



TENDER NOTICE FOR ELECTIONS RESEARCH

NRI FEASIBILITY STUDY INTO OPTIONS FOR ELECTRONIC COUNTING IN PNG

The National Research Institute through its Improving Governance Program is seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified researchers or a research team for the ‘NRI feasibility study into options for electronic counting in Papua New Guinea elections’ that will be conducted from March to September 2011. Interested applicants are asked to submit applications of no more than 12 A4 pages by the 28 February 2011.

Terms of Reference

Pillar:	Institutions Strengthening
Program:	Improving Governance
Project:	Electronic Counting in Papua New Guinea Elections
Project Code:	151.2.4
Project Manager:	Dr. Ray Anere

Objectives of Study

1. To review the current system of vote counting in Papua New Guinea elections in order identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current system.
2. To review:
 - a. the international literature to identify electronic counting practices that are appropriate to a PNG context;
 - b. the PNG literature, with a focus on past studies of PNG elections, to justify the need for improving counting in the elections; and
 - c. the trials on electronic counting conducted in the Rai Coast and other by-elections after 2007.
3. To outline a set of possible options for improving counting in PNG, including electronic counting.
4. To assess the electronic counting system (ECS) in terms of the following criteria:
 - a. sustainability (PNG’s institutional capacity to adapt to and maintain a new system);
 - b. appropriateness to a PNG cultural and political context (including high risk electorates, with particular reference to the Highlands Region);
 - c. resource implications (administrative, communications, human, training, technical, logistical, financial);
 - d. potential donor assistance that would be required to effectively and efficiently implement recommended changes;
 - e. capacity of PNG institutions to implement an improved system; and,
 - f. readiness to deliver an effective and reliable counting system, including electronic counting, possibly for the 2012 National General Elections in PNG and beyond.
5. To provide clear recommendations for PNG based on this assessment, after reviewing the best practices appropriate to the PNG cultural and political context.

Rationale

There are numerous problems in and associated with vote counting in PNG elections. Various election reports have made reference to irregularities in counting. However, a systematic study of options for improving the counting process, including electronic counting, has not been conducted. A background study on priorities for a free and fair election that includes issues in vote counting, by the NRI, is available to the successful bidder.

Key Issues

This study will need to review and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current system of vote counting in PNG. It will also assess how the system operates during counting and especially after the introduction of the Limited Preferential Voting system in the 2007 general elections. This election found that the exhaustive vote counting of second and third preferences has prolonged counting periods to several weeks in some electorates. Current counting practices have raised questions on the security of ballot papers and boxes, the trustworthiness of counting officials, the reliability and acceptance of results, the high costs to cover three to four weeks of counting, let alone time and manpower, the integrity of ballot papers and counting, and the strong likelihood of post-election disputes, and lengthy court cases. These and other issues, warrant a study on improving the counting system in PNG elections, including electronic counting.

As part of the desk-top study, the researcher/team should also review and assess the international options appropriate to a PNG context. When determining the appropriateness of international options to a PNG context, the researcher/team should consider the following criteria:

- countries which conduct nationwide electronic counting with high levels of public acceptance of results;
- examples where similar logistical, communications and human resource challenges are faced; and
- examples where eliminating irregularities by utilising electronic counting has been a top priority.

This study should also consider options for vote counting that have been predominantly domestically-funded, compared with donor-supported approaches.

Through both the desk-top review and stakeholder consultation, this study should assess the options that are most relevant to the PNG context. Knowledge and understanding of the PNG context can be gained by consulting past studies of PNG elections compiled by NRI and other organizations.

Finally, the stakeholder consultation should seek:

- to understand the present policy positions/thinking of key stakeholders on electronic counting;
- to understand the perceived constraints;
- to understand any issues in relation to electronic counting that may need to be addressed; and
- to conduct interviews with selected stakeholders who are keen to explore electronic counting practices.

Scope of Work

This work will involve:

1. A desk-top review of the PNG and international published and unpublished literature on counting mechanisms or methods used.
 - a. NRI to provide Endnote library (with attached PDF documents) with a comprehensive list of PNG literature and partial list of international literature.
 - b. Researcher/Team is expected to contribute other relevant literature, especially international, and supply revised Endnote library at completion of project.
2. Analysis of literature to develop and assess relevant preliminary options for improvement in counting, including electronic counting.
3. Stakeholder consultations – this may be a combination of workshops, group or individual surveys and will require some in-country work. NRI can negotiate to provide some level of assistance to coordinate in-country stakeholder consultation.
4. Further analysis of options in light of results of stakeholder consultation.
5. Development of recommendations based on criteria outlined in objectives of study.
6. Draft Report.
7. Final Report.
8. Seminar Launch.

Deliverables

Deliverables	Time frame (completion date)
Contract negotiated and Final Proposal	March 2011
Progress Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of initial review of literature provided • Any questions for NRI to address and any further requests for documents if required 	Late March 2011
Preliminary Options Paper (results of desk-top review) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of appropriate options from review of international and PNG literature • Preliminary assessment of appropriate options based on criteria outlined above in objectives of study 	April 2011
Plan for stakeholder consultations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline for workshop and interview schedule including dates and timeframes and all relevant documents (letters of introduction). Plans should include any ethical considerations. 	Early May 2011
Stakeholder consultation report including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of consultations; and • Any records of consultations 	Late May 2011
Draft Report	June 2011
Copies of all collected documents and a	July 2011

bibliographic data file	
Peer review	August 2011
Final Report	Early September 2011
Launch Seminar	Late September 2011

Content of EOI

Interested applicants are asked to submit an Expression of Interest of no more than 12 A4 pages to NRI by the 28 February 2011. The EOI should include:

1. Cover sheet
 - a. relevant project information (title, project code, project manager);
 - b. name and title of all persons associated with proposal;
 - c. contact details of agency and main contact person; and
 - d. total of budget contained in the plan.
2. Table of Contents
3. Research Plan that includes:
 - a. Introduction;
 - b. Research Approach to include;
 - demonstration of how objectives will be achieved;
 - description of how the research approach will encompass a range of perspectives;
 - rationale for selecting literature and the basis for inclusion and exclusion of literature;
 - recruitment strategies for stakeholder consultation;
 - data collection, management and recording strategies;
 - ethical considerations;
 - discussion of the benefits or limitations of research approach;
 - demonstration of understanding of PNG's cultural and gender contexts; and
 - the anticipated form of presentation of research results.
4. Qualifications and expertise of researcher/team (a 1-page CV per person)
5. Accomplishments of the researcher/team. This should document relevant work done that is specific to this field of research and conducted either in PNG or a similar context
6. Other commitments of researcher/team – all other commitments should be documented to demonstrate that all individuals can meet the commitments of the proposal
7. Time required to complete proposal
8. Itemized budget – Please follow the sample below in relation to all individuals associated with the study

Name of Individual	Role in Study	Total days spent in study	Daily rate	Cost
Total				
9. Any cooperative features
 - a. Any assistance or agreements required from other agencies;
 - b. Any existing relationships with key stakeholders or demonstrated capacity to form such relationships; and
 - c. Any resources required from NRI.
10. Referees – include the names, titles and phone and email contact details of two referees per individual associated with the project.

In addition to these required sections, if you have suggestions for any variation of this project, please include another section called 'Suggested Variations to Project' in your EOI.

To assist the successful bidder, a background study on priorities for a free and fair election that includes issues in vote counting will be provided to the successful bidder.

NRI will also fund all travel expenses (economy flights only), accommodation expenses and any out-of-pocket expenses for the period of research that is spent in consultation with key stakeholders within Papua New Guinea – 10 days only. NRI can supply office space, internet, printing and photocopying facilities and may be able to provide logistics coordination and support for stakeholder meetings and time spent in Papua New Guinea. As the research visa processing authority for Papua New Guinea, NRI can also facilitate a research visa for all individuals associated with the project.

For queries or a detailed copy of the Terms of Reference please contact Dr Ray Anere on Ph: 326 0061 Ext: 336 or Email: ranere@nri.org.pg. A detailed TOR is also available on the NRI website: www.nri.org.pg.

The Institute reserves the right to negotiate all aspects of the project with the successful applicants. All Expressions of Interest should be submitted in electronic copy to director01@nri.org.pg or by registered mail to:

**The Chairman
The NRI Tenders Committee
National Research Institute
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Papua New Guinea**