

Support to Building Institutional Capacities of the Electoral Management Bodies in Libya, Egypt and Tunisia

Joint effort by Romania and Mexico, facilitated by the United Nations Development Programme

The purpose of this concept note is to present a joint initiative – a triangulation project in the field of electoral assistance. It presents the background information and situation analysis, the justification for and the objectives, its key partners, activities as well as an estimative budget and management arrangements.

This triangulation project will be a joint effort of two providers of development cooperation - Romania and Mexico - in the field of electoral processes. The overall objective is to support the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and other key stakeholders involved in electoral processes in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt in building their institutional capacities to organize independent, free and fair elections. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its established offices in the respective countries, the sub-regional project on the ground and the Bratislava Regional Center program supporting new EU donors, will act as a facilitator.

Elections are a critical element of the UNDP's democratic governance work. Electoral assistance is one of the strongest areas in UNDP's portfolio, UNDP having been recognized by traditional donors as one of the leading assistance providers in the field of elections. The UNDP's permanent field presence, country knowledge and neutrality enable it to forge strong relationships with government officials and international donors, which result in a high profile role of coordinating donor assistance, as well as technical assistance and logistical support to international observers.

Background – The New ODA Cooperation Partnership with Romania:

This effort is part of the *New ODA Cooperation Partnership with Romania (2013-2015)*, an umbrella joint project of the Romanian MFA and UNDP that focuses on supporting Romania to become an effective, innovative and increasingly influential actor in development cooperation in order to achieve sustainable, scalable development impact in the priority countries of Romanian ODA. The ultimate objective of the project is that, by 2015, the Government becomes fully capable and equipped with the appropriate capacity to independently manage all parts of ODA project management cycle UNDP and Romania are working together to strengthen the long term vision and policy coherence of Romania's international development cooperation, consolidate national instruments for ODA management, delivery, monitoring and reporting, and to develop a triangulation support facility - a flexible demand-driven system of east-east cooperation to share Romania's transition experience. The project is managed by the *New Partnerships and Emerging Donors* team of the UNDP Regional Center for Europe and the CIS, via the project management unit in Bucharest. In addition, more broadly, the UNDP Regional Center is working to provide support to effective development cooperation of the new EU donors and to promote east-east cooperation.

Situation analysis:

The Arab region is experiencing a defining moment in its modern history, with millions of women and men across the region sending out a solid call for change. They have voiced their aspirations for a say in the decisions that affect their lives, and for transparent and accountable governance. For the first time in the region, several countries have taken decisive steps on the long road to democratic governance, but all are still undergoing the transition period with both successes and challenges along the way. **Egypt**, for instance, has been undergoing a tumultuous democratic transition for more than 2 years. Following the two years of dramatic and tumultuous events, Egypt's new Constitution stipulates that a National Elections Commission (NEC) is created with the responsibility to manage referendums, presidential, parliamentary and local elections. It is envisaged that Egypt will elect a new President in the first half of 2014 followed by new Parliamentary elections.

In **Libya**, the High National Elections Commission was established in 2012 with a mandate on voter registration, preparation, implementation, supervision and monitoring of elections. In July 2012, an interim legislature, the General National Congress, was elected. Elections of a Constitutional Drafting Assembly are currently underway. If the Assembly makes good progress on the constitution, a referendum is expected in late 2014, otherwise a new interim legislature is likely to be elected before October 2014.

Tunisia has never experienced democratic elections throughout its contemporary history until 2011. In 2011, however the Independent High Authority for the Elections had been established, known as ISIE, which was created to organise the elections held in October 2011 of a national constituent assembly, and whose mission came to an end after the announcement of the final results. However, given the successful management of the elections and the international good practices in the field, the clear choice of the Tunisian political actors was to establish a permanent institution for the management of elections. The law for the establishment of the electoral management body was issued in December 2012 and the Independent High Authority for Elections was established in January 2014, in the same month when the Constitution was adopted. Tunisia is now expected to elect a new parliament and president before the end of 2014.

Development issue to be addressed and objectives:

The **overall objective** of the triangulation initiative is to support the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and other key stakeholders involved in electoral processes in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt in building their institutional capacities to conduct and manage independent, free and fair elections. To this end, the project will use a combination of Romanian and Mexican experience and expertise to support the capacity building efforts.

More concretely, the project will:

- *Facilitate* best practice, lessons learned and experience sharing between the elections practitioners in the two donor countries, Romania and Mexico, and their homologues in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya;
- *Strengthen* the direct cooperation, communication and networking and facilitate new opportunities for development cooperation initiatives between the EMBs and other key stakeholders involved in electoral processes in Romania, Mexico, Libya, Tunisia and Egypt, leading to a greater awareness of common problems and a wider access to available

knowledge and experience, as well as to the creation of new knowledge in tackling development problems

- *Promote* and strengthen the collective self-reliance among countries of the “Global South” through the exchange of experiences and expertise, and the development of their complementary capacities.

Justification and relevance: why a triangulation project?

While definitions vary depending on context, *triangular cooperation* normally involves two countries that are sharing knowledge and experience and provide assistance and a partner country (or a group of countries) that is/are the main beneficiaries. Very often triangular cooperation is facilitated by an international organization that may serve as a neutral platform, a catalyst and / or a “knowledge broker”, as well as an implementer. In this particular case, the UNDP, through its established offices in the respective countries, the sub-regional project on the ground and the Bratislava Regional Center program supporting new EU donors, will act as a facilitator of the triangular partnership. Moreover, the needs assessment and the project strategy have been guided to a great extent by the UNDP sub-regional project in the Arab States and its direct experience on the ground. Thus, integrating all the three beneficiary countries (Libya, Egypt and Tunisia) into this initiative rather than focusing on only one of them became the clear optimal approach that would ensure both sustainability of and coordination with the current efforts in the field and also the logical continuation of the already existing UNDP-IFE (the Federal Electoral Institute) cooperation in the region.

Why Romania and Mexico?

Having gone through complex democratic transition processes themselves, Romania and Mexico have gathered plenty of experiences, good practices and lessons learned that can be shared with other countries that continue their efforts to build a strong and democratic state. In this context, both Romania and Mexico position electoral assistance and democratic governance as important thematic priorities in their development cooperation policies. Thus, Romanian Permanent Electoral Authority (PEA) and IFE Mexico have been for many years actively participating in different cooperation networks and technical assistance projects at international level, widely contributing to the consolidation and promotion of the democratic principles and institutions around the world within a framework of shared responsibility.

Moreover, the Romanian PEA and IFE Mexico have enjoyed a solid partnership during the last years, having shared experiences and conducted mutual study visits since 2010 on various thematic areas, such as financing political parties and electoral campaigns, electoral management, out of country voting and electoral administration.

Why UNDP?

In this context, UNDP can provide the critical space that connects the expertise of two countries to the benefit of the three Arab states, where the UNDP has a well-developed electoral assistance program and has enjoyed a very good cooperation with the public authorities during the last years.

The project will build on and follow up to previous Romanian initiatives supported by UNDP and addressed to the Arab States partners. In July 2011, around six months after the debut of the Arab

Spring, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNDP Romania/GPECS, the UN Electoral Assistance Division and the Romanian Permanent Electoral Authority were the among the first actors to go beyond the level of political declarations of support and organized the first comprehensive electoral processes/transition to democracy workshop dedicated to Egypt and Tunisia. This initiative was further followed up by a large variety of joint programs supported by UNDP, such as BRIDGE trainings and study visits. This project will also build on and complement a UNDP larger-scale sub-regional project in the Arab States that coordinates the electoral efforts in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, in view of ensuring the continuation and sustainability of results.

Activities and estimative budget:

As per the needs assessment guided by the UNDP sub-regional project in the Arab States and by the consultations with the beneficiary countries and the two providers of assistance (Romanian PEA and IFE Mexico), the key proposed activities to be undertaken through the triangulation project are the following:

Activity	Period/duration	Participants	Description	Budget	
Specialized workshop on electoral dispute resolution Tunis, Tunisia	2 days, April 2014 (training implemented by the UNDP sub-regional project in the Arab States)	2 reprs Mexico; 2 reprs Romania	Workshop on electoral dispute resolution in which framework 2 Mexican and 2 Romanian electoral practitioners will share knowledge, experience and best practices in the field with homologues from Egypt, Tunisia and Libya.	\$3.000 (Romanian MFA for Romanian reprs) \$4.000 (IFE Mexico for Mexican reprs)	UNDP BRC IFE Mexico
Study visit / workshop Romania	3 days, 25-27 May 2014 (Euro-Parliamentarian elections)	4 reprs Tunisia; 4 reprs Egypt; 4 reprs Libya; 2 reprs Mexico	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One day Euro-Parliamentarian elections observation that includes visits to key electoral institutions, i.e. Constitutional Court, Central Electoral Bureau; Ministry of Foreign Affairs (OCV), etc 2 day workshop to include facilitated discussions, experience and best practice sharing between the 5 countries and real time presentations on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) voter registration; b) women in elections; c) financing political parties and electoral campaigns; (detailed curricula to be developed). Simultaneous Romanian- Arabic- Spanish translation will be provided. 	\$24.000 (Romanian MFA) \$4.000 (IFE Mexico for Mexican reprs)	UNDP BRC IFE Mexico
Workshop on awareness raising on electoral dispute resolution Cairo, Egypt	2 days, May 2014 (training implemented by the UNDP sub-regional project in the Arab States)	2 reprs Mexico; 2 reprs Romania	Workshop on electoral dispute resolution in which framework 2 Mexican and 2 Romanian electoral practitioners will share knowledge, experience and best practices in the field with homologues from Egypt, Tunisia and Libya.	\$3.000 (Romanian MFA for Romanian reprs) \$4.000 (IFE Mexico for Mexican reprs)	UNDP BRC IFE Mexico

				reprs)	
Study visit / workshop Mexico	3 days, July 2015 (Parliamentary elections)	3 reprs Tunisia; 3 reprs Egypt; 3 reprs Libya; 2 reprs Romania	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One day Parliamentarian/legislative elections observation that includes visits to key electoral institutions, i.e. Electoral Tribunal; Ministry of Foreign Affairs (OCV), etc 2. 2 day workshop to include facilitated discussions, experience and best practice sharing between the 5 countries and real time presentations on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) electoral administration; b) regional networking, sharing Mexico's and Romania's experience as members and/or presidents of various international / regional organizations; c) awareness raising and voter education. <p>(detailed curricula to be developed). Simultaneous English – Arabic - Spanish translation will be provided.</p>	\$28.000 (IFE Mexico) \$12.000 (Romanian MFA for participant flight tkts)	IFE Mexico
TOTAL				\$42.000 Romanian MFA \$40.000 IFE Mexico	

Project partners and their roles:

Romanian PEA:

The Permanent Electoral Authority (PEA) of Romania is an independent administrative public institution which ensures the effective organization and conduct of free and fair electoral processes that guarantee appropriate conditions for exercising the voting rights, equal opportunities in political competition and transparency in funding of political parties activity and electoral campaigns. During its 9 years of activity, the PEA has established solid bilateral relations with electoral management bodies (EMBs) around the world, as well as strong relations with regional and international bodies. International cooperation has provided a critical space for the PEA to express its commitment to support other countries' efforts to hold free and fair elections, by facilitating networking, building synergies and generating joint projects for the advancement of democracy and credible elections. In 2014, the Romanian PEA is the President of ACEEEO (Association of European Election Officials), a regional organization that facilitates and fosters greater cooperation between EMB's in Europe and worldwide.

Since 2004, the PEA has provided electoral assistance and shared its experience with electoral management bodies worldwide in various modalities: organizing study visits for EMBs from countries such as Iraq (2004, 2005), Moldova (2006), Malaysia (2010), Indonesia (2011), Egypt (2011); sending PEA representatives to election observation missions in Azerbaijan (2005, 2010), Iraq (2005), Bulgaria (2007), Moldova (2007, 2009, 2011), US (2008), Hungary (2010), Tunisia (2011), Egypt (2012), Georgia (2012); organizing and substantively leading various international workshops (e.g. *ACEEEO Conference on the security of elections Mamaia*, 2008; *Out of country voting workshop*, Bucharest, 2010; *Workshop on democratic transformations*, Bucharest, 2011; *BRIDGE workshops*, Bucharest 2012 and 2013; *Regional workshop on preventing and combating electoral fraud*, Bucharest 2012; etc), to name just a few. Moreover, the experiences shared at the 2011 workshop in



Bucharest inspired Tunisia set up a permanent independent election authority, Egypt imported the Romanian model on the election complaints adjudication system for the presidential elections, while Libya established a permanent independent election authority and expressed its strong interest in strengthening its collaboration with the Romanian PEA.

IFE Mexico:

The Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) is a public, permanent, autonomous, and independent organism bestowed with organizing federal elections (presidential and legislative) in Mexico. It was formally created in 1990, and has, since 1993, implemented a policy for systematically linking and cooperating with the international community. It resulted in the opportunity to encourage and actively take part in a wide range of projects and initiatives—both regional and worldwide—aimed at promoting and strengthening democratic institutions, laws and practices on the electoral field.

Since 1993, IFE has signed and renewed, in some cases, almost 40 agreements for exchange and cooperation that comprise a wide range of electoral authority bodies and international or regional institutions specialised in the promotion of democracy or in providing technical assistance, among which the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Association of European Electoral Officers (ACEEEO) and the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA). Also with that policy in mind, specialists and officials of the IFE have collaborated in 70 technical assistance missions in 35 countries on the American continent, Africa, Asia and Middle East.

The ultimate expression of IFE's efforts to participate in international cooperation is its initiative to create an International Centre for Electoral Research and Training. The key purpose of this centre is to support the strengthening and professionalizing processes of the electoral bodies through specialized training and programs. These programs are targeting the executive bodies of the institutions with an emphasis on medium and long term strategic planning and electoral management, through specialized exchange, training and research programs. Following this initiative, up to 2013 - 49 specialisation workshops have been organized in the field of electoral administration and justice in view of exchanging experiences, knowledge and best practices with electoral authorities from 14 countries in Africa, 9 in Latin America, and 3 in the Middle East.

Management arrangements:

The triangulation project at hand will be managerially supported by the **UNDP Regional Centre for Europe and the CIS** through its *New ODA Cooperation Partnership with Romania* project, that will: a) facilitate a set of well-defined capacity building activities addressed to elections practitioners in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya; b) create a mix of the appropriate Romanian and Mexican expertise in partnership with Romanian PEA and Mexican IFE; c) ensure the project management (implementation, monitoring and reporting, partnership management; financial management of the Romanian ODA funds). IFE Mexico will directly manage the Mexican cost-sharing contribution. The two specialized institutions – **IFE Mexico** and **Romanian PEA** – will be the main implementing partners.

The **UNDP Country Offices in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya** and the **sub-regional electoral assistance project** in the field will provide support and programmatic integration on the ground.