

ASSISTANCE TO THE GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION

(TC-96-08-21-9)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REQUESTER: Government of Guyana

EXECUTING AGENCY: Guyana Elections Commission/National Registration Center with the assistance of the UNDP

BENEFICIARIES: Guyana Elections Commission, the National Registration Center and the population of Guyana aged 14 years and older

FINANCING: IDB (net income FSO): US\$500,000
Local counterpart funding: US\$ 60,000
Total: US\$560,000

TERMS: Execution period: 1.5 years
Disbursement period: 2 years

ENVIRONMENTAL CLASSIFICATION: The Environmental Management Committee classified this project as a Category II operation on December 9, 1996.

OBJECTIVES: The objective of the assistance to the Guyana Elections Commission/National Registration Center is to build public confidence and acceptance of the electoral and registration systems in order to strengthen Guyana's democratic institutions. The program seeks to: (i) facilitate the administration of the 1997 general elections; (ii) ensure the continued transparency and institutionalization of the electoral process; (iii) use the national registration exercise to produce reliable voter's lists and voter identification cards; (iv) build the institutional capacity and sustainability of the Elections Commission/National Registration Center as a single institution in charge of all electoral and civil registration processes.

DESCRIPTION: The project would consist of technical and administrative assistance to the Guyana Elections Commission/National Registration Center for the purposes carrying out the immediate activities that are necessary for the administration of the 1997 elections. The project would address building the capacity of the Commission's administrative body while seeking to improve the electoral and

registration processes of the country. By providing personnel to build and maintain the national civil registry database, future voter registration exercises will be facilitated, thus ensuring an easier administration of future elections.

**EXCEPTION TO
POLICY:**

The UNDP shall be directly contracted to assist the executing agency.

**CONDITIONS PRIOR
TO FIRST
DISBURSEMENT:**

The UNDP shall be contracted by the Executing Agency prior to the first disbursement.

BENEFITS:

By providing assistance to the Elections Commission/NRC, the Bank is helping institutionalize Guyana's new democratic structures. The 1997 elections will be important to follow on the successes of the 1992 and 1994 elections and, taking into account their shortcomings, improve the transparency, efficiency and sustainability of the electoral process.

The Bank is supporting the work of the new institution that is responsible for Guyana's electoral administration and national civil registration process. The recruitment, hiring and training of qualified local professionals to work with the Elections Commission/National Registration Center will help improve the administration of the 1997 elections. The permanent core staff that remains after the elections will make both voter registration and civil registration more effective and cost-efficient.

RISKS:

The process of hiring personnel should be conducted carefully to prevent staff from resigning from their positions before the project has concluded. This has been a general problem in Guyana, since many skilled people trained to undertake specific technical tasks have either become employed by the private sector or have emigrated to other countries seeking greater opportunities. Proper training and incentives such as a proposed career path and above average pay scales should be emphasized in recruiting and hiring personnel for this project. Staff members of the Commission/NRC already receive a salary which is higher than other public sector employees, since their salary includes a special honorarium for the services they provide.

In case of a delay in the disbursement of Bank funding, the UNDP will provide an advance of funds to pre-finance project expenses such as the recruitment

and hiring of consultants or the purchase of equipment. UNDP funds spent in advance of available Bank funds will be reimbursed by the Bank.

**THE BANK'S
COUNTRY STRATEGY:**

The Bank's strategy for Guyana, set out in the Country Programming Paper and approved by the Board of Executive Directors in August 1995, established the following key objectives: (i) attainment and maintenance of a sound macroeconomic environment, requiring the reduction of the external debt burden and improvement of public sector efficiency; (ii) improvement of health and education systems; (iii) rehabilitation of economic infrastructure to restore productive capacity and efficiency; and (iv) establishment of systems to safeguard the integrity of the country's natural resource endowment. Improvement in all these areas is a necessary condition for sustained development.

I. BACKGROUND

A. Institutional framework for the Guyana Elections Commission

- 1.1 The 1980 Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana regulates the composition and function of the Guyana Elections Commission. It states that "elections shall be independently supervised by the Elections Commission...", and the Commission "shall exercise general direction and supervision over the registration of electors and the administrative conduct of all elections."
- 1.2 Of the seven members of the Commission, three are nominated by the ruling political party and three by the Parliamentary opposition party. The Chairman is chosen by the President of the Republic from a list of six names submitted by the opposition parties. The Chairman has the casting vote on the Commission.
- 1.3 The Elections Commission is a fully autonomous body. Such institutional independence from the executive branch has two advantages: (i) it allows the Commission to accelerate the implementation of decisions, especially on financial matters; and (ii) it enhances the integrity and credibility of the Commission among all political forces.
- 1.4 The National Registration Act of 1967 deals with the registration of electors. The compilation of the register is administered by the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Registration together with the National Registration Center (NRC) staff. This act, in effect, duplicates the functions of the Elections Commission and the NRC by assigning them separate roles in the administration and management of the voter and civil registries, respectively.
- 1.5 A 1996 amendment to the Elections Law establishes the authority of the Elections Commission over the Commissioner of Registration. The implication of this is that the Commission, which in the past has been responsible for voter registration, merged with the National Registration Center, which traditionally has maintained the National Civil Registry. The merger created a single, yet unnamed, institution that will be in charge of all registration processes and the administration of all future elections.
- 1.6 At present, the Elections Commission and NRC are in separate but adjacent buildings and the staff of each office still work somewhat independently. The responsibilities are not clearly defined and many lack technical experience, training and preparation. Under the Commission's new mandate, it will have to identify and remedy and duplication of employment or activities between itself and the NRC.

B. Permanence of the Elections Commission/National Registration Center

- 1.7 The Commission traditionally has been a provisional body, without sufficient institutional memory to effectively conduct regular and periodic elections. Now that it is charged with the administration of all elections (presidential, parliamentary, regional, local) and also the maintenance of the national civil and voter's register, the permanence of the Elections Commission/NRC must be ensured. Most "employees" of the Commission have been hired on a temporary basis during an election period, thus leaving the Commission severely understaffed in the inter-electoral periods. The Commissioners themselves, according to the Constitution, must vacate their offices "at the expiration of three months from the date of the election." It is likely that another Commission will be constituted to supervise the administration of the local elections to be held in 1998.
- 1.8 In so far as the permanence and future responsibilities of the Elections Commission/NRC are concerned, appropriate legislation still must be proposed and approved to reform the electoral laws and the electoral provisions of the Constitution. The reforms should aim to form a single, permanent, effective and financially sustainable institution responsible for the supervision and management of elections and the maintenance of a permanent civil/voters register. Changes in the legislation should not be made immediately prior to the 1997 elections or they will run the risk of disrupting the elections. The laws should be changed to give the Elections Commission/NRC a firm mandate to implement what is expected of it.

C. Recent electoral history

- 1.9 The administration of the 1992 general elections and the 1994 local and municipal elections in Guyana was considered much improved over previous electoral events in Guyana's history. While the elections were judged by local and international observers to be a success by having achieved many advances, much remains to be done to assure that future elections will be secure, accurate, reliable and sustainable.
- 1.10 Deficiencies surrounding the preparation of an up-to-date voter's list, the Elections Commission's short term in office, operational delays in the technical administration of the elections, and lack of voter education materials, among other issues, caused problems during the 1992 and 1994 elections.

D. Needs for the 1997 general elections

- 1.11 Some corrective measures aimed at facilitating the election process have taken place since the current Commission was installed in early 1996. In order to strengthen the Elections Commission and support its work, several needs assessment studies and comprehensive implementation plans have been developed by the UNDP and IFES to improve the administration of the upcoming general elections scheduled for October 1997.

- 1.12 As the needs assessment documents emphasize, the Guyana Elections Commission must undertake many important immediate activities prior to the 1997 elections in order to assure that they will be transparent, free and fair. These activities include: the production and delivery of voter identification cards to all registered voters; the production of a provisional and final voter's list; the recruitment and training of approximately 7000 polling officers; the identification of voting sites; voter education; the production and distribution of electoral materials such as ballot boxes, ballots, voting screens and indelible ink.
- 1.13 A house-to-house registration exercise was completed in October 1996 that registered all Guyanese 14 years of age and older. The computerized information gathered from the registration process will now be used in the production of voter identification cards and the voters lists for eligible voters (Guyanese over the age of 18 years). Additionally, the database can be used as the foundation upon which to build a new national civil registry and produce a new national identity card (information on Guyanese aged 14 years and younger still needs to be collected).
- 1.14 As the October 1997 general elections and the 1998 local elections approach, it will be necessary to improve the efficiency of the Elections Commission/NRC. In order to accomplish institutional sustainability the Commission needs a professional, well-trained, full-time staff that can administer electoral events. In the inter-electoral period, a permanent core staff is needed at the Commission/NRC to maintain the voter and civil registries and to adequately plan for future elections.

II. OBJECTIVES

A. General objective

- 2.1 The objective of the assistance to the Guyana Elections Commission/National Registration Center is to build public confidence and acceptance of the electoral and registration systems in order to strengthen Guyana's democratic institutions.

B. Specific objectives

- 2.2 The specific objectives of the project are: (i) to facilitate the administration of the 1997 general elections, (ii) to ensure the continued transparency and institutionalization of the electoral process, (iii) to use the national registration exercise to produce reliable voter's lists and voter identification cards, (iv) to build the institutional capacity and sustainability of the Elections Commission/National Registration Center as a single institution in charge of all electoral and civil registration processes.

III. DESCRIPTION

A. Activities

- 3.1 The project would consist of technical and administrative assistance to the Guyana Elections Commission/National Registration Center for the purposes carrying out the immediate activities that are necessary for the administration of the 1997 elections. The project would address building the capacity of the Commission's administrative body while seeking to improve the electoral and registration processes of the country. By providing personnel to build and maintain the national civil registry database, future voter registration exercises will be facilitated, thus ensuring an easier administration of future elections.

1. Technical and administrative assistance

- 3.2 The Executing Agency will be responsible for recruiting and hiring 39 local consultants and five international experts who will facilitate the administration of the 1997 elections. (See Annex for Terms of Reference.) Of the 39 local consultants, there will be 5 managers, 10 technical staff, 2 computer systems experts and 2 computer programmers, 10 administrative staff, 5 support staff, and 5 training staff.
- 3.3 The five managers would oversee the other personnel and the implementation of the project's activities. They would hold the positions of project administrator, technical services coordinator, administrative officer, finance officer and training coordinator.
- 3.4 The technical staff, the computer systems experts and the computer programmers would work closely with the managers in the administration of the elections: the management of computerized registration data, the design and production of the voter identification cards and voter's lists, the identification of the polling places, the design of the voter education campaign, the recruitment of the polling officials, monitoring the spending and accounting of international donor assistance, etc.
- 3.5 Administrative staff would provide the necessary services in order for the managers and technical staff to carry out their duties, including word processing, typing, photocopying and other secretarial tasks. Support staff would serve in positions such as couriers, drivers, security guards, and other office assistants.

2. Training

- 3.6 Training would be offered by the training staff to the appropriate local consultants in the following areas: activity planning for an electoral event, competitive procurement procedures for supplies and services, financial management, data management, accountability

procedures, reporting mechanisms, computer hardware management and programming. Where appropriate, training materials and manuals would be developed for use in the training courses.

- 3.7 Training also would strengthen the support mechanisms of the Elections Commission/National Registration Center in the coming years, including the identification of leadership roles and responsibilities and the definition of the ongoing work of the institution that ultimately will be responsible for the managing the national civil registry.
- 3.8 Whenever possible, the project's trainers will be chosen from local Guyanese experts. Four international technical consultants will be contracted to work closely with the local consultants to train them in project administration and computer management. Training by international experts would help ensure professionalism, and provide additional authority and credibility to those personnel who receive the training.
- 3.9 Trainees would be expected to perform their jobs independently and in turn, be able to train other staff members. The transfer of technology would be a continuous process so that if personnel resign or leave their positions, others would be available as replacements and could be trained in a simple and efficient manner. The training materials that are produced also would help train future staff members.
- 3.10 Finally, one international management consultant with a specialization in electoral systems will be hired to work with the Elections Commission/NRC and conduct a needs assessment for the future work of the institution. The study will focus on staffing, salaries, budgets, management, and organization. In addition, the consultant will make recommendations on planning for future elections, maintaining the voter and civil registries, making the Elections Commission/NRC sustainable (including necessary legislative reforms), producing a national identification card and sharing the computerized information collected in the national civil registry with other government agencies and institutions.

3. Equipment

- 3.11 Equipment purchased for the purposes of this project would be considered an investment for future electoral and registration exercises. Based on several needs assessment studies, the Elections Commission/NRC lacks modern office equipment. This project would fund the purchase of the computer hardware, software and other supplies needed to support the staff in its production of the voter registration lists (preliminary and final), and the modernization of the national civil registry.

4. Materials

- 3.12 Training materials and manuals would be produced to prepare the newly-hired personnel in management, technical and administrative skills. Materials would be combined with hands-on experience in the areas of database design, activity planning and execution, accounting and computer hardware and software operation.

B. Execution, supervision, reporting and follow-up

1. Execution

- 3.13 The Guyana Elections Commission is the executing agency for this project. In order to carry out the activities detailed in this technical cooperation, the Commission will directly contract the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to assist in project implementation. To date, the UNDP has provided assistance to the Guyana Elections Commission/National Registration Center in serving as the coordinator of the international technical and financial contributions to the Commission for the purposes of the 1997 elections.

- 3.14 The UNDP has been working with the Elections Commission for several years and has conducted several needs assessment studies for the 1997 elections. In 1996, the UNDP has provided the Elections Commission with some computer equipment and the services of an electoral administrator and a logistics consultant. The UNDP field office in Guyana comprises four UNDP staff members that are fully dedicated to project implementation including recruitment of personnel, procurement of goods and services, and financial controls.

2. Supervision and reports

- 3.15 In its role as coordinator for the international support to the Elections Commission, the UNDP holds regular meetings with the Commissioners to discuss the progress toward the administration of the 1997 elections. These regular meetings will allow the Commission to closely supervise the technical and financial aspects of the Bank's project. The UNDP also is funding a local consultant who is working in the Elections Commission office and providing technical assistance to the Commissioners and staff. By means of this consultant, the UNDP has an open channel of communication with the Commission.

- 3.16 The Executing agency would generate the following reports:

- a. Initial report: Within 30 days from contract signature, the executing agency would present a report which would include: (i) progress in recruiting local and international staff; (ii) planned acquisition and execution of physical investments; and (iii) a workplan for project implementation, including all major activities required to fulfill project objectives and corresponding staff responsibilities.

- b. Mid-term report: This report would detail adherence to the workplan, adjustments that were deemed necessary, and overall achievement of project objectives.
- c. Final report: A final report would be presented by the executing agency at the conclusion of project implementation. This report would summarize project accomplishments and shortcomings, and principal outputs. A financial report detailing the expenditure of the Bank's contribution will be included. There will also be a description of expected future activities.

3. Follow-up

- 3.17 While much of the local consultants' work will be to assist in the administration of the 1997 elections, many of their duties will lead to the institutional sustainability of the Elections Commission/National Registration Center. Following the elections, several local consultants hired for the project would remain in place as a permanent core staff to maintain the voter and civil registries and the keep the work of the Elections Commission/National Registration Center ongoing. The permanent staff, as proposed by the Commission itself, would fill the positions of the Chief Electoral Officer, the Executive Secretary, the Financial Officer, a Computer Systems expert, and several secretaries/support staff.
- 3.18 The needs assessment study that will be prepared by the international management consultant will serve as a basis upon which to organize the tasks and staff responsibilities of the Elections Commission/NRC following the 1997 elections. Particular attention will be paid to defining leadership roles and the ongoing work of the institution.

C. Costs and Financing

- 3.19 The Bank's contribution to this project will be used to supplement existing efforts to assist the Guyana Elections Commission/National Registration Center. The Government of Guyana has been joined by international donors (UNDP, the European Union, the Canadian International Development Agency, United States Agency for International Development, the British High Commission) in providing financing for the 1997 elections.
- 3.20 The estimated cost of the proposed project is US\$560,000, according to the following budget:

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	IDB	GOVT OF GY	TOTAL
1.1	Professional Services Firms (UNDP): Fees	25,000		25,000
2.1	Local Consultants (39): Compensation	1 YEAR		
	Project Administrator	15,000		15,000
	Technical Services Coordinator	12,000		12,000
	Administrative Officer	12,000		12,000
	Financial Officer	12,000		12,000
	Technical Staff (10)	90,000		90,000
	Administrative Staff (10)	60,000		60,000
	Training Coordinator	5,000		5,000
	Training Consultants (5)	25,000		25,000
	Computer Systems Experts (2)	20,000		20,000
	Computer Programmers (2)	20,000		20,000
	Support Personnel (5)		30,000	30,000
	Subtotal	271,000	30,000	301,000
2.2	International Consultants (5): Fees	2 months		
	Training Consultants (2)	36,000		36,000
	Computer Systems Experts (2)	36,000		36,000
	Management Consultant	18,000		18,000
	Subtotal	90,000	0	90,000
2.5.1.	International Consultants: Travel and Per Diem			
	5 tickets X 2 trips x \$1,000	10,000		10,000
	60 days X \$134	40,000		40,000
	Subtotal	50,000	0	50,000
6.	General Support			
6.3.1.	Equipment Purchase Computers/Software	43,000	20,000	63,000
6.4.1.	Teaching Materials	6,000	3,000	9,000
	Subtotal	49,000	23,000	72,000
98.	Contingencies	15,000	0	15,000
	Subtotal	15,000	0	15,000
TOTAL		500,000	60,000	560,000

- 3.21 The Bank's contribution of US\$500,000 would be non-reimbursable and drawn on the net income of the Fund for Special Operations (FOE). It would cover some of the activities involved in the administration of the 1997 elections and help to make the Elections Commission/National Registration Center sustainable. The contribution would include the following expenses: (i) compensation for local consultants to be recruited and hired as the administrative body of the Elections Commission/National Registration Center, (ii) fees, travel and per diem for international consultants to advise and train the Commission's local consultants, (iii) the purchase and maintenance of equipment, computers and software to help produce the voters identification cards, produce the voter's lists and update the national civil registry, and (iv) the production of materials and manuals to train

the administrative body of the Elections Commission/National Registration Center.

- 3.22 The UNDP will follow the Bank's procurement procedures for the purchase of equipment, computers and software. UNDP procurement procedures are decentralized, thus allowing the field office to avail itself of an efficient mechanism to procure goods and services on both local and international markets.
- 3.23 In case of a delay in the disbursement of Bank funding, the UNDP will provide an advance of funds to pre-finance project expenses such as the recruitment and hiring of consultants or the purchase of equipment. As a condition of the first disbursement, the UNDP must be contracted to assist in project implementation. UNDP funds spent in advance of available Bank funds will be reimbursed by the Bank.

IV. BENEFITS AND RISKS

A. Benefits

- 4.1 By providing assistance to the Elections Commission/NRC, the Bank is helping institutionalize Guyana's new democratic structures. The 1997 elections will be important to follow on the successes of the 1992 and 1994 elections and, taking into account their shortcomings, improve the transparency, efficiency and sustainability of the electoral process.
- 4.2 The Bank is supporting the work of the new institution that is responsible for Guyana's electoral administration and national civil registration process. The recruitment, hiring and training of qualified local professionals to work with the Elections Commission/National Registration Center will help improve the administration of the 1997 elections. The permanent core staff that remains after the elections will make both voter registration and civil registration more effective and cost-efficient.

B. Risks

- 4.3 The process of hiring personnel should be conducted carefully to prevent staff from resigning from their positions before the project has concluded. This has been a general problem in Guyana, since many skilled people trained to undertake specific technical tasks have either become employed by the private sector or have emigrated to other countries seeking greater opportunities. Proper training and incentives such as a proposed career path and above average pay scales should be emphasized in recruiting and hiring personnel for this project. Staff members of the Commission/NRC already receive a salary which is higher than other public sector

employees, since their salary includes a special honorarium for the services they provide.

- 4.4 If possible, personnel contracts between the Elections Commission/NRC and the local staff should stipulate mutually agreed periods of time (1 year) before resignations can be tendered. Further provisions should be made in contracts for continuous training of hired personnel beyond their respective areas of expertise so that a transfer of skills and technology can be applied for the continuous support of the Elections Commission/NRC permanent operations.
- 4.5 In case of a delay in the disbursement of Bank funding, the UNDP will provide an advance of funds to pre-finance project expenses such as the recruitment and hiring of consultants or the purchase of equipment. UNDP funds spent in advance of available Bank funds will be reimbursed by the Bank.

V. EVALUATION

- 5.1 The evaluation of the present operation would be done through periodic meetings between the Country Office staff, the Elections Commission and the UNDP.
- 5.2 Both Bank headquarters and country office in Guyana will be involved in following up the development of this operation, and will generate reports which would be used by the Bank to better direct the execution and continuation of project activities.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

GUYANA. NON-REIMBURSABLE TECHNICAL COOPERATION
ASSISTANCE TO THE GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION PROGRAM

The Board of Executive Directors

RESOLVES:

1. That the President of the Bank, or such representative as he shall designate, is authorized, in the name and on behalf of the Bank, to enter into such agreements as may be necessary and to adopt such other measures as may be pertinent for the execution of the plan of operations referred to in Document AT-_____ with respect to a technical cooperation with the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, the purpose of which is to assist the Guyana Elections Commission.

2. That up to the sum of US\$500,000 or its equivalent in other currencies, is authorized for the purposes of this resolution, chargeable to the net income of the Fund for Special Operations.

3. That the above mentioned amount is to be provided on a non-reimbursable basis.