Concept Note

Event: **Global Electoral Organization Conference**

This draft note presents the proposal of a substantive Romanian presence at the *Global Electoral Organization (GEO) Conference* that will take place in Incheon/Seoul, Republic of Korea between 14 and 17 October 2013. This solid contribution of the Romanian Permanent Electoral Authority (PEA) to the GEO Conference goes under the New ODA Cooperation Partnership with Romania (2013-2015), a UNDP project that focuses on supporting Romania to become an effective, innovative and increasingly influential actor in development cooperation so it can achieve sustainable, scalable development impact in the countries that are a priority of Romanian ODA. The ultimate objective of the project is that, by 2015, the Government be fully capable and equipped with the appropriate capacity to manage all parts of ODA project management cycle by itself. One of the project components aims at strengthening the long-term vision and policy coherence of Romania's international development cooperation. More concretely, it aims to identify / organize a benchmark event that can enhance Romania's profile as a donor of development assistance. The event at hand will seek to increase Romania's visibility at the international level as ODA/electoral assistance provider by showcasing examples of good practices in the field with focus on sharing of transition knowledge and experience.

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 a leading assistance provider 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 funds, supporting the implementation of technical assistance and logistical support to international observers. This year, the UNDP co-organizes the GEO Conference for the first time, allowing the perfect opportunity to facilitate Romania's solid contribution to this unique global electoral conference. The UNDP's value added here is the capacity to mobilize national partners in sharing the country's democratic transition and electoral experience with EMBs around the world.

Background

The Global Electoral Organization (GEO) Conference will take place in Seoul, Republic of Korea between 15 and 17 October 2013 and will be hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Election Commission of the Republic of Korea (NEC). The GEO Conference is the leading international forum for election professionals and aims to bring together practitioners and experts to exchange knowledge and share experiences, to provide a forum for networking, to provoke debate and promote new initiatives. Participants will include over 300 election and democracy professionals representing national electoral management bodies from around the world, international electoral experts, regional election networks, academics, members of the diplomatic and donor communities, civil society networks and democracy assistance practitioners.

The theme of this year's conference is "Sustainable Electoral Processes, Strengthened Democracy". The discussions and experience sharing will focus on various aspects of the election process, including sustaining electoral integrity, capacity building and professional development of election officials, and promoting cost-effectiveness in electoral processes.

<u>Purpose and objectives:</u>

The Global Electoral Organization Conference is the biggest forum of electoral administrators and electoral practitioners in the world. It is the perfect opportunity to share experiences, achievements and discuss new ideas in the management of elections.

The **overall objective** of Romania's contribution to the GEO Conference is to support Romania strengthen one of its niches in the global development cooperation by connecting the Romanian experience and expertise to homologue institutions and electoral experts around the globe. PEA's participation in the forum will help Romania better position itself in the global development cooperation space and raise its profile as development assistance provider. Moreover, it will support the PEA in its efforts of becoming a regional leader in the field and in increasing its network of institutions and experts it cooperates with.

By supporting a substantive and consistent Romanian presence at the GEO conference, the Romanian PEA will:

- Share experiences, achievements and lessons learned with homologue international election practitioners and assistance providers structured by relevant themes
- Showcase its latest electoral knowledge, technology and initiatives
- Establish new and strengthen the existing networks with various EMBs around the world and practice communities
- Explore new opportunities for development cooperation initiatives with a focus on Romania's ODA partner countries

<u>Romania's substantive contribution to the GEO</u>:

1) **PEA's presence in the Knowledge Fair,** that will showcase knowledge products and publications, arrange stalls for mini-electoral training center, as well as other election-related innovations and cooperative achievements. The knowledge fair will facilitate appropriate exchange of experience and expertise with the participating institutions with the overall objective of strengthening electoral democracy worldwide. Examples of Romania's knowledge products/ publications/ innovations to be showcased during the fair include:

   a) Real-time presentations of the **Romanian electronic electoral register**, a centralized database comprising all Romanian citizens who have reached the age of 18 and has the right to vote. **Romania's competitive advantage:** Romania belongs to a small group of countries that have implemented a national electronic electoral register (Canada, South Korea, Brazil and Lithuania). The PEA has finalized the implementation of this project at the end of the past year and tested it recently with very good results. The electoral register is part of an ongoing process of implementation of a full electronic election management system. To the date, countries such as Moldova, Egypt, Tunisia and Libya (some of Romania's ODA partner states) have expressed strong interest in learning from the Romanian experience in view of developing similar electoral management instruments.

   b) Real-time presentations of the **IT software for polling stations**. In 2010 and 2011, during several parliamentary by-elections, the PEA implemented a pilot project on computerizing the electoral activities in polling stations. The software allows polling staff to look up voters in the electronic database and provide alerts on illegal voting attempts and was used to enter polling station results into electronic protocols, compile results and forward them to the Central Election Bureau. **Romania's competitive advantage:** only few countries in the

world have piloted such a tool (e.g. Lithuania in its 2011 municipal elections and 2012 parliamentary elections) and a number of state (e.g. the republic of Moldova) have shown interest in testing similar software.

c) Reports/brochures/presentations on **financing political parties and electoral campaigns.** Party financing in Romania has gradually evolved from very general provisions (almost a non-regulated filed)for the elections in 1990, to very specific regulations in 2012 parliamentary elections. The current regime on financing political parties is characterized by strict control over the public subsidy, frequent control activities and strict reporting regime. **Romania's competitive advantage:** Insofar, Moldova expressed a special interest in benefiting from the Romanian expertise in the field of political funding which is planned to be provided by the end of 2013.

d) Reports/brochures/presentations on **preventing and combating election frauds. A handbook on Romanian experiences.** The handbook was developed by the PEA in partnership with UNDP and the UN Electoral Assistance division (UNEAD), following the *Black Sea Regional Training on Preventing and Combating Electoral Fraud* which took place in Bucharest in May 2012.Due to the increasing focus worldwide on elections integrity it may serve as a valuable tool to all election practitioners.

e) Multimedia exhibition of materials/tools developed by the PEA in view of **educating and mobilizing young voters** (a special website and videos will be presented). Similar tools can be used as reference in similar campaigns.

f) Other materials/publications/compilations of relevant legal acts will be presented to support PEA's efforts in sharing its knowledge and experience in the field.

g) Promotional materials with MFA/ROAID logo and information.

2) **Key-note speaker** in two GEO Conference sessions, as per the official programme presented in Annex 1 below (session officially confirmed by the GEO organizers):

- Session on **Fraud and Manipulation** (presenting Romania's experience on transparency in financing political parties and electoral campaigns; achievements and good practices)

13:45 – 15:15   **SESSION 2, BREAKOUT SESSIONS: Threats to electoral integrity** The break-away sessions will provide an opportunity for participants to explore in-depth three different threats to electoral integrity and share experiences on how these threats have been addressed sustainably in different contexts:

Breakout 2 Fraud and Manipulation Preventing electoral fraud and manipulation: standards and the role of democratic citizenship education and electoral observation **Chair: Manuel Carrillo, IFE** **Speakers**: 1)   Judge Tamburini, Brazilian Election Commission 2)   Judge Damian Lubuva, Chairperson National Election Commission of Tanzania 3)   **Mr**. **Cristian-Alexandru Leahu, Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania**

- Session on **Assessing sustainable ICT** (presenting Romania's Electronic Electoral Register & other achievements and good practices in the field)

3) Substantive contribution and experience sharing by all Romanian PEA representatives during the three-day debates and discussions, with a special focus on the **Fraud and Manipulation** and **Assessing sustainable ICT** that represent two of the strongest Romanian PEA's niches in electoral assistance. All sessions of the conference, the Knowledge Fair and side events will also represent a real learning opportunity for all the participants.

The Permanent Electoral Authority (PEA) 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 bilateral relations with electoral management bodies (EMBs) worldwide as well as 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. PEA is a member of ACEEEO (Association of European Election Officials), a regional organization which facilitates and fosters greater cooperation between EMB's in Europe and worldwide, and will assume presidency of this organization in 2014.

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.

Participants: 4 representatives of the PEA; 1 representative of the MFA; 1 representative of UNDP.

Available budget: 25.000 USD, as per the project document and the 2013 Annual Work Plan:

Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount
30000 (MFA)	**71605 – Travel Tickets International** (6 participants: 4 PEA; 1 MFA; 1 UNDP)	7.200 USD
30000 (MFA)	**71615 – DSA International**	9.864 USD
30000 (MFA)	**71635 - Terminals**	912 USD
30000 (MFA)	**72415 – Courier Charges**	700 USD
30000 (MFA)	**74210 – Printing and Publications** (printing of the *Preventing and combating electoral frauds. A handbook on Romanian experiences,* 200 pcs; printing of the report on *Romanian experience in financing political parties and*	1.053 USD

	electoral campaigns – 200 pcs)	
30000 (MFA)	**74215 – Promotional Materials and Distribution** (roll-ups, ODA-RoAid promotional materials: USB sticks with all materials presented during the knowledge fair in the electronic version, Romanian ODA presentation materials, etc)	400 USD
30000 (MFA)	**74230 - audio-visual production** (Knowledge Fair: rental of 1 TV screen for real-time presentations of the: Romanian electronic electoral register; IT software for polling stations; website and videos created for the education and awareness campaign in view of mobilizing the young voters)	500 USD
30000 (MFA)	**75105 - Facilities & Administration (GMS)**	1.444 USD
30000 (MFA)	**TOTAL**	**22.073 USD**

PEA Contribution (direct payments, not through the UNDP Project):

Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount
PEA	**71605 – Travel Tickets International** (2 PEA participants)	2.400 USD
PEA	**71615 – DSA International**(accommodation and meals)	3.300 USD
PEA	**74210 – Printing and Publications** (printing of the PEA presentation brochures– 200 pcs)	400 USD
PEA	**TOTAL**	**6.100 USD**

Annex 1:

GEO Programme and A-WEB Inaugural Assembly (14-17 October):

Monday, 14 October	Tuesday, 15 October			Wednesday, 16 October			Thursday, 17 October
A – WEB (Association of World Electoral Bodies) Inaugural Assembly	**Opening Ceremony** **High Level Discussion** on the Global State of Elections and Democracy			**Plenary Session 3** **Capacity Building and Professional Development of Election Professionals** – Assessing Capacity and Training Needs			**Plenary Session 6** **Promoting Cost Effectiveness in Electoral Processes**
	Breakout 1 Capacity development of EMBs			**Breakout 2** Electoral Knowledge/ Information			**Breakout 3** International Assistance Programmes
	Plenary Session 1 **Sustaining Electoral Integrity**			**Plenary Session 4** **Capacity Building and Professional Development** – EMB Practice, Information and knowledge management, and assistance programmes (breakout reports)			**Plenary Session 7** Summary and Conclusions **Closing Ceremony**
	Lunch break			*Lunch break/Knowledge Fair*			*Lunch*
	Breakout 1 Exclusion: Women	**Breakout 2** Fraud and Manipulation	**Breakout 3** Electoral Violence	**Breakout 1** Stakeholder relationships	**Breakout 2** Retaining talent	**Breakout 3** Assessing sustainable ICT	
	Plenary Session 2 **Upholding integrity standards on inclusion, fraud prevention and electoral security** (breakout reports)			**Plenary Session 5 Capacity Building and Professional Development** – Stakeholder Relationships, retaining talent and sustainable ICT (breakout reports)			