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EVALUATION OF

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT NO. CCS-0007-A-00-2046-00

WITH THE

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS
FOR
DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM INITIATIVES

IN THE NEW INDEPENDENT STATES
OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

(PROJECT 110-0007)

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ACRONYMS

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| AID | Agency for International Development |
| CEC | Central Elections Commission |
| DPI | Democratic Pluralism Initiatives Project |
| MSI | Management Systems International |
| NDI | National Democratic Institute for International Affairs |
| NED | National Endowment for Democracy |
| NGO | Nongovernmental organization |
| PVO | Private voluntary organization |
| USAID | Overseas mission of the Agency for International Development |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report constitutes a summary of an evaluation of International Foundation for Electoral Services projects that were funded in FY1992-1994 by USAID's Democratic Pluralism Initiatives in Russia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. Total funding \$1,776,000.

These projects have made a contribution to the immediate process of transition from communist, authoritarian states to democratic systems. They are especially significant because they were initiated at the request of the host government and involved direct IFES participation with the Central Election Commissions responsible for administering the electoral process in these countries. The projects and their results to date were assessed positively. On the whole, they were well targeted and well functioning.

Program Summary

IFES programs begin with an on-site diagnostic survey of the political climate, the election system, and evaluation of the election law which is developed into a comprehensive Pre-election Technical Assessment (PETA), that includes specific recommendations for an IFES assisted program. PETA's have been conducted in Russia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. The PETA for Kazakhstan was underway at the time of the evaluation. The programs developed in Russia and the Ukraine have included the provision of technical assistance with the procurement of election equipment and commodities, the provision of legal advice and technical assistance regarding the implementation of elections, coordination of international observer teams to undertake election observation and the development of a network of election administrators, and others to promote and preserve democratic pluralism.

The program in Kazakhstan, to date, has only included the PETA. IFES will provide on-site technical advising in the areas of election law, administration, and procedure, as well as official voter information. IFES will also operate an information clearing house for international observers.

Findings

In Russia, IFES provided both direct assistance and indirect assistance. Direct assistance to the CEC and Russian NGOs included on-site technical advice, training and support on questions of election law, election administration and management, electoral procedures, campaign finance, public opinion research, vote tabulation and ballot security, and official voter information. A poll workers manual was developed, but not finalized. Portions of the manual were incorporated into CEC instructions to lower level commissions, the IFES/IRI/NDI poll watcher manual and the IFES international observers manual. Indirect assistance included information sharing with the U.S. NGOs, coordinating commodities purchases with foreign donors, briefings on the electoral process and acting as the facilitator/clearinghouse for the foreign observers during the week of the elections.

In Ukraine the program is under revision with elections imminent on the 27 March 1994. The program will include the development of an election information database, support for the completion of a network of telefacsimile machines and computers with modems to connect the CEC with the local governments, a clearinghouse to coordinate election related assistance from other international donors and distribution of a poll worker training video for election officials. A proposed program of domestic facilitators to assist with the elections using students and women has been reassessed by IFES and scaled back to keep the program manageable.

It is too early to assess the impact in Kazakhstan because the PETA is still being completed.

Impact

IFES holds a unique position among the American NGOs because of its official recognition by the government in the host countries where it works. By sharing office space with the CEC, IFES has been able to interact with CEC staff on a daily basis prior to the elections, raising procedural questions, offering options and demonstrating their expertise in a collaborative, non-confrontive manner that has enabled them to influence these highly politicized organizations and processes.

Because IFES does not maintain permanent offices in the countries where it works, it has not been able to provide on-going support between elections. A permanent IFES regional center may be necessary to provide technical assistance to these countries since the process of developing effective electoral systems in these countries is going to be a long one. Providing longer term support is raising other staffing and support issues for IFES which it is currently exploring with AID Washington.

IFES has a well deserved reputation for developing comprehensive, substantive reports and assessments. The collecting and processing of information, much of it highly technical, is a priority for the administrators of these projects. The crisis nature of these early elections in the NIS has required the IFES staff to be flexible and to work under extreme time pressures. Often IFES has the opportunity to begin work in a country, long before AID and the Embassy give their approval. This has exacerbated the time constraints for developing an effective strategy for offering assistance.

1 PURPOSE AND METHOD OF THE EVALUATION

A Background and Purpose of the Evaluation

This evaluation was conducted by Management Systems International (MSI) under IQC No AEP-0085 I-10-3001 00 Delivery Order No 10. It is the first evaluation of a major sectoral component of assistance from the Agency for International Development (AID) to the New Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union. It relates to a portion of AID's Democratic Pluralism Initiatives (DPI) Project No 110-0007, which was authorized on 10 April 1992. Funding for the DPI Project has been increased twice and it has been extended to 31 December 1996.

The DPI Project was designed to help build political, legal and social institutions critical to the success of democratic and economic reform in the NIS in the wake of the collapse of communism and the Soviet economic system. In its early phase, the Project funded Grants and Cooperative Agreements for U.S.-based nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to provide technical assistance, training and some equipment. Grants and Cooperative Agreements are both instruments to transfer funds to provide assistance to the recipient in carrying out a program. A Cooperative Agreement is a relationship in which substantial involvement is anticipated between AID and the recipient during the performance of the proposed activity. This report refers to the recipient organizations generically as grantees.

The DPI Project has five sub-sector components: rule of law, independent media, civil society, governance and public administration, and political process. This latter component is intended to enable individuals and organizations to determine political outcomes in a competitive and fair environment. The IFES Cooperative Agreement is a portion of the political process component.

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which the grants are meeting the objectives of their agreements, fitting with the general guiding principles of democratic reform and able to adjust to the new strategic priorities being implemented in an effective and efficient manner, and having an impact on the people, organizations and countries of the NIS.

B Method

In December 1993, AID contracted with Management Systems International (MSI) to conduct field evaluations of the activities of seven DPI Project grantees and desk studies of the activities of two grantees.

The evaluations were conducted by a team of six management consultants: David Read Barker (Team Leader), Cynthia Clapp-Wincek, David Hirschmann, James S. Holtaway, Sally J. Patterson, and Alan Lessik. Four members of the team (Barker, Holtaway, Patterson and Lessik) divided responsibility for the seven field studies, with three evaluators each taking lead responsibility for two studies and one evaluator taking responsibility for one field study and the synthesis report. The other two members of the team (Hirschmann and Clapp-Wincek) were each assigned lead responsibility for one desk study.

The professional backgrounds of the evaluators are development management cultural anthropology political science and political organizing and opinion research All four of the field evaluators had previous professional experience in Russia three of them had worked in Russia within the previous 6 months

A team planning meeting of the AID project managers the evaluators and representatives of IFES and other grantees was held on 4 January 1994 The participants agreed to support the evaluation as a collaborative candid constructive and creative process The evaluators then interviewed AID officials and grantees in their offices in the Washington DC area and California Extensive documentation was gathered and reviewed by the team

The evaluators visited the Russian Federation from 20-29 January, at which time the team broke into two sub-teams one of which visited Ukraine from 29 January to 5 February and one of which visited Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan from 29 January to 5 February The method of the field visits was derived from rapid appraisal techniques which stress creation of a team, multi-disciplinary treatment of data selective sampling, gathering information through interviews, and conscious efforts to identify biases

With the full cooperation of IFES the evaluators structured their itinerary to maximize opportunities to observe significant project activities Similarly, IFES provided names of key beneficiaries who became priority targets for interview Interviews with Russian-speaking informants were conducted in English using professional interpreters To the extent that logistics permitted at least two team members participated in interviews with beneficiaries However intense time constraints required modifications of the optimal itinerary and interview schedule

The authors conducted a total of 52 interviews 28 with U S government officials in five countries 11 with IFES staff members in three countries and 13 with beneficiaries of IFES's programs in three countries A list of people interviewed is given in Appendix A Documents which were reviewed are listed in Appendix B

Following the field visits the team met several times in Washington DC to exchange notes Team members met with AID officials and with IFES staff to present key findings and conclusions informally and to review critical issues Copies of the draft report were submitted for comment to IFES and to AID/Washington and were sent to the USAID Missions in Moscow Almaty and Kiev This revised draft reflects comments and corrections by the grantee and AID/Washington but no comments have been received to date from the three USAID Missions

The team expresses its sincere appreciation for the excellent cooperation and support received from AID officials in Washington, from USAID and U S Embassy staffs in Moscow, Almaty, and Kiev, from the IFES headquarters and field staffs and from the numerous beneficiaries of these programs

2 THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

A Purpose and Description of the Program

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is a non-governmental not-for-profit organization dedicated to monitoring supporting and strengthening democratic election systems around the world IFES operates an international election resource center in Washington DC and maintains relationships with hundreds of election administrators from dozens of democracies In the New Independent States IFES has undertaken pre-election technical assessments and conducted technical election assistance and voter education projects in the Russian Federation Ukraine Moldova Belarus Georgia Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan

The objective of IFES projects within the former Soviet Union has been to support and strengthen democratic processes by fostering honest impartial and efficient election administration according to law and by promoting public understanding of and confidence and participation in post-Soviet electoral systems

Unlike the other NGOs involved in democratic pluralism initiatives, IFES works closely with the official governmental entities responsible for developing, implementing, and overseeing the election process It also participates in programs to expand voter awareness and democratic ideals through official and non-government education initiatives

In the New Independent States IFES' programs have emphasized the following tasks consistent with the objective

- Coordinated the implementation of pre-election technical assessment teams to utilize technical electoral experts and area specialists to respond to requests for assistance and training The experts have prepared an on-site diagnostic survey of the political climate and the election system, and evaluated the election law and made detailed recommendations for assistance
- Provided technical assistance with the procurement of election equipment and commodities, designed election documentation, coordinated logistics and planning, designed civic education materials, poll worker training, and logistical planning for international observers
- Designed, provided oversight, and helped implement short-term in-country poll worker training programs, including the design of the basic training program and the development of training materials reflecting recent changes in election laws and procedures in conjunction with the Central Election Commission (CEC)
- Provided information and training to election commissions on the national and regional levels to encourage inclusive practices and democratic reform of existing electoral institutions

- Provided technical assistance regarding election commodities and equipment including assistance in locating, selecting, procuring, and transporting election commodities and equipment
- Coordinated international observer teams to undertake election observation and to engage in a factual assessment of each country's ability to conduct free, fair, and open elections
- Fostered the development of a network of election administrators, voter education activists, and election technicians involved in promoting and preserving democratic pluralism. IFES has developed an annual conference to promote the exchange of electoral information, data, and expertise among eastern European and NIS countries.

IFES funding is 95 percent dependent on AID support. The Cooperative Agreement was submitted in early 1992 and activity began during the third quarter. IFES funding was \$526,000 for FY92 and \$1,250,000 for FY93 for a total of \$1,776,000. Program activity in the NIS has totalled \$745,995.

B Country Context and Issues

IFES' participation in the NIS is contingent upon a formal invitation from the host country government indicating their commitment to support the building of sound election systems and requesting IFES' support. This necessitates early contact to foster a relationship with the government and the parliamentary or presidential appointed administrator of the CEC. In both the Russian Federation and Ukraine, this involved cultivating relationships with three different election commissioners prior to the election date.

The political sensitivity of working directly with the host government has sometimes delayed USAID or Embassy approval and has frequently resulted in a late invitation to enter the country to provide assistance.

Furthermore, in many of these newly emerging democracies where elections have not been routinely scheduled, the elections are often called on a short time frame to convey political urgency or for other political reasons. This creates incredibly tight time frames for analyzing the election law, elections infrastructure, and other concerns that enables IFES to make the best recommendations for a coherent strategy of support.

IFES does not maintain an independent permanent office in the countries where it works. Traditionally, it has gone into a country to conduct a pre-election assessment and then returned prior to the election to provide support and work directly with the election commission. After the election, IFES' support has been offered via on-site visits, not through a permanent presence.

In both the Russian Federation and Ukraine, as a result of considerable IFES effort, the Central Election Commissions have provided space within their offices to IFES, which has given IFES immediate access to the commissions and enabled them to be on call to the CEC staff. This on-

site presence has also allowed IFES to observe the commission in operation and to collect information about the electoral process which it has shared with other interested parties

C Program Budget and Financial Management

IFES's unsolicited proposal to AID was approved on 24 July 1992 at a funding level for FY 92 of \$526,000. The program to be funded by this Cooperative Agreement included Pre Election Assistance in Georgia, Tajikistan, and Ukraine and On-Site Assistance in Georgia and Belarus.

In the modification of the Cooperative Agreement No. CCS-0007-A-00-2046-00 dated 8 August 1993, the CA was supplemented by \$1,250,000, the scope of activities was augmented, and the grant completion date was extended from 30 September 1993 to 31 March 1994.

Of the \$1,776,000 approved for the cooperative agreement, \$745,995 has been spent to date in the NIS. \$81,100 has been spent on commodities. (See Table 1.)

| Table 1 IFES Projects in the NIS | | |
|--|----------------|------------------|
| <u>Project</u> | <u>Country</u> | <u>Cost</u> |
| Pre-election Technical Assessment (PETA) | Georgia | 58,505.69 |
| | Ukraine | 87,455.77 |
| | Kyrgyzstan | 63,403.37 |
| | Russia | 158,554.08 |
| | Moldova | 36,597.86 |
| | Kazakhstan | TBD |
| | Belarus | 31,080.20 |
| On-Site Technical Assistance | Georgia | 100,845.44 |
| Election Assistance | Ukraine | 25,783.91 |
| | Russia | 164,859.34 |
| | Moldova | 18,914.40 |
| TOTAL | | \$745,995 |

To facilitate flexibility AID also rewrote the IFES cooperative agreement to be function defined rather than country defined. This approach covers the nine functions in the IFES grant: Pre Election Technical Assessments, on-site technical assistance, poll worker training, election commissions, election commodities, voter education, election observation, symposia/conferences, resource centers, and publications.

According to the document:

this modification to the grant will allow IFES to be more flexible and responsive to mission/Embassy requests for technical and other related electoral assistance and will provide geographic flexibility to evade frequent reprogramming of funding. Countries that were not originally shown to receive electoral assistance will be included to respond to requests by all NIS missions.

According to the AID Project Officer, this has given IFES greater ability to respond to sudden changes in NIS country election time frames. It has also eliminated the need for frequent reprogramming of funds. Documentation on a country-by-country basis has been submitted to USAID via the quarterly reports.

According to the IFES Director of Programs, this requires double bookkeeping of all program activities within the NIS project, but it is a headache worth the price.

3 FINDINGS

A Inputs Activities, and Delivery Mechanisms

Russian Federation

Since 1989 with both private and public funding IFES has collaborated with Soviet and Russian election authorities and other officials in exchanges of expertise to encourage the independence and professionalism of the election administration. In 1989 and 1990 IFES participated in a series of exchanges with the Soviet Central Election Commission (CEC), under the leadership of Vladimir Orlov. Closely monitoring the evolution of the Russian electoral process, IFES experts held consultations in September 1992 and June 1993 with the CEC of the Russian Federation then chaired by Vasiliv Kazakov.

A technical assessment was undertaken in June 1993 and the report finalized in late September shortly before President Yeltsin called for the elections in December. The assessment identified four priority areas for IFES' involvement in Russia: ballot security, poll worker training, voter education and poll watcher training, and international election observation support.

In early October 1993 IFES representatives met with officials of the newly formed Central Election Commission of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly to discuss the accelerated election calendar in Russia. Alexander Ivanchenko, the Vice Chairman of the CEC, expressed interest and enthusiasm about the possibility of cooperative efforts between IFES and the CEC. As a result of follow-up consultations with Vice Chairman Ivanchenko and with Chairman Nikolai Ryabov, IFES was formally invited to establish a technical assistance office inside the Central Election Commission.

With an office established by mid-November 1993, IFES support for the CEC proceeded along two lines: technical assistance to the Central Election Commission and serving as an information clearinghouse for foreign donors, international observer groups, and the foreign press.

Direct assistance to the CEC and Russian NGOs included the development of a poll workers manual, portions of which were incorporated into more formalized CEC instructions, a poll watchers manual produced in conjunction with NDI and IRI, an international observers guide, on-site technical advising and training including a roundtable series on election reform issues, commodities assistance in the form of computers and printers for CEC department heads, an international observers guide, briefings and training for foreign observers, English translations of key CEC documents and Presidential decrees pertaining to the elections, an international observer guide tailored to the Russian elections and training for foreign observers, technical briefings on election law and procedures by IFES and CEC experts, facilitating answers from CEC personnel to inquiries, and developing and implementing a procedure for issuing observer credentials.

Indirect assistance included information sharing with the US NGOs, coordinating commodities purchases with foreign donors, briefings on the electoral process and acting as the facilitator/

clearinghouse for credentials key information and other reports for election observers on behalf of the Central Election Commission. During the week of the elections, IFES organized a series of round table discussions to analyze the lessons learned during the preparations for the 12 December elections and to discuss what changes could be implemented in future elections.

IFES worked with nearly one dozen radio stations and an educational newspaper *Teachers' Gazette* to develop public service announcements and articles explaining the new governing structures, election system, and balloting process. IFES also helped the CEC establish priorities for its commodities and equipment needs and facilitated international donor contributions to avoid duplication and ensure that the CEC's priority needs were being met.

The IFES project team of five included Robert Dahl, a comparative electoral law expert; Richard Rochefort, a voter information specialist; Paul DeGregorio, an election administration expert; Danny McDonald, FEC Commissioner and election management specialist; and Catherine Barnes, the IFES Washington-based project manager for Russia. The offices were established in mid-November and the entire team was in Moscow through the third week of December.

Central Asia

IFES arrived in Kazakhstan to conduct a Pre-Election Technical Assessment (PETA) during the first week of February 1994. While they were there, the President announced that elections would be held in March. The US Embassy reported to the evaluation team that it had made a mistake by not immediately approving an IFES PETA which had been proposed six months earlier. Efforts are now underway to develop an expanded and, as in the Russian Federation, accelerated program of support for these elections.

The IFES team, once in Kazakhstan, encountered additional difficulties when it was announced that they were going to be providing technical support for the elections. Prior to their departure to Kazakhstan, the team had determined with AID/Washington that they were only going to conduct a PETA and specifically stated that they would only provide technical assistance if the PETA warranted such activity. It was very difficult to arrive in the country to conduct the PETA and discover that government officials were only interested in discussing commodities and other specific types of election activity support.

As of 5 February, there is one very experienced IFES consultant in Kazakhstan, and expectations are that two additional members will be added to the team.

Ukraine

IFES became involved in Ukraine early in 1992. IFES proposed an initial exchange of experience and information to CEC Chairman Boiko to take place before the referendum called for 26 December 1993 (to determine whether new elections should be held) and well before the parliamentary elections, then scheduled for 1995. Despite the lack of a firm date for the elections, the choice of election systems and the proper management of those elections were of great interest to the Central Election Commission, President Kravchuk's staff and members of the Parliament who were working on the new election law and constitution.

After several months of correspondence with Chairman Boiko IFES learned in January 1993 that he had been named Ukrainian Ambassador to Moldova. CEC Vice Chairman Alexander Lavrynovich became the Acting Chairman. IFES met with Mr. Lavrynovich during his visit to the United States and outlined IFES' capabilities and the objectives of the proposed project.

Mr. Lavrynovich indicated that IFES' technical assistance would be especially important to Ukraine as the country moves from a Soviet style multi-candidate election system to a multi-party process, and he invited IFES to send a technical team to meet with the CEC and other key persons in the electoral process to produce a technical assessment of the process.

The IFES team conducted their initial meetings with the CEC in February 1993. While the IFES team was in Ukraine, President Kravchuk called for a new constitution and new parliamentary and presidential elections. The pre-election technical assessment made several specific recommendations encouraging IFES involvement in the revision and strengthening of the laws related to the elections, and the structure of the CEC; the importance of paper for the ballots and other election commodities; training for poll workers and election officials; guidelines on the role of election observers; and civic education and training.

In mid-1993 IFES hosted for two months the Acting Chairman of the Ukrainian CEC, Mr. Lavrynovich, as an IFES Electoral Fellow in D.C. under a grant from the National Forum Foundation. When he returned to Ukraine, Mr. Lavrynovich continued to work with IFES to coordinate a program for training election officials and providing technical assistance to the CEC in Ukraine.

Throughout the late summer and early fall, it became increasingly clear that the Supreme Rada of Ukraine would not upgrade Mr. Lavrynovich's status from acting chairman to chairman of the CEC. Nevertheless, he continued to play a very active role in the discussion of the new election law.

IFES sent a follow-up team to Kiev in November 1993 to develop a program to assist with the parliamentary elections on 27 March 1994 and in anticipation of presidential elections slated for June 1994. The IFES team, Chris Siddall and U.S. Claims Court Judge Bohdan A. Futey, an active participant in the Ukraine Rule of Law program, were invited to provide testimony at the Council of Advisers of Ukraine hearings on the election law. Representatives of the U.S. Embassy/Kiev political section commented that theirs was the only testimony that recognized the anti-democratic character of the draft law. At that time, they outlined a program which would require them to establish a main office 3 months before the election. The program will proceed along two lines: technical and commodities assistance for the CEC and encouraging local NGOs of students and women to participate as facilitators/observers of the election process.

Specifically, the program included

- an election information database, a computer for tracking election district data, candidate information, complaints, and election results,

- a network of telefacsimile machines and computers with modems to connect the CEC with the local governments in each of 26 *oblasts* and Kiev (3 to be based at the CEC) and Sevastopol
- a clearinghouse to coordinate election-related assistance from other international donors who are contributing to the Ukrainian election process to prevent duplication of effort
- support in scripting a video series on voter education for election officials,
- a training manual for election officials and poll workers, and provide financial support for two training conferences in Kiev,
- post-election debriefing sessions to review and assess the administration of the parliamentary elections, as well as the impact of the election official and poll worker training program
- voter/civic education tasks recruit 250 monitors develop a non-partisan public information campaign and mass communications program conduct a series of voter education workshops, train and consult with representatives of the mass media possibly conduct a poll watcher training component, and
- election commodities assistance

At the time of this evaluation in January and February 1994, IFES was working with its third chair of the CEC. The current chair, Mr. Yemets, has been appointed by President Kravchuk and confirmed by the Parliament. It is the assessment of many that he is most interested in making leading members of the current parliament satisfied with the elections process. It should be noted that the CEC is a commission of parliament and will need considerable support for it to become truly independent of that body and free from overt political influence.

B Outputs

Forecasting the value of all other IFES products is their initial work when they are first invited into a country. The '*Pre-election Technical Assessment (PETA)*' is an invaluable document which provides the framework for U.S. government, NGO, and others to assess the political climate, legal framework, and potential for effective execution of the elections. These documents have been valuable resources because of the breadth and depth of their analysis and their timeliness. PETAs have been completed for Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Moldova, Kazakhstan, and Belarus.

Russian Federation

The Russian elections have been characterized by many Russian political observers as 'shock elections'. They were announced by President Boris Yeltsin in late September 1993 and organized in the wake of the October attack on the White House. Organizing a new and

fundamentally different election in a country with 225 constituency level commissions 96 000 polling district sites over 105 million voters 11 time zones harsh climatic conditions an incredibly brief preparation period and an extremely tenuous political environment is a tremendous challenge Add to that the offer of assistance from a relatively new ally, the United States and one has a sense of the challenge faced by IFES in Russia

They were able to establish a presence in the CEC offices less than a month before the election Robert Dahl comparative electoral law expert Richard Rochefort voter information specialist Paul DeGregorio election administration expert Danny McDonald, FEC Commissioner and election management specialist and Catherine Barnes, an expert in Russian domestic politics and IFES Washington-based project manager set up a base of operations

According to Vice Chairman Ivanchenko,

We went through a period of our studying them (their professionalism, on the spot recommendations their ability to be spontaneous respond to the issues of the moment) the major feature was that they were oriented to the voters Their purpose was to make it understandable to voters Based on this, we agreed to work with them "

Mr Ivanchenko indicated that the primary goal of the CEC was to ensure that the elections occurred and that they knew they would not be able to act on all of the recommendations from IFES Nevertheless they did attach the IFES report and recommendations as a supplement to their report to the government

Specific outcomes during the Russian electoral process include the following

- IFES advisers participated as members of high-level panels before an audience assembled by the CEC for roundtables on election administration and reform to discuss such issues as the regulation of public opinion polls during the campaign period electoral law campaign finance and questions of election management
- IFES played an advisory role in helping CEC develop official voter information posters as well as a text on marking the ballots, which was printed in newspapers across the country and was aired in the form of public information spots on radio and television
- IFES provided on-going technical advice on the conduct of the parliamentary elections and the constitutional referendum, including distribution of the CEC *Explanations* on the procedure of completing the ballots of deputies to the Federation Council and the State Duma and for the national referendum on the draft constitution A USAID/Moscow officer shared her experience with the evaluation team of sitting in the IFES office on election day, when a ranking CEC official walked into the office seeking clarification from an IFES staff person on a critical point of election law that had just come up in a CEC meeting

- IFES assisted in leveraging donations by encouraging a Japanese donation of \$65 000 worth of equipment to the CEC the provision of Canadian on-site advice (\$18 000) and conducting a needs assessment of technical requirements of the CEC for use by donor organizations
- IFES provided monitoring functions as participants in spot checks of problematic constituency and district commissions at the request of the Vice Chairman's office
- IFES played a critical liaison role for CEC with foreign press, election observers and other American NGOs by providing a credential process and essential orientation materials including an international observer guide for election day Russian CEC officials had underestimated the foreign interest in their elections and had no procedures in place for coordinating their participation in the process
- Working with *Teachers Gazette* IFES played an important role in educating teachers throughout Russia about the process of these elections The publication which is sent to 66 000 schools reaches over 3 million teachers

Central Asia

There are no outcomes in Kazakhstan to date The technical assessment and revised program of activities are in development

Ukraine

Although the elections in Ukraine are only a month away, it is still early to assess the outcomes of the work that IFES is doing with the CEC in this country As in Russia IFES was able to leverage its international contacts to secure additional targeted election assistance to the CEC Chris Siddall met with Canadian officials in November 1993 to outline IFES support and solicited Canadian interest in supporting the Ukrainian election process The Canadian government eventually provided \$2.5 million to the election process especially for ballot security

In our meeting with Ihor Tseluyko, Secretary of the CEC, he indicated that the CEC decided to honor the commitment and continue the work with IFES because "Ukrainian elections are not up to international standards we've never had so many candidates, platforms public interests we are now becoming a modern political system" Specifically, he mentioned his interest in the following support from IFES

- the legal and technical support IFES will provide for the electoral process (two computers, fax machines other technical equipment) He underscored the lack of time and the need for the equipment to be approved as soon as possible
- videotaped training for the district staff (2 programs with 225 each), and

- the support from election law attorney Steven Nix in developing general regulations for election monitoring and guidelines for the approximately 400 foreign observers expected to play a role at this election

The IFES team had arrived in Ukraine only a day before the arrival of the evaluation team. It was clear that they were hitting the ground running and attempting to establish their base of operations as quickly as possible. It also became clear to IFES in their separate meetings, and in meetings attended by the evaluation team that the program for Ukraine needed some on-the-ground adjustment.

In meetings with the chief of the Information Systems Centre of the Supreme Rada of the Ukraine Mykola Shvetz plans for an elaborate information center that would provide the parliament with a Congressional Research Service (CRS) type program was co-mingled with the discussion about the information processing needs of the CEC.

Further research revealed that the Information Systems Centre is also working with the CRS under a different AID grant to develop legislation tracking for the parliament. They were having trouble getting equipment clearances and saw an opportunity to possibly combine the equipment under the two programs.

The IFES Senior Program Officer, Christopher Siddall, moved quickly to identify the issues involved, contacted the CRS representative in Ukraine and AID staff and developed a technical agreement letter to clarify the equipment needs and guidelines for their use.

IFES had also proposed an aggressive outreach program to the students movement in Ukraine. Students have been an independent political force in Ukraine since the late 1980's and were instrumental in the first referendum.

The student movement has formed a Freedom of Choice coalition which intends to encourage young people to participate in the elections, follow and observe the legality of the electoral process and the election and create groups of volunteers which will support democratic candidates in the election. They hope to recruit 5,000 students, 25 in every *oblast*.

Leaders of this group have been tapped by IFES to recruit students to serve as official liaisons with the district oblast election commissions for this election.

At the time of the evaluation team's meetings with the leader of the CEC, Ihor Tseluyko, Secretary of the Central Election Commission, responding to our specific question about voter education, commented that, "the CEC must be neutral." He seemed unaware of the plan of IFES to coordinate students at the *oblast* level, although he had some general knowledge of IFES' need and desire to have additional community based workers at the election sites.

However, of even greater concern, the leaders of the Freedom of Choice effort told us that they were collaborating with IFES specifically to strengthen their sources of information, gain the dividends of participating in the expansion of the civic culture, be "international observers" and thereby to have special status in these elections, so that local election officials will treat them

differently than other domestic observers have certain assurance that the elections are monitored by people they trust and have access to the computer network and communication links that IFES is developing at the CEC and regions for their own communication purposes

Once again IFES officer assessed the situation and responded quickly. It is our understanding that the role of the student observers is being scaled back dramatically that other groups, in addition to the students will be recruited to act as facilitators on election day and that special care will be taken to separate the work of Freedom of Choice and the work of young people supporting the IFES project

There was also some tension in Ukraine between various NGOs and IFES when they first arrived in late January. Many of the groups that had been coordinating their pre-election activities were dismayed to learn of IFES plan for election monitoring. Part of this concern can be attributed to the 'newest kid on the block' phenomenon, but it is clear that the level of integration and cooperation among NGO's in Ukraine is not as strong as we observed in Russia

C Impact

IFES work in these countries has made a demonstrable positive impact on the clients they have served. Quantifiable and qualitative changes were noted in the operation of the CECs. The degree of impact was affected by political, legal, time constraints and other factors. Nevertheless, it is important to note that tremendous social change and structural changes must occur before a democratic elections process can be implemented at the national, regional and local level in the NIS. The challenges confronting the CECs are substantial and these efforts will have to be initiated by the people of the NIS. Support from IFES and other American NGOs will be tertiary

IFES holds a unique position among the American NGOs because of its official recognition by the government in the host countries where it works. Sharing office space with the CEC allows IFES an on-site presence that they have learned to maximize

Furthermore the offer of specific commodities and tangible technical assistance provides leverage for other less apparent but from IFES' viewpoint no-less necessary, types of support and technical assistance

The diplomatic skills of the IFES staff are high. The ability to transcend three evolutions of chairmen of the CEC in two separate countries is a reflection of their ability to present the range of services and the benefits of IFES' support to a broad array of political players. Furthermore, once they are in place within the CEC, the staff have a very non-threatening way of staying visible (i.e., "in the face") of the CEC administrator and other CEC staff. By raising procedural questions, sharing samples of election related legislation or regulations from other countries, offering options, and demonstrating their expertise in a collaborative, non-confrontive manner they have won on-going entree in a highly politicized organization and process

Russian Federation

IFES' most comprehensive work in the NIS to date has been its work in Russia. The IFES team provided input in the development of the regulations and process governing the December 12th elections, acted as liaisons to the international observers, supported the acquisition of commodities essential to vote tabulation and supported official voter education efforts.

The success of the IFES program in Russia is the result of the tenacity and ingenuity of the IFES team. Catherine Barnes reported that the IFES team consistently put itself before the CEC staff with questions about the implementation of the Russian election law, raising concerns about aspects of the regulations that were not clear, and suggesting projects that the IFES team could handle. Vice Chair Alexander Ivanchenko told us that the CEC observed the IFES team for several days, examined the recommendations and concerns of the IFES team, and concluded that they were genuinely concerned about the outcome of the Russian elections from the standpoint of the Russian voter. It was only upon reaching this conclusion that the Central Election Commission decided to work in concert with the IFES team.

Several of the proposals outlined in the original scope of work for the December 12th elections were not implemented:

- training of election administrators
- a video training program for poll workers
- written guidelines for election officials and poll workers,
- election administrator's training conference, and
- follow-up seminars and assessments

According to Vice Chair Ivanchenko, many of the proposals were beyond the capability of the CEC, which was just trying to ensure that the elections actually occurred. The manual for election officials and poll watchers was developed but not actually used. However, the CEC continues to be committed to improving the election systems in Russia. The Commission has become a permanent entity, and Mr. Ivanchenko has met with IFES to outline a program for their continued collaboration and to develop programs in anticipation of the next set of elections. These steps will include legal assistance on a new election law, assistance with redistricting, training for poll workers in the districts and the development of a poll worker training guide, and possibly, some additional efforts for voter education.

The question will be raised, and in fact has been raised, about whether the Russian elections were 'free and fair.' Concerns were voiced by the international community about the outcome of the elections. It does appear that the CEC is making a good faith effort to support and strengthen democratic processes through improved election administration, a strengthened election law, and by attempting to promote public understanding of, and confidence and participation in, post-Soviet electoral systems.

The IFES team in Russia succeeded in establishing its credibility before the Central Election Commission and provided support as requested to help the CEC strengthen electoral procedures in Russia. It can also be argued that IFES' interaction with the CEC gave it higher recognition.

in the international community and may have contributed to the elevation of the CEC to a standing governmental committee. They have developed a program and will continue to work for further improvements.

IFES contributed to the improvement of the elections administration process for national elections. Although many of their recommendations were not acted on for the December 12th elections, they have negotiated a continuing relationship with the CEC. In addition, IFES will work with the CEC to introduce improved administrative procedures at the regional and *oblast* level. They made a substantive effort to educate voters through the teachers publication and through public service announcements.

Central Asia

Except to comment that IFES is becoming increasingly skilled at making these last minute assessments and crunching months of support work into weeks of frenetic activity, there is not much that can be said at this early date about the impact of their work in Kazakhstan.

Ukraine

It is also early to assess the impact of the IFES team in Ukraine. The team was literally moving into their offices at the CEC the day that the evaluation team left the country.

The proposed program in Ukraine has been reviewed, revised, and defined to address priorities that all parties seem to have approved.

Efforts are underway to ensure that the commodities arrive in a timely manner, recruiting is underway for the facilitators to support the *oblasts* on election day, elections law attorney Steven Nix is returning in a week to help with additional election regulations and guidelines, and IFES officer Chris Siddall will spend additional time in Ukraine providing project oversight.

D Grantee Future Directions

Internal assessments of the IFES projects in the NIS has prompted some serious discussion about the importance of developing a permanent presence, perhaps through on-site resource centers in Moscow, Kiev, and possibly Almaty (to serve the Central Asia region) or a regional office in Moscow. The challenge of developing sound election laws, administrative procedures, and democratic participation in these post-Soviet environments is going to be a long process. Changes must occur in the national elections, the regional administrations, and at the local level.

It will be a challenge to recruit election law and election administration professionals who can serve on extended assignments in these countries. The importance of personal contact and rapport suggests the need for an on-going presence, but professionals with technical expertise and experience who will accept these long-term assignments are not easily found.

In the near term, IFES activity has been crisis-driven, because they were responding to the nearest election date. After this first round of post-Soviet elections, IFES and its team of

consultants should be able to work with the central election commissions and others interested in reform according to a strategic plan and some long-term priorities

4 MANAGEMENT

A Grant Management

Management by the Grantee

IFES has a well-deserved reputation for developing comprehensive, substantive reports and assessments. The collecting and processing of information, much of it highly technical, is a priority for the administrators of these projects. IFES is aware of the value of its information and is quite willing to share it with others and it encourages AID staff to give their information broad circulation. IFES has drafted contracts regarding the use of equipment by the CEC of Russia and a Memorandum of Understanding with the CEC of Ukraine to regulate the use of IFES procured equipment and commodities. Periodic spot checks are also used to ensure compliance with IFES contracts and memoranda.

IFES is frustrated by the fact that field approval for its projects is often late in coming. Many times they have requested permission to initiate contacts in a given country months before electoral activity, only to be told it's premature. Then the political situation changes, elections are announced and IFES must do its work within an unreasonably tight time frame, pressing for emergency clearances and applying political pressure to get commodities and technical consultants delivered in a timely manner.

The budget process focusing on functions, rather than countries, requires dual budget-keeping by the accounting office at IFES. This is a headache worth the price because there are no program delays due to reprogramming requests and the time lag that often accompanies approvals, this functional budget allows the grantee greater control over allocation of its resources during the frantic pace that accompanies these "crisis elections."

Staffing is also becoming an issue as the work of IFES in the NIS expands. Project directors and assistant project directors who are required to make a commitment of 6 months to a year are not easily found. The Washington-based project staff have excellent credentials and are widely regarded both in Washington and the NIS. But the expanding demands on their time and the need for them to be both on the ground in Washington and in the field creates a constant tug of war.

Because of the necessity of quick decision-making, the IFES project manager must be a seasoned professional with an understanding of election administration and the role that IFES should play. There is a constant tension between the need for expertise and cultural sensitivity. The decision whether to send an elections expert or someone with language and cultural skills is dependent on available personnel and is decided on a project by project basis.

Management by AID

The decision to provide direct election support in the NIS has been a sensitive policy issue in some of these countries. The need for advance assessment and strategic planning has needed to

be balanced against political sensitivities and foreign policy objectives. In these 'crisis' elections, IFES has often found itself stymied by conflicting viewpoints between AID/Washington, the U.S. Embassy and USAID Missions about when it is appropriate for IFES to come into a country and what types of activities should be undertaken once in the field.

Furthermore, there have been instances when a USAID Mission has attempted to specify the role and activities that IFES should undertake, even though IFES has reached a different understanding with AID/Washington.

Because many of the IFES projects have been implemented under incredibly tight time frames, special clearances have been needed for commodity purchases and other project activity. Many times the proposed scope of activity has had to be revised when the IFES team actually arrived in the field. This has required quick approvals, a high degree of flexibility, and instant communications. For the most part, all parties reported that IFES and AID have been able to rise to this challenge in every instance, but it is not the preferred method of operation.

Field monitoring of IFES activities has not been consistent from country to country. Although there has been resistance to IFES coming into a country, once they are present there has been relatively little oversight or interaction by the USAID Mission. The notable exception has been Russia, where all American NGOs report a high degree of interaction and collaboration prior to the December 12th elections.

The restructuring of the IFES cooperative agreement to be function oriented has worked well from the AID perspective as well. The AID project officer stated that IFES reports are the best among the NGOs; they are comprehensive, outputs-oriented and clearly reflect the impact of project activities toward the achievement of the desired objectives. Specific project activity is reported to AID/Washington in both the quarterly reports and with frequent memos and updates.

The AID Project Officer expressed concern about control over commodities purchased under the IFES projects. In other countries outside of the NIS, AID has sometimes placed restrictions on the commodities and requested that they either be retrieved after their use or accounted for by some other mechanism.

Concerns were raised in Ukraine about the qualifications of the IFES team. Most of these concerns reflected the need for an experienced IFES program director or election administration expert. This issue was raised prior to the approval of the scope of activities for the Ukraine elections and additional field visits for IFES staff and experts were written into the proposal.

B Organizational and Institutional Factors

It is becoming increasingly clear that shaping democratic elections is a process that requires not only activity on election day, but also considerable effort prior to the elections. The need for IFES to establish its relationships early in the process must be supported by the USAID Missions, the U.S. Embassies and those in Washington. A credible project cannot be developed without adequate evaluation, assessment and strategic planning in advance of an election. In addition,

the need to establish rapport with the host country and to develop a plan for cooperation also takes time. This is essential to lay the foundation for an invitation to work in a country.

The lack of an on-going IFES presence in Russia and Kiev has been raised repeatedly both by IFES and others. If there had been a permanent presence in Russia, perhaps more could have been done to press for release of the election results after the December elections. In the Ukraine there is a sense that IFES missed its opportunity to help shape the election law in fall and early winter of 1993. A permanent presence would also ensure that American NGO activity around these elections is coordinated and collaborative.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 1 IFES has effectively promoted the development of democratic processes in elections in the three countries visited by the evaluation team. They are internationally recognized as an effective provider of needed technical assistance in elections including the following:
 - pre-election technical assessments, which evaluate the political climate, legal framework, existing laws, the administrative structure for implementing the elections, and the adequacy of this environment for providing free and fair elections,
 - expertise on electoral law and election administration,
 - on-site technical advising and assistance to official governmental central and regional election commissions,
 - commodities and equipment assistance,
 - providing information clearinghouse services for foreign observers, and
 - assisting in voter education initiatives.
- 2 At the client level, the majority of their recommendations have been adopted or are being adopted. Specifically, the procedures for managing public opinion data during the last weeks of the election and helping develop official voter information posters. With many clients, the impact of adoption can be quantified in terms of greater efficiency, improved operations and increased foreign confidence in the procedures, as demonstrated in the December 12th elections in Russia. With other clients, quantification is more difficult as in Ukraine. This is often the case where IFES is providing assistance early in the process of transformation to democratic electoral practices. The establishment of collaborative relationships may result in more substantial impacts in subsequent elections.
- 3 Despite the challenges inherent in managing "crisis elections", the evaluation team saw no decrease in the quality of IFES project management. In fact, increased understanding of the political and social environments of the three countries has made IFES management more effective. In all three countries, an initial focus on conducting a comprehensive assessment of the social and political climate, and the election law and related processes has enabled IFES to develop an in-depth understanding of the constraints and opportunities. With this knowledge, IFES was able to better target its projects where there is both the willingness and the ability to implement the recommendations.
- 4 The ability to establish an office within the central election committees in Russia and Ukraine enabled IFES to provide constant technical assistance and advice to the Central Election Committees on a timely basis. Ready access and high visibility clearly made it

easy for the CEC to assess IFES personnel to become familiar with the support available from IFES, and to consult with IFES personnel whenever the need arose

- 5 The lack of an on-going presence in the NIS has limited IFES ability to respond to pre- and post- election events in a timely manner
- 6 IFES plays a unique role among the American NGOs supporting the democratic pluralism initiatives because its link is directly with the government of the host country and is contingent upon a formal government invitation to support its election activity For this reason special care must be exercised around all of IFES program activity in a country to ensure that the host country is aware of and concurs with its program
- 7 Voter education efforts should be consistent with efforts to enhance public understanding of the electoral process and voter participation Broader activities which could be perceived to encourage only segments of the electorate to participate in the elections should be left to other NGOs who are perceived to be working only with segments of the voters IFES should refrain from activities which may be regarded as civic education while it is working with the CEC
- 8 At this time the greatest need in the NIS appears to be for IFES support in the development of election law, election administration, vote tabulation and other technical aspects of elections This includes helping the CEC to clarify relationships between the CEC and regional and local election administration entities IFES should be encouraged to focus its resources into responding to this need

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 The revised Cooperative Agreement which is function-based instead of country-based should be evaluated to determine if it is applicable to other grantees
- 2 As the NIS moves beyond these crisis elections and reforms of the electoral process continue it may make sense to encourage IFES to establish a permanent resource center or centers to provide on-going assistance with election administration and election implementation
- 3 The role of IFES in voter education should be defined within the context of support for Central Election Commission activities to encourage voter participation in elections Efforts to foster civic education and independent domestic monitoring as part of IFES support for election activities need to be closely monitored by IFES and AID to ensure that the relationship with the CEC is not jeopardized
- 4 AID needs to develop mechanisms for monitoring on-site adjustments to its proposals once the IFES field team is established in a country This should include but is not limited to guidelines on commodity purchases, oversight of voter education programs, and coordination of activities of all American NGOs participating in election related activities

APPENDIX A LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

United States

Washington, DC

AID/EUR/NIS/DIHR

Geraldine Donnell, Director
Marv Ann Riegelman, Deputy Director
Paul Holmes, Adviser
Ilona Countryman, Project Officer
Kris Loken, Project Officer

AID/EUR/NIS/PAC

Carlos Pascual, Director
Jeff Evans, Evaluation Officer
Paul Ashin, Social Science Analyst
Afnnette Tuebner
Julie Allaire McDonald

Larry Garber

POL/CDIE/E

Gary Hansen
Harry W. Blair

Department of State

Rosemary A. DiCarlo, Director, Democratic Initiatives for the NIS

IFES (WASHINGTON)

Richard Soudriette, Executive Director
Juliana Pilon, Director of Programs
Catherine Barnes, Program Officer
Robert Dahl, Project Manager, Moscow, attorney on Elections Law
Christopher Siddall, Senior Program Officer, Former Soviet Union and East Central Europe
Sonja Sluzar, Project Director, Ukraine
Yaro Polk Kulchycky, Deputy Project Director, Ukraine

Russian Federation

Moscow

USAID

James Norris Mission Director
Robert V. Burke Deputy Mission Director
Allen Reed Program Officer
Jeanne Bourgault Program Officer
Anne Nesterczuk

U.S. Embassy

Thomas C. Niblock, Jr. First Secretary, Political Section

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Alexander IVANCHENKO | Vice Chair of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation |
| Evgenii ANDRIUSHCHENKO | Head, Analytical Division Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation |
| Valeri S. KOROBEGINIKOV | Chief Adviser of the Analytical Department, Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation |
| Peter POLOZHEVITZ | Editor, The Teachers Newsletter |

Beneficiaries

Alexei S. KOROTAEV, Director of Research, Memorial Human Rights Society

Elena V. KOTCHKINA, Central for Gender Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences

Dmitrii LLEONOV, Memorial Human Right Society

Marina MALISHEVA, Center for Gender Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences

Sergey MARGARIL, Policy Council, Democratic Party of Russia

Sergei MARKOV, Moscow State University

Georgy A. SATAROV, Director, Center for Applied Political Problems, INDEN

Mikhail SCHNEIDER, Executive Secretary of the Coordination Council, Democratic Russia Movement

Alexander SHILOV Executive Secretary of the International Committee, Social Democratic Party

Dmitrii ZHUKOV Center for Municipal Law

KIEV

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Steven Nix | Baker & Hostetler election law attorney |
| Alexander LARVYNOVICH | Former Acting Chair, Central Elections Commission |
| Ihor TSELUKO | Central Elections Commission |
| Mykola SHVETZ | Chief, Supreme Rada of Ukraine Information Systems Centre |
| Igor ZDZEBA | Chief Telecommunications Software analyst, Supreme Rada of Ukraine Informations System Centre |
| Yaroslav MAHKEVICH | Supreme Rada of Ukraine Information Systems Centre |
| Arthur Labricque | Canadian Embassy |
| Andre Bouchard | Canadian Embassy |
| Orest VASILTSIV | President Central Union of Ukrainian Students |
| Volodymyr SKOROPAD | Program Director Freedom of Choice |

Kazakhstan

Almaty

U S Mission

William H Courtney, Ambassador
Jackson McDonald, Deputy Chief of Mission
Richard O Lankford, Public Affairs Officer, U S Embassy
Charles G Buck, Director, USAID
Patricia Buckles, Deputy Director, USAID
Paula Feeney, General Development Officer, USAID
Jonathan Addleton, Program Officer, USAID

IFES

Catherine Barnes, Project Manager
Linda Edgeworth, IFES Consultant, Almaty

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**APPENDIX C PROJECT DESIGN SUMMARY
LOGICAL FRAMEWORK
IFES**

| NARRATIVE SUMMARY | OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS | MEANS OF VERIFICATION | IMPORTANT ASSUMPTIONS |
|--|--|---|--|
| PROGRAM GOAL To create the capacity for the NIS to administer its elections | Measures of goal achievement Elections take place and are judged to be more effectively administered than past elections | Staff visits to the field Review of project and progress reports Interviews with beneficiaries Evaluation findings | 1 Willingness of the respective governments to invite IFES to work in the country 2 Internal security situation in country will allow elections to take place 3 Political environment allows the CEC to operate in a non-partisan manner independent of the government |
| PROGRAM PURPOSE To enable the Central Election Commission to carry out the elections with minimal technical problems | The elections take place with minimal technical problems as verified by international and domestic observers | Same as above | That assisted organizations can properly utilize IFES support |
| OUTPUTS Pre-election assessment Guidelines for election officials Provision of election Commodities | Pre election assessments provide basis for identification of actual technical needs and feasibility of IFES project Project manager has worked closely with the CEC, assisted in the development of the training video and in the development of written guidelines Computer hardware installed to be used to produce detailed elections results | Same as above | That assisted organizations self interest will lead them to request and implement IFES advice and recommendations |
| INPUTS a) capital b) operational staff c) program direction | | | |