decentralization of authority and responsibility for effective and efficient management of electoral activities. Much more effort is, however, needed to achieve visible results in this area. The Divisions within the secretariat and DEOs have not been fully mobilized in terms of their capacity to engage in policy and decision making processes. The problem partly lies in the law which is, for obvious reasons, commission centered and does not clearly demarcates the line between policy and operation, and partly lies in inadequate willingness to delegate authority. The law in spirit is for delegation of authority as it provides full space to the commission to exercise it (Election Commission Act 2063, section 38) to any organ under it. This provision is mostly activated when there is a need for passing the responsibilities down but not the authority required to execute the responsibility, and when it comes to delegation of authority one needs to be confident, which is largely a matter of trust, whether the authority would be properly used. It is the impression of the evaluator that the commission has been constrained by the traditional attitude that "if it is working then why to change". The problem is also systemic in nature.

In a given situation, it does not seem to be feasible to make a leap forward unless until the whole policy framework orients to citizens with commensurate implementation mechanisms. The ongoing state restructuring motion is expected to initiate this process. What the commission can do from within is to break the current predicament and see the

capability that what the Secretariat and its Divisions and DEOs can do on their own at their level. One starting point can be to delegate authority with resources according to their capacity to make their own annual plan for implementation of the SP at the division and district level with projected fiscal budget. For this, the HQs need to do homework on fiscal planning parameters to be used by the Divisions and DEOs and put appropriate instruments in place to consolidate district plans into commission plan. This also applies to divisions and sections at HQs.

2.2.6 Information Technology Advancement

In consistent with new voter registration system, the SP sets five targets to achieve this goal. They are increased access of all staff to IT, ICT networking, MIS and replacement of old registration system with the new one. The old voter registration system has already been replaced with the new one. As explained in the previous sections, the work on consolidation, cleaning and transfer of data is ongoing and is expected to be completed in the next 5-6 months. Perhaps ECN is the only government organization where each staff member has access to IT if one wishes to utilize it. Work towards meeting other targets has, however, not been progressed much. DEOs are connected with public internet services. The plan to install LAN in each DEO has been shelved for now due to unaffordable cost involvement. Similar is the case with MIS.

Analysis and suggestions

IT and voter registration system are intertwined. The sustainability of the new voter registration system will depend to a large extent on the capacity of IT unit to perform in a sustainable manner. ECN IT unit has so far been showing a good performance in setting up IT system required to operate new voter database with both financial and technical support from ESP. Voters data captured by the new registration system are being consolidated at the district and national level and is expected to be completed in the next 5-6 months.

Based on the discussion with IT officers, the unit has primarily been busy with setting up of the new system and thus the task of preparation of maintenance plan did not fall into priority. The review of the progress and discussions with the IT officers reveal that there are three critical issues to make it sustainable. First, is purely related to technology. The current software does not have capacity to provide data in the format required by National ID Project and vital registration system. For this, an additional layer needs to be introduced to the system. Assessment has already been carried out by ESP consultant which also has estimated time and cost. As per the estimate, it takes at least one year to do the job. Immediate ECN decision on this issue should, therefore, be the priority.

The other two are related to IT personnel and maintenance plan. IT department has prepared and submitted the proposal on personnel requirements at HQs and district level. As per the proposal, there will be need for a position of Joint Secretary, 2 Under Secretary, 2 IT Engineers and 4 IT Technicians at the HQs level and 2 Computer Operator at each DEOs for keeping the system running and maintenance. Given the size of the system

expanded to 75 districts and the plan to extend upto the VDC level in future, the proposal appears to be reasonable. The commission should make a decision on the requirement and initiate recruitment process at earliest possible so that the system gets appropriate IT personnel in time. The IT unit needs to elaborate the present proposal with job description, plan for mobilization of Computer Operators and justification for each of the positions.

Maintenance plan with estimated cost per annum based on different scenarios such as with and without updating of voter register and corresponding plan for arrangements of resources should be of an utmost priority for sustainable running of the IT system. In view of the complexity of linking the electoral database with vital registration system, it is likely that ECN will need to have plan for updating the voter list at least for next five years if everything as planned goes well. Depending on the new electoral system and election requirements in near future, there could be a scenario where the commission may require organizing elections every year-national, federal and local (!). There should be an IT plan also for such evolving demands.

2.2.7 Physical Infrastructure Development

As targeted, bench marking of election resource centers in strategic locations based on the experience of constituent assembly election has been completed and work towards establishment of resource centers in 5 locations namely Biratnagar, Chitwan, Pokhara, Nepalgunj and Dhangadi is in progress. The resource centers will be equipped with warehouse and office buildings the construction work of which is underway. One of the targets was also to acquire land for ten additional local offices. Requests and proposals have been received from different DEOs for land acquisition. They are, however, pending further actions.

Analysis and suggestions

Learning from the constituent assembly elections, ECN has made considerable achievements towards building infrastructure necessary for organized management and administration of elections. The establishment of resource centers in the strategic locations will not only enhance ECN capacity to timely deliver logistics to the electoral process but also facilitate future elections under politically restructured Nepal.

Having resources is one thing and managing the available resources is another. Resources can become master of people when people fail to master to use them. The same principle can apply to the resource centers if proper instruments with appropriate resources for sustained management of the resource centers are not put in place. ECN has a plan which can be further sharpened by incorporating the elements such as at least five year maintenance plan with appropriate allocation of resources to implement, human resource capable of organizing and managing electoral logistics and warehouse, feasibility analysis of using the resource centers for other purposes during off season (meaning when there is no need of the extra space for electoral activities) and electoral materials acquisition,

storage, distribution, retrieval and maintenance plan and commensurate instruments for implementation.

The optimum use of resource centers is also linked with the capacity of DEOs in terms of office premise, material storage space and logistics management. ECN should expedite the DEOs land acquisition proposals so that they improve their capacity.

2.2.8 Effective Collaboration with Stakeholders

The SP has established targets at introducing permanent mechanism at central and local levels for regular interaction with stakeholders, establishing and operating an election information center along with a library and collaborating with political parties for their institutional strengthening. ECN is close to achieve election information center target as the construction of EIC building is expected to be completed soon. Although ECN is in touch with all the stakeholders through avenues such as interaction events, workshops, conferences and meeting on different issues of electoral concerns, no formal mechanism has been set up yet. Similar is the case with collaboration with political parties for their institutional strengthening.

Analysis and suggestions

Collaboration with stakeholders is critical in ensuring shared flow of information, generate support to implement each stage of electoral cycle and tap the opportunities in support of electoral activities of ECN. The SP has identified 17 categories of stakeholders including international community. ECN has mobilized Judiciary, government and administration, security agencies, government employees and teachers, election experts and technical experts, civil society leaders and personalities, human rights activists, observers, school management committee, professional associations, media, international community and above all voters, in one way or other to make voter registration process happen. Government, administration and international community have been critical in generating resources and providing necessary support to new voter registration process. This time around Judiciary's role was commendable in smoothing over the obstacles that occurred at the middle of the process. Without Judiciary's verdict in favor of the process, it would not have been possible for ECN to move with the program. Other stakeholders have been equally instrumental in educating and encouraging the voters to register and create favorable environment. ECN used different venues and means such as seminar and workshops, meetings, interaction events at different levels, and dissemination of information through media to build collaboration with the stakeholders. The efforts were instrumental in making new voter registration drive to move.

Learning from the past experience, ECN now need to regularize the collaboration process also through creation of formal mechanisms and instruments to make the collaboration stronger and more effective. Its collaboration with media and political parties has not been as effective as expected. Both are critical in making electoral process smoother, transparent and yet vibrant. One way to enhance collaboration with media is to provide

them opportunities, such as training on electoral reporting, to learn about electoral reporting followed by invitations to attend stakeholders meetings. Similar approach can be adopted to enhance collaboration with political parties. ECN has, in fact, already implemented this by organizing interaction programs on electoral processes in the past.

One form of mechanism would be monthly meeting of stakeholders on at least monthly basis to discuss/inform about progress or activities to be implemented in immediate future, or new electoral law, or procedures, or any issue that demands stakeholders support, or it could be just discussion on over all electoral processes. The invitation for participation may not necessarily be sent to every stakeholder, depending on the nature of issues to be discussed. In any case, media and political parties should be invited.

It is not easy to make this successfully happen for it needs highly sensitive professional skills to handle the participants and make sure that no backfiring information goes out. For this, ECN needs to establish a unit which could be named as external relation or stakeholder's relation consisting of a team headed by a highly competent under secretary. As the SP has specified the stakeholders, the second name can be better option. The same unit can also be entrusted with other tasks such as coordination with observers and institutional capacity building of political parties. DEOs can take the same lead at their level under the guidance of this unit.

On the institutional capacity building of political parties, ECN needs to identify the areas in which it can extend cooperation to political parties. If cooperation package not properly designed, it can be very sensitive issue and can blur the ECN boundaries in terms of its independence and neutrality by sending message to the public that ECN is doing politics by training political parties how to institutionalize their politics. The message has to be very clear from the very outset. ECN lives in voters and is there to serve voters' cause not one or other political party. Political parties are there because of voters and therefore need to be capable of at least complying the electoral rules and regulations in order to compete in the elections. This can be one of the justifications for ECN and aim the package at building their institutional capacity in the area of compliance rather than overall institution of the party.

One of the best options for reaching this target can be to prepare a training package on how to comply electoral laws on different aspects starting from submission of application for candidacy, campaign expenses, penalties and methods of internal monitoring by political parties. The training unit can run such training on regular basis once the training facilities in EIC are up and running. The package can consist of modules on different issues so that the political parties can send their staff for training according to nature of job. Such training should never be organized outside the ECN compound in order to maintain neutrality and impartiality.

2.2.9 Research and Development

It is one of the dearest goals of the SP with four targets. They were analysis of experiences from CA elections to feed in the electoral process, research facility at EIC, development of indicators of core election activities and publication of quarterly newsletter. ECN has already met the target of quarterly newsletter and work is in progress to build research facility at EIC. A descriptive detailed report of CA elections has been prepared but the information has not been analyzed yet. Similar is the case of development of indicators of core election activities.

Analysis and suggestions

The concept of research for policy inputs has not evolved yet in ECN. Like in many other EMBs, post and past election analysis of election results with the aim to feed the overall political process and thereby introduction of improvement in the electoral process has always been in the least priority. In fact it is as important as elections themselves in order to have better outcomes of elections. The results of any election have far reaching impact on the polity of a country; their negative impacts can be reduced by feeding the political process with empirical facts.

It is never late even in this regard. ECN can and should start doing research on how the electoral process in Nepal evolved and how it impacted in changing the political process based on the results starting right from the first democratic elections held in 1958 to 2008 CA elections and disseminate it to the political process with empirical findings. This can immensely help the political leaders to build their perspective on future electoral system. Not only this, it can tremendously help ECN to make better informed policy and operational decisions. The future research endeavors should focus on this.

How to do this? There are two ways to do this. The review of ECN documents reveals that there is a potential skill to do such research within ECN staffs provided that they get some training on research and analysis tools/techniques and motivational environment which can be created by conferring rewards in terms of annual monetary award, extra leave days and/or even just sincere appreciation of the work. This can be a best approach for action research. The second way is to encourage PhD students of social sciences to undertake policy research on electoral process of Nepal by providing research facilities and grants based on the quality of the proposals.

ECN monitoring and evaluation process has not been as effective as expected not because there is no will and capacity but because there are no indicators for ECN electoral activities. Monitoring without indicators is preparing rice seedlings without land to cultivate them. Indicators are as important for effective monitoring and evaluation as the appropriate land for rice seedling. Development of indicators should thus be one of the priorities of ECN if it wishes to see the best results of the SP.

The question is again how to do this? The answer this time around is very easy. Use BRIDGE talent!

2.2.10 Reform in Monitoring and Evaluation System

Reform in monitoring and evaluation system is one of the critical goals of the SP to achieve its targets. Stronger the system better the results.

ECN has made efforts to put monitoring system into place. A committee under the leadership of one commissioner was set up with mandate on monitoring and implementations of the SP as soon as the decision was made to enforce the SP. TORs were provided which specified 9 tasks for the committee.

In line with one of the targets set in reform in voters roll goal, monitoring and coordination committee was formed at HQs which was extended to four levels down: regional, district, VDC and registration center. TORs were provided to the committees of each level. The establishment of monitoring and coordination committee had significantly helped smooth over the problems encountered during the registration process. A comprehensive monitoring report was prepared upon the completion of field monitoring which, among others, documents the issues encountered and ways and means used to resolve them.

The other mechanism used to monitor and evaluate the registration process was quarterly review meetings and annual evaluation workshops of DEOs. Both of them were very useful in making assessment of progress status. In addition, the annual reports and quarterly newsletters have been indirectly contributing to the monitoring and evaluation activities of ECN.

No work has been initiated in developing monitoring indicators, an essential element of effective monitoring.

Analysis and suggestions

Although ECN has made considerable efforts to make monitoring and evaluation a regular mechanism, systematic monitoring system has not yet been evolved. Out of 9 tasks assigned to the high level monitoring committee, only the last one is related to monitoring and supervision and rests are linked to implementation of the plan. This is an indication of monitoring in least priority. The committee was successful in achieving results as demanded by its mandate. Obviously, on the monitoring part, the committee has, however, been not as strong as required. The reason behind is clear. The TORs emphasis was on implementation not on monitoring.

The other reason of weak monitoring of SP implementation is absence of monitoring indicators. ECN has not yet taken initiative to develop monitoring indicators.

ECN should establish a monitoring committee at earliest possible. The composition of the committee should be not more than 5 headed by a Commissioner. Since the possibility of conflict of interest is high if all the members of the committee are from within EC, inclusion of an independent professional or someone from other ministry or a donor representative to minimize the conflict and increase transparency may help reduce the conflict of interest to

some extent. The committee should monitor the progress on regular basis and produce quarterly monitoring reports including progress made, gaps, pending issues if any, and solutions to meet the gaps and smooth over the pending issues, and progress made by the committee during the period. The bi-monthly meeting of division heads should be the venue of regular monitoring and remove hurdles if any before they negatively impact achievement of the targets. The tasks of the committee should include arrangement for development of monitoring indicators, establishment of committees at district and program levels and provide guidance to the committees formed to monitor programs and implementation of SP at the district level.

2.3 Implementation Arrangement and Mechanism

The SP was enforced in March 2008. An action plan was prepared towards implementation of the SP. An implementation arrangement was made by establishing a Committee under the leadership of a Commissioner with a mandate to harness all possible resources to achieve the targets. Each division and section was assigned related activities as shown in the Annex 3 of this report. An estimate of cost (2870 million Rupees) was also made when the commission decided to implement the plan.

Different instruments are in place to review the progress. Each division has a tradition to meet every two week and review the progress, see inconsistencies and coordinate activities among themselves. Each month all staffs meet to review the progress and discuss issues related to implementation of the SP. These instruments have been very useful both to build team and shared understanding among the key personnel.

The implementation arrangement was reasonably good as a result of which ECN has been able to achieve significant targets since the implementation of the SP.

Analysis and suggestions

As explained, ECN has made considerable efforts to put an effective implementation mechanism in place. The mechanism was successful in achieving certain targets to date particularly new voter registration system. Analysis of progress by each goal in the above sections does, however, indicate that the implementation mechanism would have been more effective if it had intertwined targets with resources. In this case, the existing organizational structure also had a role to play.

As per the present organizational structure, the secretariat has three divisions headed by Joint Secretaries. They are administration, legal and political parties and voter registration. Each division has sections to perform specific tasks (Annex-XXX). The way the tasks have been distributed to the divisions and their sections makes one question why there is a separate voter registration division but not an election division? Most interestingly, administration division has election section entrusted with responsibilities related to election management. Voter registration, a part of election management, is a division and election management is squeezed to a section. This does not sound logical.

Unlike in the past, election management now hugely involves professional and technical know how and thus more operational than merely administrative. In order to have coherent system of management, the organizational structure is needed to be crafted to meet the operational needs. Although introduction of overall changes in the existing structure may not be feasible in immediate future as it involves legal and resource issues that would need more time to resolve, ECN should re-organize existing structure by changing voter registration division into election management division. Election, logistics, currently both under administration section, voter registration, voter education, training, and computer sections should be brought into this division. As these changes do not involve any addition financial and legal implications, ECN can make this reform immediately. This will enhance the operational capacity of ECN by making all relevant activities tuned to election operation and institutional memory, currently a grave issue, and streamline SP targets as well.

2.4 Funding Sources and Expenditure

ECN has been very effective in mobilizing different sources to fund the implementation of SP. Although it was difficult to obtain accurate figures obtained from different sources and spent during the period, the available figures indicate that over 2156 millions of Rupees have been spent so far to achieve the targets explained above. Both bi-lateral and multilateral donors have been instrumental in supporting and gearing ECN drive. In the total spending, their cash contribution amounts over 33% (Table 1) excluding assistance extended by DANIDA and USAID in other areas of reform in electoral processes.

Australia, Japan, European Union, DFID, USAID, Denmark and UNDP extended their financial support through two different funding mechanisms. They are Nepal Peace Trust Fund and UNDP Basket Fund. Other bilateral donors such as Denmark, Norway and India also contributed to the implementation process by providing fund for technical assistance in electoral reform process and Electronic Voting Machine respectively.

Apparently, the government spending was considerable pointing to high level of commitment to the electoral process. The table below presents summary figures disaggregated by year and funding sources.

Source	Expenditure*			Total
	FY 2065/066 RS (in million)	FY 2066/067 RS (in million)	FY 2067/068 RS (in million)	
Government	308.7	180	938	1426.9
Nepal Peace Trust Fund (NPTF)	38.9	0.85	0	39.8
UNDP Basket Fund	49	438.3	170.1	657.5
DANIDA	0	22	0	21.6
INDIA (EVM)	10	0	0	10.2
Total	407	641	1185	2156
Government including 30% of NPTF				1438.84
Donors				717.16

Source: ECN Annual Reports and UNDP/ESP Project Document

1 USD= 71 RS (estimated from exchange rate of the last three years)

Note: The above figures do not include NPTF for 2067/068 and the cost of TA extended by IFES, Norway through IFES, IDEA, DFID and Danida HUGOU.

UNDP Basket Fund includes budget for 2009, 2010 and 2011.

Analysis and Suggestion

ECN has effectively harnessed all sources for funding implementation of the SP. ECN has accordingly achieved results.

It is the finding of the evaluator that ECN would have been more efficient in achieving targets if they were tagged with resources before funding was sought. The targets and action plan were set without adequate consideration of financial, human resource and time implications, which is also well reflected in the SP itself. Monetary and human resources seem to have been allocated to the targets, except for voter registration, as and when they were available. As the time is a critical factor determining the cost of any activity which was not specified in the action plan, some targets could have been achieved at less cost than spent due to time difference or vice versa. In the absence of such information as estimated time, money and human resource set to achieve a given target, it is also difficult to make judgments whether a specific target was met efficiently or not. In addition, the monitoring and evaluation system can not work effectively in the absence of such information. Even for forecasting of budgetary requirements for sustained continuation of achieved targets and ensuring sustained sources of funding, time, human resources and finance must be specified before actual allocation.

The existing financial management capacity of ECN is not at par for financial management of strategic plan. The government accounting system in Nepal has limited scope for financial analysis which needs to be expanded in order for effective and efficient implementation of strategic plan. It is imperative to align the strategic targets and goals to account headings in order to make the spending transparent and efficient. It is, however, very difficult to do so with current accounting system of the government for the existing account heads are mainly for regular budgeting with limited headings for program budgeting.

On the current finance management capacity of ECN, the inability to prepare financial status report of pilot voter registration project funded by DANIDA even after a year of completion explains the situation. There is an urgent need for concerted effort to improve the capacity in this area. No target, however, seems to be in place for capacity building of account section at the same level as other areas of ECN. With the current capacity, it would be very difficult for ECN to sustain outcomes of strategic plan as it would require exhaustive analysis of financial implications and corresponding system for financial management. It is, however, beyond the scope of this evaluation to offer an appropriate solution to this problem except offering a suggestion to seriously look into this matter.

Another area of concern for ECN with respect to financial management should be to think in advance about reduction of its dependency on donors for funding. The existing scenario of funding sources suggests that ECN will have to depend heavily on donor funding to sustain the achievements so far made and to implement the remaining targets. This is not a good sign from the perspective of ECN vision and mission established in the SP. This also suggests that ECN needs to revisit the SP, analyze the targets from sustainability point of view and revise them, if necessary, with specification of time, money and human resource requirements. This exercise will also help ECN to see how long there will be need for donor funding and to which area.

The current funding comes from two basket funds: NPTF and UNDP. The fund to both baskets comes from international community. Questions are being raised why from two basket funds? This is also an issue that ECN needs to think on. Based on the analysis of the current situation, it appears that ECN will need to continue with present arrangements for some time. Although NPTF arrangement is a short term arrangement and is due to complete its phase in next over six months, it is a good mechanism from the perspective of long term capacity building of ECN since there is no element of technical assistance and ECN has to be accountable for every spending. In this case, ECN has to manage the fund by itself which demands enhanced capacity of ECN in financial management, accounting and procurement to be able to maintain transparency. Unlike this mechanism, UNDP basket fund arrangement has provision of in house technical assistance and separate financial, accounting and procurement mechanisms. This arrangement has immensely helped ECN smooth over unprecedented problems in terms of both financial and technical nature. Without assistance of UNDP/ESP, it would have been very difficult for ECN to manage the problems of procurement of both materials and technical services of utmost necessity to implement the new voter registration system. With this approach, ECN will, however, not grow if it continues receiving it. Therefore, ECN must make a cut off point to be technically capable of doing its business without any external technical support. It should also be one of the key targets in the SP.

2.5 Technical Assistance

One of the key factors in making ECN able to achieve its SP targets is technical assistance. UNDP/ESP, IFES and International IDEA have immensely helped ECN in improving its capacity in every aspect of electoral management. Their support in organizing and conducting BRIDGE training, technical assistance to voter education program, electoral system reform and new voter registration system has been critical in making these events happen. In addition, ECN has also been able to utilize technical assistance of independent consultants both national and international towards achievement of the targets.

Analysis and Suggestions

ECN has been receiving technical assistance since the first democratic elections held after restoration of democracy in 1990 in one or other form. It is one of the reasons for ECN's distinct functioning today. The mutual learning process never ends. However, it is important

for both the donors and ECN to make critical assessment of progress made in learning on a periodic basis so that both can mutually see whether there is a need for further customized learning. It is also important for improvement in TA approaches. Therefore, ECN should establish a mechanism for conduct of such critical learning assessment once at least in six months where TA and ECN staffs critically evaluate progress in mutual learning. The stakeholder relation unit can be entrusted also with this task.

3. CONCLUSION

ECN has made considerable achievements in different aspects of its capacity building leading to enhanced management of electoral process through implementation of its first five year strategic plan. If all the targets are met within plan period and next elections are held at the end of full implementation of SP, ECN can deliver a much better elections. In any case, elections based on electronic voter register, whether using EVM or ballot papers, will be fairer and freer than the previous elections. It can be expected that there be no reports on the cases such as a qualified voter was disqualified to vote as some one else had casted vote in his or her name.

The thrust of building capacity in every respect of electoral management has to continue with new vigor. As revealed from this evaluation, this process can be further enhanced by review and revision of strategic plan incorporating measures to meet the identified gaps and prioritization of targets. The revision process will also allow ECN to take new developments into account and consequently the targets achieved more effectively and efficiently within the plan period.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluative analysis of progress made towards meeting the goals and targets suggests that there are number of areas where ECN can introduce improvement measures to achieve the strategic targets leading to the goals within plan period. Suggestions have been made with possible options under each goal in the above sections. Key strategic recommendations are summarized here.

4.1 Review and revision of strategic plan: As revealed, the goals and targets are not coherently presented with specific resources required to meet them. As a result, it has been difficult to coordinate the activities within sections. There are also some critical issues such as security, gender and logistics that have not been included in the plan even though ECN has been taking those issues into consideration when it implements its various programs such as recent voter registration and education. They are security, gender and logistics. Reformulation exercise will allow ECN to incorporate all missing elements, reorganize the targets in priority order and make it more comprehensive, coherent and easy to implement. A well designed workshop of ECN officers would be the best approach to do this. ESP can be requested to extend TA to this end.

- 4.2 Sustainability assessment:** ECN has and has been introducing new measures to improve the electoral process. They include biometric voter registration, electronic noting machine and resource centers in strategic locations. They all are resource intensive ventures and need carefully designed maintenance plan in order to sustain them. A plan for feasibility study of EVM is already in place which is also expected to take sustainability issue into consideration and a detailed maintenance plan. Such sustainability assessment should also be carried out for new voter registration and resource centers, and a detailed maintenance plan should be in place.
- 4.3 Strengthen institutional memory:** Retention of institutional memory has always been a problem with ECN. A number of efforts have been made to introduce measure to retention competent staffs in ECN and no measure has so far worked. The efforts to create a core electoral team or election service should continue. These will take time therefore an immediate option is recommended to minimize the loss of institutional memory. ECN should immediately introduce handover-take over mechanism before any staff member is transferred and enforce strong record keeping system (hard copy synchronized with soft copy filling system). This will help retain institutional memory to a large extent. (ECN can also consider expansion of its services to elections of professional groups, NGOs, user groups and even student unions in this regards. This can also be one factor to retain staff as they will have space to be engaged even beyond elections).
- 4.4 Establish Monitoring and Evaluation Committee: M and E** of the SP has been very weak in the past. In order to achieve better results, ECN should immediately establish a permanent **M and E Committee** under the leadership of one of the commissioner. One of the members of the committee is recommended to be drawn from outside ECN. He or she could be an independent professional, a representative from donor community or M & E expert from National Planning Commission. This will help minimize the conflict of interest and make the monitoring process transparent.
- 4.5 Introduce changes in existing organizational structure** to make it SP, as a matter of fact modern electoral management approach, friendly. The existing voter registration division is recommended to be named as election management division and the sections related to election management and operation such as voter registration, election, logistics, computer, trainings and voter education should be brought into umbrella of this division. This will tremendously help streamline the SP targets, coordinated implementation and retention of institutional memory too. A proposed structure is attached in Annex 5.

ANNEX-1 TERMS OF REFERENCE



UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. POSITION INFORMATION

Title: National Mid-Term Evaluation Expert for Strategic Plan for the ECN

Department/Unit: UNDP Electoral Support Project (ESP)

Reports to : ESP Project Management

Duty Station : Kathmandu

Expected Places of Travel : N/A

Duration of Assignment: Thirty working days (August-September 2011)

The Consultant will be based in the offices of the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN). ESP administration shall provide him/her with logistical support for activities related to this contract.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Background:

The Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) is recognized as an independent constitutional body, responsible for holding free and fair elections. The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 provided the ECN with a Chief Election Commissioner and four members. The commission is supported by a secretariat led by a secretary of the Government of Nepal. Currently, the secretariat has 583 staff, of which approximately 100 are in the central offices while the rest are deployed in the field offices/ districts. All these employees are civil servants. The ECN has district offices in all 75 districts headed by Gazetted Class III Officers. Each district has a total of six to eight staff, depending on the size of the population.

The Electoral Support Project (ESP) consists of a four year technical assistance initiative for the inter-elections period of 2008 until 2012. The ESP aims to build a sustainable and enduring institutional and professional capacity within the ECN which could be easily and effectively employed in future elections. ESP is supporting the ECN in eight major activities. Strategic plan implementation, monitoring and gender inclusion is one of the main activities supported by the

ESP. In the ESP project document, signed in August 2008 by both the ECN and UNDP, it is stated that a key activity is that: “a multi-year strategic plan, including gender inclusion, is produced, adopted and implemented and guides the ECN in the full attainment of its mission, vision and set goals and objectives.”

The ECN published its five-year Strategic Plan (2009-13) in March 2009 with vision, mission, guiding principles, goals and targets along with the implementation modality. The plan includes a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity and threat) analysis. The purpose of formulating this plan was to increase the management capacity and skills of the ECN to make election management more credible and effective. In the strategic plan it was stated that a mid-term evaluation will be carried out during 2011-12 and a final evaluation in 2015.⁵ Following this plan, the ECN intends to conduct a mid-term evaluation of the plan by an independent, external expert. The ESP is providing assistance to conduct this evaluation.

Evaluation Criteria:

The mid-term evaluation would be “formative” in nature which also serves the monitoring function of the plan. It will use criteria such as efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and sensibility to social and gender inclusion. The strategic plan has clearly stated goals and targets. The mid-term evaluation expert will assess and review the desired outcomes and strategies undertaken and will then evaluate whether or not those outcomes are achieved. If targets are not met, the expert will need to reassess how the targets can be met in the remaining timeframe. The 2009 strategic plan will be expanded to contain areas of activities, programs, resources etc and the ECN will form a steering committee to monitor its activities.⁶ The evaluation will study these activities along with the targets/goals mentioned in the strategic plan.

Key Evaluation Questions:

The following are the key questions for the proposed mid-term evaluation:

- Did the ECN achieve the desired outcomes as stated in the Strategic Plan? If not, why?
- Did the ECN make the best use of its resources to achieve its results?
- Has the ECN been efficient in implementing its activities?
- To what extent has the ECN been able to build and promote its partnerships with other relevant stakeholders to achieve greater results?
- To what extent has the ECN's and other stakeholders' interventions been institutionalised within the ECN to ensure its sustainability?
- Have the implementing partners been effective in providing support to the ECN in effectively implementing its five year strategic Plan (2009-2013)?
- How effective has the ECN been in promoting gender and social inclusion in the electoral cycle?

⁵ Strategic Plan of the Election Commission of Nepal, Kantipath, Kathmandu, p.9

⁶ Ibid p.24

Methodology:

- Review the relevant background documents including the strategic plan and other reports such as the quarterly and yearly progress review of the ECN reported to the Government of Nepal.
- Obtain initial briefings from UNDP, ESP and ECN on the objectives and scope of the evaluation and clarify any issues as required. Modify TOR based on mutual agreement, if needed.
- Consult relevant stakeholders/partners of the ECN.
- Organise participatory stakeholders' workshop to examine the relevant issues.
- Collect relevant information through meetings, consultative sessions, field visits, etc.
- Draft the report and make a presentation of findings and recommendations to the ESP and the ECN.
- Finalise the report with comments and inputs from various stakeholders and implementing partners.

III. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF ASSIGNMENT

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to assess the overall progress of the outputs/targets and their contributions to the outcome/goals as well as intended impacts taking into account the current changed context and the challenges being faced by the ECN. The study will suggest suitable ways to address any challenges.

The objectives of the assignment are to:

- Evaluate the progress towards achieving targets as identified in the strategic plan.
- Review the effectiveness of the interventions/ activities and their impact on capacity building of the ECN.
- Review sustainability of the achievements made by the ECN.
- Review the implementation modality and monitoring mechanism of the strategic plan, identifying any possible future interventions.
- Develop recommendations for introducing appropriate changes into the strategic plan.

IV. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

Under the direct supervision of the ESP project management and in close coordination with an assigned joint secretary of the ECN, the expert will produce the following deliverables
Preliminary Findings Report – A presentation on findings to key stakeholders orally and in writing will be made prior to the commencement of the study. The purpose is to provide an opportunity for validation and elaboration of the evaluator's observations and analysis.

Draft Evaluation Report – Within three weeks of the assignment the expert will submit a draft evaluation report to UNDP.

Final Evaluation Report – Within two weeks of receiving comments from stakeholders, the expert will submit a final mid-term evaluation report.

Evaluation Report Outline

The Evaluation Report shall include the following components:

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction / Background
3. Objectives
4. Methodology
5. Analysis
6. Findings
7. Lessons learnt
8. Recommendations

Relevant Annexes, for example: list of people interviewed, list of acronyms, evaluation work plan and TOR, key reference documents etc.

The expert will take the overall responsibility for the quality and timely submission of the evaluation reports to the UNDP country office.

V. RECRUITMENT QUALIFICATIONS

Education:	Advanced university degree in Project Management/ Development Planning or related field.
Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 10 years experience in the field of monitoring and evaluation. Experience with Election Management Body in Nepal or abroad would be an asset. • Work experience with UNDP or other international organisations will be preferred. • Strong analytical skills, strategic and creative thinking. Ability to produce the outputs agreed within a limited timeframe.
Language Requirements:	Strong verbal and written English language skills and demonstrated ability to communicate effectively.

VI. OTHER SELECTION CRITERIA

- Sound knowledge of results based management and strategic planning.
- The ECN will be closely consulted and involved in the recruitment process of hiring this consultant.

ANNEX-2: PEOPLE MET

Mr. Neel Kantha Uprety, Acting Chief Commissioner, ECN
Mr. Dolakh B Gurung, Commissioner, ECN
Dr. Ayodhee Prasad Yadav, Commissioner, ECN
Mr. Kishor Thapa, Secretary, ECN
Mr. Sharada Prasad Trital, Joint Secretary, Voter Registration Division, ECN
Mr. Madhu Prasad Regmi, Joint Secretary, Legal and Political Party Registration Division, ECN
Mr. Rajendra Prasad Sharma, Joint Secretary, Administration Division, ECN
Mr. Komal Prasad Dhamala, Under Secretary, Planning, Training and Research Section, ECN
Mr. Tulsi Prasad Gautam, Under Secretary, Administration, ECN
Mr. Laxmi Sharan Ghimire, Under Secretary, VR Section, ECN
Mr. Gopal Prasad Aryal, Under Secretary, VR Section, ECN
Mr. Marika Prasad Shrestha, Senior Computer Officer, Computer Section, ECN
Mr. Luis Martinez-Betanzos, Project Manager, UNDP/ESP
Mr. Kundan Das Shrestha, Deputy Project Manager, ESP/UNDP
Mr. Prabhat Kumar, National GIS Officer, ESP/UNDP
Ms. Salina Joshi, Gender Consultant, ESP/UNDP
Mr. Sachin Karmacharya, Voter Registration Coordination Officer, ESP/UNDP
Mr. Sujit Gopal Shrestha, National IT Specialist, ESP/UNDP
Ms. Nikila Shrestha, National EEIC Coordinator, ESP/UNDP
Mr. Bhash Raj Rijal, Section Officer, Planning, Training and Research Section, ECN
Mr. Ram Gobinda Aryal, Computer Officer, Computer Section, ECN
Mr. Murari Shivakoti, Governance Advisor, DANIDA
Mr. Gopal Gurung, Program Officer, JICA
Ms. GARCIA AL CUBILLA Diana, European Union
Mr. Allan Wall, Country Director, IFES, Nepal

ANNEX-3: PARTICIPANTS OF INTERACTION MEETING WITH ECN

Mr. Neel Kantha Uprety, Acting Chief Commissioner, ECN
Mr. Dolakh B Gurung, Commissioner, ECN
Dr. Ayodhee Prasad Yadav, Commissioner, ECN
Mr. Kishor Thapa, Secretary, ECN
Mr. Sharada Prasad Trital, Joint Secretary, Voter Registration Division, ECN
Mr. Madhu Prasad Regmi, Joint Secretary, Legal and Political Party Registration Division, ECN
Mr. Rajendra Prasad Sharma, Joint Secretary, Administration Division, ECN
Mr. Komal Prasad Dhamala, Under Secretary, Planning, Training and Research Section, ECN
Mr. Tulsi Prasad Gautam, Under Secretary, Administration, ECN
Mr. Laxmi Sharan Ghimire, Under Secretary, VR Section, ECN
Mr. Gopal Prasad Aryal, Under Secretary, VR Section, ECN
Mr. Matrika Prasad Shrestha, Senior Computer Officer, Computer Section, ECN
Mr. Kundan Das Shrestha, Deputy Project Manager, ESP/UNDP
Mr. Lok Darshan Pandit, under Secretary, Election Section, ECN
Mr. Prabhat Kumar, National GIS Officer, ESP/UNDP
Mr. Sachin Karmacharya, Voter Registration Coordination Officer, ESP/UNDP
Mr. Sujit Gopal Shrestha, National IT Specialist, ESP/UNDP
Mr. Bhesh Raj Rijal, Section Officer, Planning, Training and Research Section, ECN
Mr. Ram Gobinda Aryal, Computer Officer, Computer Section, ECN

Main Concerns Raised

1. Institutional recording system in ECN is just evolving therefore many achievements made may not be found in the documents therefore the consultant should consult each of the section heads and collect information on achievements so far made, and reflect in the report.
2. The preliminary report seems to have not covered all the achievements.
3. The evaluation report should provide implementable recommendations.
4. The approach to evaluation should be positive.
5. The report should offer ways and means to decentralize ECN activities.
6. Revision of the SP should not be proposed as the document was the product of rigorous consultation with all the stakeholders.

ANNEX- 4: PARTICIPANTS OF INTERACTION MEETING WITH ECN AND DONOR

Mr. Sharada Prasad Trital, Joint Secretary, Voter Registration Division, ECN
Mr. Madhu Prasad Regmi, Joint Secretary, Legal and Political Party Registration Division, ECN
Mr. Komal Prasad Dhamala, Under Secretary, Planning, Training and Research Section, ECN
Mr. Tulsi Prasad Gautam, Under Secretary, Administration, ECN
Mr. Laxmi Sharan Ghimire, Under Secretary, VR Section, ECN
Mr. Gopal Prasad Aryal, Under Secretary, VR Section, ECN
Mr. Matrika Prasad Shrestha, Senior Computer Officer, Computer Section, ECN
Mr. Lok Darshan Pandit, under Secretary, Election Section, ECN
Mr. Asbjorn Lovbraek, Counsellor, Royal Norwegian Embassey, Kathmandu
Mr. Kundan Das Shrestha, Deputy Project Manager, ESP/UNDP
Mr. Prabhat Kumar, National GIS Officer, ESP/UNDP
Ms. Latika Pradhan, AusAID, Kathmandu
Mr. Murari Shivakoti, Governance Advisor, DANIDA
Mr. Gopal Gurung, Program Officer, JICA
Ms. GARCIA AL CUBILLA Diana, Eropean Union
Mr. Allan Wall, Country Director, IFES, Nepal
Mr. Ramesh Adhikary, Election/Legislative and Political Processes Specialist, USAID, Nepal
Mr. Bishnu Adhikary, Governance Advisor, Enabling State Programme
Ms. Sumitra Manandhar, USAID
Ms. Najia Hashemee, Election Advisor, UNDP/ESP

Main Comments and Concerns Raised

1. Overall the report outline is comprehensive and covers key issues.
2. Sustainability of new Voter Registration System should be looked into from technical, financial and administrative perspective.
3. A practical solution should be proposed to improve institutional memory of ECN.
4. The SP should also be assessed from financial management capacity of ECN perspective.
5. Decentralization of ECN activities must be emphasized and ways for engagement of DEOs in the policy making process should be figured out.
6. The idea of revision of the SP is good and all the DEOs must be involved in the revision process.
7. Concrete recommendations should be provided to complete unfinished tasks in the remaining period.

ANNEX- 5: PROGRESS MATRIX OF ECN SP

Goals/Strategic Targets	Planned Activities (Unofficial translation by evaluator from Nepali to English)	Lead Section	Planned Date of Completion	Inputs		Status
				National	Donors	
6.1 Reforms of the electoral system and election process						
6.1.1 Contribute to the Constitution-making process by providing recommendations based on national and international elections experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification and review/study of relevant documents• Study/review of national international experiences• Preparation of report with draft recommendations• Preparation of final recommendations and discussion with relevant CA committees• Submission of recommendations	Election	Not available (NA) NA NA NA NA	NA	NA	Completed and submitted to CA
6.1.2 Reform the electoral legal framework and organizational structure to allow the Commission to hold free and fair elections.	1. <u>Reform in electoral laws</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be prepared to come up with necessary laws within 15 days of promulgation of constitution to implement the adopted electoral system by identifying the areas and subjects in advance. Make study visits to countries which have federal system of governance in order to learn from their experiences.• Form a task force to prepare electoral laws in identified subject areas within 15 days of promulgation of constitution.• Draft electoral laws prepared by the task force within 3 months of its formation.• Discuss with and obtain suggestions	Legal	2011 NA NA NA			A concept paper on electoral system submitted to CA for consideration Yet to be formed Waiting for the constitution To be organized once the draft

Goals/Strategic Targets	Planned Activities (Unofficial translation by evaluator from Nepali to English)	Lead Section	Planned Date of Completion	Inputs		Status
				National	Donors	
	<p>from the key stakeholders including political parties, civil society and the government within 15 days of draft electoral laws submitted by the task force.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit the electoral laws with incorporation of comments and suggestions obtained from the stakeholders to the parliament through the government within 1 month of receipt of suggestions. <p>2. <u>Reform in organizational structure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake O and M study as envisaged by the strategic plan. • Reform organizational structure in cooperation with the government as recommended by the study. 	Administration	NA NA NA NA			<p>electoral laws are in place.</p> <p>To be done once the draft electoral laws in place</p> <p>A proposal prepared and is under discussion.</p> <p>Follow up with government pending new government policies approval for creation of new posts</p>
6.1.3 Formulate a consolidated legal framework incorporating basic electoral norms and standards.	Apply 6.1.2 (7)	Legal	2011			Work ongoing, pending new constitution
6.1.4 Delimit the maximum distance between a voter and a polling station to five kilometers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain updated PCML from district offices and Review/study. • Identify PCs falling beyond the standards. • Proposal for relocation of polling centers • Establishment of polling centers 	Election				Data collection completed, Processing pending implementation of GIS project
6.1.5 Limit the processing time for voting (vote cycle) to three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed study of present polling center procedures and management 	Election				Tested with EVM and the average time taken per

Goals/Strategic Targets	Planned Activities (Unofficial translation by evaluator from Nepali to English)	Lead Section	Planned Date of Completion	Inputs		Status
				National	Donors	
minutes (time taken from verifying a voter eligibility to casting a vote)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of a report with solutions to improve the process and management of polling centers Incorporation of solutions into the laws and guidelines to limit the process within given timeframe. 					voter is less than 3.
6.1.6 Use Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) for polling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare lessons learnt report based on experience with EVM used in the by elections. Feasibility study on use of EVM throughout the country. Arrangement of necessary materials and human resources based on the feasibility study Arrangements for procurement of or obtaining EVM Arrangements for distribution, storage and maintenance of EVM 	Election				The study process ongoing, mock exercise in 15 districts
6.1.7 Introduce Braille script on the ballot papers in at least five constituencies on a trial basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Necessary revision on election guidelines Identification of constituencies for use of Braille script Preparation of Brail Scripted ballot paper format Mock Brail script voting Make necessary arrangements while procuring EVM to have brail script 	Election				Feasibility study completed, feasible in machines not in ballot papers
6.1.8 Provide for accessibility of wheel chairs for the handicapped in at least one polling center per constituency if geographically feasible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make necessary changes in the election guidelines. Identify the constituency where the number of people with physical disability is very high. Prepare polling center layout standards to allow wheel chairs to move into the polling centers Construct RAMP in the selected 	Election				Data collected for the potential constituencies, rest planned to be undertaken before the elections

Goals/Strategic Targets	Planned Activities (Unofficial translation by evaluator from Nepali to English)	Lead Section	Planned Date of Completion	Inputs		Status
				National	Donors	
	polling centers as per the set standards					
6.1.9 Arrange for mobile voting in 100 or more bed hospitals and in old homes with more than 25 people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake feasibility study for arrangement of mobile polling centers Reflect changes in the laws accordingly Provision for mobile polling teams 	Election				Feasibility study completed, possible at old age houses not in the hospitals due to practical problems such as availability of documents with the patients and temporary nature of stay
6.1.10 Make the election staff more inclusive and encourage local participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of existing staffs (in terms of ethnic and geographic composition) Establishment of bases for making staffing inclusive Preparation of guidelines on inclusiveness 	Election				Possible only during the elections (can standards and guidelines be prepared?)
6.1.11 Conduct a feasibility study on pre-voting and absentee voting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment study of pre-voting and absentee voting Preparation of reports 	Election				Planned for current FY
6.1.12 Introduce an identification document with the voter photograph as a mandatory provision for voting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility study on use of citizenship certificate or any other documents as identity document Development of process and system based on the study report Make necessary changes in the related laws 	Election				Tested in the last by elections Study is yet to be carried out and the process for legal change has been initiated.
6.1.13 Conduct a feasibility study on in- and out-of-country voting for permanent and temporary residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a proposal and study Implement the recommendations of the report 	Voter Registration				Not yet carried out

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				National	Donors	
6.1.14 Devise an appropriate mechanism for monitoring the campaign expenses and its actual implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire suggestions on election expenditure monitoring from the political parties and civil society representatives with one month of promulgation of constitution for arrangement of necessary legal provisions Provide the suggestions obtained from the representatives to the Law Drafting Task Force within 15 days 	Legal				Legislation drafted.
6.1.15 Develop an effective mechanism to improve the quality of the domestic election observation.	Review of Election Observation Guideline/Manual 2064 in the context of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observer accreditation process Qualification of observers Observer selection criteria Training of observers Observer mobilization policy ECN Monitoring mechanism 	Planning and Training				Yet to be carried out
6.2 Reform of the Electoral Rolls						
6.2.1 Make the local electoral bodies responsible for collecting and updating the electoral rolls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake necessary amendments in Voter Registration Act, 2063 and Regulation allowing ECN to set basic conditions and delegate authority to local bodies for voter registration exercise and preparation of regulations and guidelines/manuals accordingly, Establishment of roles and responsibilities of HQs and district offices Formulation of policies in close consultation with VDC and 	Voter Registration				Qualitative assessment is ongoing. Actual process is planned to be carried in the current fiscal year. Work has not yet been initiated Work has not yet been initiated

Goals/Strategic Targets	Planned Activities (Unofficial translation by evaluator from Nepali to English)	Lead Section	Planned Date of Completion	Inputs		Status
				National	Donors	
	Municipality Associations on technical, physical and financial support to be provided by ECN to local bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of an effective system for monitoring the preparations and implementation of voter registration exercise 					Monitoring committees were established at all levels to monitor the ongoing voter registration process which was dissolved after the completion of nationwide phase of VR.
6.2.2 Start the process of preparing the electoral register to include the voter photograph.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrangement of legal and policy provisions based on the report of Voter Identification and Registration Committee, and search for resources Establish a Project Unit specifically for this purpose and prepare a project proposal Implement the project as per ECN's approved proposal 	Voter Registration				On going, phase one completed in 64 districts Done Ongoing
6.2.3 Increase the accuracy of the electoral register to more than 95 percent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revision and improvement in voter registration system Adopt voter education as an integral part of voter registration process 	Voter Registration				Achieved. VR Data cleaning is in the process Adopted
6.2.4 Update the electoral register throughout the year, closing it only during the 75 days before election day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make necessary amendments in the laws incorporating cut of date and closing date of registration Make necessary amendments in the laws to include provision of registration at the district office throughout the year and closed 75 days before the elections. (Registration teams will operate at the VDC level only during the period specified by ECN.) 	Voter Registration				Completed, VR open throughout the year, District offices are equipped to provide continuous voter registration. Preparations for amendments in the laws made pending final approvals

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				National	Donors	
6.3 Improvements in Voter Awareness						
6.3.1 Launch the voter education program on a regular basis and not just during the election process to reach out at least 95 % of the voters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a separate unit for voter education program or attach the program to a relevant section.• Internalize the fact that voter education is an integral part of election management at all levels: the commission, secretariat and district offices, prepare programs disaggregated by election stages such as registration process and other periods and implement according to the nature and approach of voter education program,• Develop a proposal in consultation and support of the government and donors for regular funding to the program	Voter Registration				Ad hoc unit to carry out VE Conceptualized but full internalization is yet to take place. The voter education program for voter registration period was organized and implemented in relatively successful manner Not yet prepared due to dedicated team within ECN
6.3.2 Conduct voter education programs in 17 different languages and sign language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formulate policy on education materials and translation in consultation with partner organizations, prepare a roster of partner organization, prepare an implementation program and implement in coordination.	Voter Registration				VR Conducted in 17 languages during the voter registration exercise
6.3.3 Endeavor to achieve a two-thirds voters' turnout.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement voter education in coordination with all key stakeholders during election as a mandatory activity.• Clean voter register in order to ascertain the actual number of voters	Voter Registration				Conceptually agreed. Preparations pending provision of dedicated VR unit Will be achieved once new voter register is in place

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				National	Donors	
6.4 Human Resource Development						
6.4.1 Provide for basic training on election management to all employees of the Election Commission.	Implement BRIDGE course at all levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selection of BRIDGE modular• Arrangement of training materials• Arrangement of training fund• Identification of participants• Selection of resource persons• Selection of training venue• Conduct of training (86) Various trainings such as computer, accounting and logistics management in addition to refresher trainings will be implemented from time to time aimed at capacity building of ECN staff	Planning, Training and Research				Significant progress made so far and is expected to be achieved within the plan period. 13 fully accredited BRIDGE national Facilitators and around 500 staff members have already been trained in different aspects of electoral process
6.4.2 Involve at least 10 percent of the employees in training, study program, research and observation related to election management, in or outside the country on a yearly basis.	Identify national and international training institutes. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the number of institutes through correspondence with national institutes.• Place request to international institutes for training.• Request ECs of countries organizing elections for accreditation of monitoring team from ECN• Correspond with Ministry of General Administration to allocate certain seats for training of ECN staff	Planning, Training and Research				Achieved. 83 staff members attended international electoral events in the fiscal years 2065/066-066/067

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				National	Donors	
6.4.3 Allocate 20 percent of the total amount of salary for training purposes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate fund for the purpose when planning annual budget Approach donors 	Planning, Training and Research				Although not specifically reflected in the budget, the overall spending is more than this %
6.4.4 Conduct a feasibility study on the formation of an election management core team in the Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake feasibility study based on present human resource management system Prepare a report 	Administration				Undertaken Report in place
6.4.5 Manage elections in 200 polling centers using, on a trial basis, staff directly recruited by the Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend laws as required Prepare necessary infrastructure to create electoral human resource force at the local level Organize mock polling exercise Arrange necessary resources to select and recruit all types of staff by ECN at selected polling centers (98) 	Administration				Concept developed. Further work need to be carried out
6.5 Reforms in Management						
6.5.1 Decentralize the preparation of the electoral register to the local level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement all the activities outlined under 6.3 in order to develop physical and human resource capacity of district offices 	Voter Registration				District offices have already been doing the work. Beyond district, concept evolving but no concrete work undertaken
6.5.2 Limit the preparation period for the elections to 90 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the present preparation process and identify the areas where the preparation time could be reduced Identify the measures to minimize the potential risk Make necessary amendments in related sections of act, regulations 	Administration				Staff aware of the need but no exercise carried out yet

Goals/Strategic Targets	Planned Activities (Unofficial translation by evaluator from Nepali to English)	Lead Section	Planned Date of Completion	Inputs		Status
				National	Donors	
	and guidelines • Develop 90 days preparation schedule					
6.5.3 Decentralize procurement and management of election materials to the local level except highly sensitive items.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish logistics standards based on detailed study of present logistics/electoral materials management system Develop election materials acquisition and procurement plan and guidelines Implement materials acquisition, storage and distribution management system 	Administration				<p>Exercise yet to be carried out</p> <p>Existing but not reviewed to improve Continuation of existing system, not reviewed from improvement perspective</p>
6.5.4 Entrust responsibility for determining the location of polling stations and the development of minimum infrastructure to the local level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify minimum requirements/infrastructure at the polling centers Prepare action plan for building infrastructure Implement the action plan through local election office 	Election				Not initiated yet.
6.5.5 Initiate a policy of managing elections through the local level offices of the Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify areas and undertake feasibility study as to what needs to be done to make local bodies capable of conduct and management of elections on their own Formulate policies based on the feasibility study Finalize the policies in consultation with the stakeholders and make necessary arrangements for implementation of the policies 	Administration				DEOs have been entrusted with responsibility for voter registration process, concrete policy for elections yet to evolve
6.5.6 Keep information of all the	• Undertake feasibility study of	Election				Completed,

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polling stations in the Geographic Information System (GIS) and at the district level.	Geographic Information System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build GIS based on the feasibility study • Establish the system at HQs and District Offices • Procure/acquire, installation and execution of GIS equipment as and when required • Prepare polling center materials list (PCLM) 					system under construction 'GIS unit established, further work in place 'Format prepared and sent to the district offices
6.6 Information Technology Advancement						
6.6.1 Make information technology accessible to all employees in the Commission and its field offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make IT training need assessment for non-class staff working in the commission and under it • Prepare training package and implement 	Computer, Printing and Photocopy				IT accessible to all staff, training package is yet to be implemented

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				National	Donors	
6.6.2 Link the Commission and its field offices through an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of LAN in every DEOs • Identify and connect appropriate internet service in each of DEOs 	Computer, Printing and Photocopy				Most DEOs are connected to public networks, no ECN LAN and WAN
6.6.3 Install management information systems in the Commission and its field offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis, design, development and implementation of inventory management system • Analysis, design, development and implementation of personnel information system • Training for 2 system administrator • Training for 80 system users 	Computer, Printing and Photocopy				Not carried out
6.6.4 Provide updated election information on the Internet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and study websites of other election commissions • Re-design web site • Create a website team and update on regular basis 	Computer, Printing and Photocopy				Election information based on old data available on the internet. Work in progress to redesign website to upload new data
6.6.5 Replace the existing voter registration system with a new Registration System.	Apply 6.2 (139)	Voter Registration				In progress, will take about 8 months to have complete data
6.7 Physical Infrastructure Development						
6.7.1 Establish election resource centers in strategic locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish resource center bench marks based on the review and study of resource centers used during CA elections • Identify strategic locations for establishment of resource centers • Prepare basic standards for 	Administration				<p>Done</p> <p>Identified at five locations In progress</p>

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				National	Donors	
	management of strategic resource centers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build and establish centers based on the set standards 					In progress
6.7.2 Construct warehouses and office buildings in strategic locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare designs and cost estimates for construction of warehouse and office building at the strategic locations Construct warehouses and office buildings at the strategic locations as per the design and estimates 	Administration				Completed In progress
6.7.3 Acquire land for ten additional local offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify districts where DEOs need land for construction of office building Make provision of budget for acquisition of land in those districts Make necessary legal and physical arrangements to secure acquired land 	Administration				In progress in some locations such as Surkhet
6.8 More Effective Collaboration with Stakeholders						
6.8.1 Establish a permanent mechanism at central and local levels for regular interaction with the stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility study on building a mechanism for regular interaction with the stakeholders identified by the Strategic Plan Prepare schedule as per the feasibility study and implement the mechanism Prepare guidelines as needed 	Administration				Interaction with stakeholders at all levels have been carried out on case by case basis, no feasibility study has however, been made to establish a permanent mechanism at HQs and District Levels
6.8.2 Establish and operate an election information center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake feasibility study Prepare design and standards applicable for establishment of 	Administration				Completed Completed

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				National	Donors	
along with a library.	multipurpose election information center (EIC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire necessary resources for the establishment of EIC • Establish EIC 					Software purchased rest in progress Building construction and other preparations in progress
6.8.3 Collaborate with the political parties for their institutional strengthening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a Task Force to identify areas of partnership between ECN and political parties as per the constitutional framework within a month of promulgation of new constitution • Identify and prepare a list of areas in which ECN and political parties can work together to build institutional capacity of political parties in consultation with the political parties and provide recommendation to the Task Force created for drafting of laws within a month of formation of the Task Force. 	Legal				Discussions with political parties ongoing but the task force is not formed yet Discussions have been made to identify relevant areas. The specific areas have not yet been identified.
6.9 Research and Development						
6.9.1 Conduct a study and analysis of all important issues such as voters' participation, voter education, campaign expenses, code of conduct and training, election observation, and election management during the Constituent Assembly election.	Undertake research on the said subjects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of research organizations • Invitation of proposals • Reach Contractual Agreement • Monitor • Get reports • Study and analyze the report • Implement programs for improvement in future (164) 	Planning, Training and Research				Very important target. A draft descriptive report has been prepared but no analysis has been made so far.

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				National	Donors	
6.9.2 Provide a research facility in the election information center for studies and research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access of researchers to EIC established as per sub-target 6.8.2 • Implement support programs to research organizations and individuals for research on subjects related to election based on the feasibility and needs.(166) 	Administration				Provisions made in the plan
6.9.3 Develop indicators of core election activities through various studies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop indicators based on the information obtained from research studies and workshops 	Research				A critical basis for monitoring and evaluation but no initiatives have so far been taken.
6.9.4 Disseminate information about the Commission's ongoing activities through quarterly bulletins and publish election related journals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of quarterly bulletin • Obtain information from other Ministries and prepare a detailed proposal based on the information for the commission • Execute events as per the approved proposals (170) 	Planning, Training and Research				Quarterly bulletin, annual reports and journals published.
6.10 Reform in Monitoring and Evaluation System						
6.10.1 Develop a monitoring and evaluation system with indicators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the system at all levels of ECN 	Planning, Training and Research				Monitoring and evaluation system for programs exist at all levels. ECN system wide (such as SP) monitoring and evaluation system and their indicators do not exist
6.10.2 Implement the developed monitoring and evaluation system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the system at all levels of ECN 	Planning, Training and Research				Pending implementation of 6.10.1
6.10.3 Carry out a mid-term and final	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake mid-term evaluation in order to establish the 	Planning, Training and				Mid-term evaluation in progress

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				National	Donors	
evaluation of the Strategic Plan in 2011/12 and 2014-15, respectively.	implementation status of the plan, and final evaluation to examine the effectiveness of the plan implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ independent research institute to undertake both the evaluation 	Research				

ANNEX 6: PROPOSED REVISION IN THE ORGANIZATION STRUTURE

