

DIPD Review 2013

Response by the Board of DIPD

Introduction

“A review is a management tool. It provides a service check of the quality of a programme and its management, and is primarily concerned with providing forward-looking recommendations.”

This definition is coined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2007, and it covers the essence of how this review can play a constructive role in the development of the next phase of DIPD. It is in this spirit that the Board discussed the draft review report on 30 October, and following this a number of comments, questions and suggestions have been made to the draft report, which has now been finalized by the review team.

As indicated above, a management response is also needed and relevant in order to respond to the main conclusions and recommendations presented. This response will show which steps and measures DIPD will take to address the issues raised and to implement the recommendations made. The management response is endorsed by the Board and outlines efforts, steps and commitments on the part of the political parties, on the secretariat and on the Board to address the recommendations presented in the report.

The structure of the response will be as follows:

- 1. General comments** to the analysis and findings of the review report;
- 2. General responses to the three sections** of the review report;
- 3. Specific comments and actions** suggested by DIPD.

For each recommendation, DIPD will respond and suggest specific actions to be taken. In some cases DIPD may have a different perspective than the review team on developments during the first three years, and this will be stated. In a few cases there may even be clear disagreement with the recommendation, and this will then be explained. But this does not change the general observation that the review offers DIPD a good platform for future developments.

1. General comments

The Board of DIPD is pleased that the overall conclusions of the report are positive, confirming the need and relevance for an institution like DIPD. In particular it is positive to note the teams observation that:

- *“DIPD has made impressive progress in establishing effective party- to-party and multi-party projects in a range of countries.”*
- *“It has developed a well-regarded programme of multi-party projects organised through local partners and in collaboration with like-minded organisations. It has supported the Danish Political Parties to create party-to –party partnerships in a wide range of different countries.”*
- *“It has established a new organization from scratch and built an international reputation, whilst simultaneously navigating logistical and administrative challenges.”*

Moreover, the report provides many constructive suggestions on how DIPD can strengthen its performance, which we will look at systematically in the following sections.

However, we would have wished that both the positive and critical observations had been better substantiated, and in some cases we wish that they had been more to the point.

The Board notes that (too) many of the comments made and corrections forwarded to the draft review report have not been reflected sufficiently, which in some cases continues to present the reader with an incorrect understanding of the state of affairs. As an example, the DIPD secretariat, the Danish political parties and the local partner TCD presented comments and corrections (more than 20) to the Tanzania Appendix – yet these reflections and comments have only been considered in a few cases.

In particular the Board finds it is important to stress the following overall observations.

- *It needs to be stated up front that DIPD is a **political project** dealing directly with political parties, governed by political parties and delivering ideas with the direct involvement of political parties.*
- *The report questions DIPDs **selection of countries** and describes them as opportunistic and without prior analysis. However, there has been a lengthy and detailed process taking place in the Board regarding country priorities, which has been followed by identification and scoping missions analyzing the political context and the potential for cooperation in light of DIPDs mandate.*
- *The report only mentions the **overall budget of 75 million Danish kroner** once in the report (page 10), and the distribution of the financial envelope is not presented in a systematic manner. The team's overall analysis is not presented as to how the use of these funds are organized, the size of the financial envelope for each party, the financial volume of the projects and their duration. This could have been useful to understand the overall framework.*
- *The report describes the **multi-party projects as 'development' projects rather than 'political' projects** and hereby the review team may have missed a key aspect of DIPDs work. For DIPD it is important to stress that DIPD works with **political development** and in particular with political actors. Thus, both the party-to-party projects and the multi-party projects are focused at political development in which the political parties play a central role. One example: In the Nepal project, DIPD works with 6 political parties organized in JOMPOPS – three of the parties being the three most influential parties in the country. We do not agree with the view that DIPDs work is developmental and not political. The whole idea is that DIPD works in the very juncture with political development.*
- *The team is in search of **DIPD's unique approach**, and this search is also important for DIPD when we move towards the next strategy for 2014-16. In this context, we have seen the huge investment made in the cross-party involvement in developing knowledge products like the Youth Guide and the Local Party Guide as an attempt to search for uniqueness, extrapolating Danish experiences, and doing this also in cooperation with partners in Egypt and Nepal.*

The Board has found it necessary to repeat some of the observations made earlier in the comments to the draft report, to clarify the basis for the conclusions and recommendations.

2. General responses to the three sections

Review Recommendations	DIPD Response & Actions
<p>Part I: Strategic focus and programme logic</p> <p>Although assistance to political parties remains a small part of international aid, it has grown in recent years. As DIPD notes itself, in its strategy document 2011-13, “The DIPD is beginning its work at a time when there is intense debate about the role of political parties in the development and democracy processes ...”</p> <p>In this context DIPD should retain enough flexibility to ensure that it has a diverse range of programmes, and is able to respond to political developments as they emerge. But flexibility is not a substitute for strategy.</p> <p>Equally, a strategy does not mean doing the same thing in every country. The political parties, in particular will want to retain enough flexibility to decide the most suitable entry points and activities in particular countries. But the strategy does need to provide some organisational coherence, especially between multi-party and party-to-party work.</p>	<p><i>DIPD recognizes the importance of fleshing out a strategy for the next phase which can offer both the clarity of direction requested by both Danish political parties and partners around the world, while at the same time offers the necessary flexibility required to operate in very different and often extremely demanding environments.</i></p> <p><i>But at the same time it must be recognized – that working on party-to-party capacity building involves very different requirements and different types of negotiations with relevant stakeholders than is the case for multi-party support.</i></p> <p>Specific action:</p> <p><i>It has all along been the intention to replace the existing ‘founding document’ on “Political Parties in a Democratic Culture” with a more focused and clear strategy when the first experiences had been harvested.</i></p>
<p>Part 2: Organisation, administration, capacity</p> <p>DIPD has achieved a remarkable amount of progress on a modest budget. But it needs to reflect on the roles of the constituent parts of the organisation, its internal processes and its staffing requirements if it seeks to continue at this pace. We make recommendations in three areas, on the role of the Board and Secretariat, staffing requirements and communications.</p>	<p><i>DIPD is very conscious of the need to pause, take stock of its ‘assets’, and then ensure that the different parts of the institution can deliver effectively in the next phase. Part of this will be to ensure that there is an acceptable balance between the ambitions of all involved on one hand, and the resources available to deliver on the other hand.</i></p> <p><i>As presented in the detailed section, DIPD is very appreciative of the specific proposals presented, although we do not agree on all of them or would like to implement changes in a different manner than suggested.</i></p>
<p>Part 3: Project implementation and results</p> <p>In terms of project initiation, management and delivery, there are distinctions between the party-to-party projects and multi-party projects. This diversity is a strength, but in the next phase of DIPD’s development the institute should seek to ensure a coherence of approach that informs both multi-party and party-to-party programmes.</p>	<p><i>The general observations on combining a coherent approach with diversity are supported by the Board. Regarding planning for and documentation of results the Board finds it would have been helpful with some more specific and concrete recommendations. .</i></p>

Specific comments and actions

Part I: Strategic focus and programme logic	
Review Recommendations	DIPD Response & Actions
<p>Recommendation 1:</p> <p>Staff, board members and political parties should develop a strategy which should seek to do 5 things (paras 27-33):</p>	<p><i>DIPD is in the process of developing its strategy for 2014-2016. Many of the above recommendations will be considered in this process.</i></p>
<p>→ Identify the distinctive features of the DIPD approach to party strengthening.</p>	<p><i>DIPD has identified and developed several distinctive features of DIPD's approach to party strengthening and we agree with the need to continue doing so. Unfortunately the review team has decided not to look into the achievements so far, so there is not as much guidance as we had hoped for.</i></p> <p>Specific action:</p> <p>1. The next strategy will spell this out clearly.</p>
<p>→ Provide guidance how and when DIPD should intervene. DIPD will need to develop sets of principles and guidelines as to how and when DIPD will intervene during the next phase.</p>	<p><i>The Board is determined to follow a strategy of consolidation, so the question of new sets of principles and guidelines is less appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>Moreover, it needs to be stressed that the Board has at the beginning had a strategic process around the choice of the present projects and deliberately decided that local demands and match with Danish party competences should be the guiding principle and not pre-established criteria by the Board as long as the overall principles of DIPDs mandate is adhered to and the overall objectives of DIPD informing the nature of the partnerships and projects.</i></p> <p>No specific action to be taken now.</p>
<p>→ Cohere the different elements of DIPD's work. We expect DIPD will continue to run a range of different activities, but they should be informed by clear strategic objectives.</p>	<p>Specific action:</p> <p><i>The new strategy should clearly articulate DIPDs change path, which will inform all project activities. The overall mission remains the same, but it will become clearer how the multi-party and party-to-party are two complementary entry points to achieving the same objectives. It will also be stressed that as all projects are carried out within the mandate of DIPD, the multi-party dialogue capacity is key to address in all projects.</i></p>
<p>→ Improve measurement of results. The strategy should give each project a better sense of likely outcomes and an exit strategy, to avoid a permanent presence built around ever-evolving objectives.</p>	<p><i>DIPD has all along been aware of the need to spell out the change path being pursued. This has been addressed in the "From Strategy to Results" paper discussed by the Board already in 2012. The priority given to this has been delayed in 2013 concomitant with the delay of the review report, which we hoped would provide important insights and recommendations in this regard.</i></p>



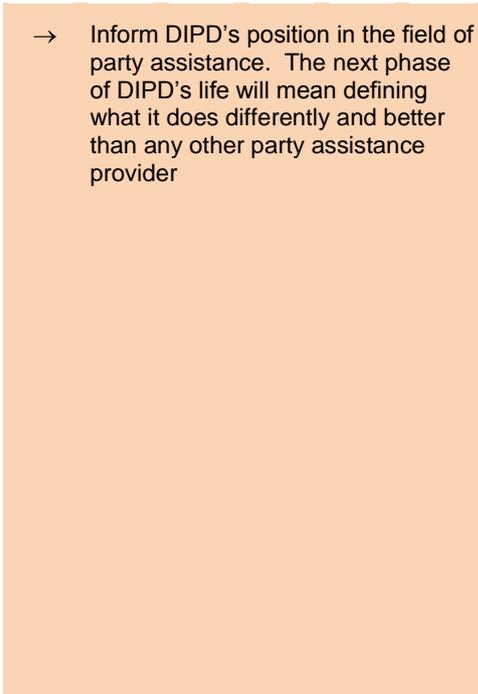
Specifically:

1. *The Change Path of DIDP will be part of the overall strategy processes underway currently, culminating in the February 2014 strategy seminar. It will also underline the need for exit strategies.*
2. *The specification of the change path will be undertaken by in-house as well as external expertise.*
3. *The planned PME system of DIDP will help us trace the results.*

The development of a PMER system has been on DIPDs activity plan for 2013-14, but has been delayed. DIDP already has several of the building blocks in place. However, the various elements need to be connected into an overall integrated system where also an evaluation policy forms part.

Specifically we suggest:

1. *Holding of a seminar on monitoring and evaluation with political parties in early December 2013.*
2. *Drafting of the overall TOR for the external assistance of developing a Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation system that is also compatible with DIPDs financial and project management system.*
3. *Drawing on the experiences of NIDM, IDEA and WMF in setting up their systems.*
4. *Outline of an overall action plan for the link between the existing elements and new elements and its operationalization in DIPDs planning cycles.*
5. *Specifically plan for thematic evaluations across the DIDP portfolio in the next cycle (2015).*



→ Inform DIDP's position in the field of party assistance. The next phase of DIDP's life will mean defining what it does differently and better than any other party assistance provider

Specific actions:

1. *DIPD will communicate the DIDP niche and specific methods more clearly in our overall communication and project planning.*
2. *DIPD will continue the work to specify DIPDs capacity development approach on the basis of the uniqueness that Danish parties bring to the table as documented in the Cross-party Working Group on Capacity Development (TAK).*
3. *The Board will endorse the commitment already given at an earlier Board meeting to provide for an "innovation pool" in the next budget phase, that will allow for the cultivation and documentation of particular DIDP approaches.*
4. *The 2013 Annual Report of DIDP will in particular seek to document and highlight the DIDP way.*
5. *Through the participation in the Global Political Party Assistance Network, DIDP also becomes more alert to our distinctiveness, which will be communicated and highlighted in DIPDs knowledge sharing initiatives with political parties.*

Part 2: Organisation, administration and capacity

Review Recommendations

DIPD Response & Actions

Recommendation 2.1

The roles of Board and Secretariat need further clarifying (paras. 41 and 42)

It appears that many decisions about project approval are formalities during Board meetings. The Board should have a stronger executive function, as the ultimate decision-maker and arbiter in disputes. The secretariat should play a role in advising the Board, and once projects are approved the Secretariat should have the authority to ensure the quality of their implementation.

DIPD agrees with the recommendation to enhance the link between parties and Board members and thereby also improve on the parties' input to the deliberations of the Board.

However, DIPD does not agree with the observation that the division of work is blurred, nor that the Board has had to help out and undertake tasks of the secretariat (if this is what the report actually suggests?).

DIPD finds the suggestion of the Board functioning as arbiter in disputes interesting, but so far no disputes have arisen in the Board. On an issue like this it would have been useful if the review team had been more specific.

The secretariat already plays the role of advising the Board and being responsible for the implementation following decisions. The blurredness in division of work between Board and Secretariat is not well explained in the report and does not concur with the observations by the Board in general.

The statement that it is not clear who is the ultimate decision-maker within the organization (para 41) appear unfounded.

Specific actions:

- 1.** *The introductory material for Board members will specify the importance of Board members consulting with the party coordinators on relevant issues prior to Board Meetings*
- 2.** *The Board will discuss at the Strategy seminar if the Board would benefit from establishing task teams on particular issues – i.e. the strategy development; etc.*
- 3.** *The secretariat and the parties will be proactive in providing exposure for the board members to DIPDs work in the various countries, preferably combined with a specific project related task.*

Recommendation 2.2

To improve Board meetings, members should have formal induction and paperwork be reduced (paras.40 and 43)

New members to the DIPD should go through formal induction, around DIPD's strategic objectives especially in anticipation of Board membership's increasing turnover as the Institute's enters future phases. In addition, given that it is not clear whether the current volume of reading material is improving the Board's functioning, we be-

The recommendation has already been acted upon since the summer of 2013, and new Board members are given special briefings by the Chair and Director, and an introductory package is given.

Regarding the amount of paper generated for Board meetings, it is useful to look briefly at how this has developed over time: In early 2011, the primary focus was on the development of the first strategy; slowly the first concrete projects were developed by parties and the institute, and it was considered important for the Board to be fully informed in order to be jointly responsible for the 'identity' of the types of partners identified.

While the initiative to have papers presented, discussed and decided upon naturally rests with the sec-

lieve that paperwork at Board meetings should be reduced.

retariat, final decisions on the points and papers on the agenda has rested with the Chairman and the Executive Committee.

It should also be mentioned that the honorarium given to members of the Board is based on a certain amount of time allocated to prepare for the meetings. Self-evaluations undertaken over the period show that a majority of members feel that there is a reasonable balance between the honorarium and the amount of papers.

Specific action:

- 1.** *The issue raised by the review report will be included in the self-evaluation planned for the beginning of 2014 regarding the work of the Board in 2013.*

Recommendation 2.3

DIPD needs more project and admin staff to carry on at the current level of activity (paras. 45-47)

DIPD needs more project and administrative staff to carry on at the current level of activity. DIPD and MFA could consider allocating a portion of project funds to hire more project staff to meet the Secretariat's increasing workload.

DIPD agrees with the finding that DIPD needs more project and admin staff to carry on at the current level of activity. This was the overall observation at the last DIPD retreat, and the issue has been touched upon by several Board members on various occasions.

The ways to make a better balance are several. The secretariat is presently forced to follow a strategy of reducing time and involvement in projects to make ends meet. But our own experience and the recommendations from the Review points to the need to use more time in developing innovative approaches, involving the political parties, developing hands-on methods, in sustaining existing partnerships, etc. In other words, measures to reduce the workload of the secretariat may also reduce the "value added" of DIPD and be contrary to DIPD's very motto, that "we don't just transfer money – but ideas".

Alternatively, DIPD can reduce the number of projects, but it is found that the current portfolio is well composed. It has also been suggested that DIPD can seek other sources of funding, as indicated below.

Specific actions:

- 1.** *The Secretariat will estimate time use on key work areas and estimate secretariat resources required when planning.*
- 2.** *The existing student assistant position is fully pre-occupied with information and communication tasks, so a student assistant to support the project work and one to support the administrative functions, in particular filing, needs to be considered.*
- 3.** *The practice of having an on-the-job training position with government subsidy will be continued, and care will be exercised that the tasks assigned are fitting well for a temporary position.*
- 4.** *In case of large delegation visits in DK organized by DIPD, designated support from the political parties will be bought and brought in to avoid the permanent staff having to manage this additional time with their overtime.*
- 5.** *Large scale events like Christiansborg and KV13*



will bring in ad-hoc experienced event management staff, possibly from the political party organisations - to avoid bottlenecks in the Secretariat.

- 6.** *An assessment will be made of the project implementation requirements in all multi-party projects to identify if other organizational models can reduce the work load.*
- 7.** *The new human resources policy of DIPD will explicitly address the issue of work balance and adopt appropriate measures to enhance appropriate coordination and prevent overload and risk of stress.*
- 8.** *DIPD has been given the same overall financial frame with the same distribution on the two pillars, and this logically means that if DIPD intends to go beyond this, diversification of funds may be an option. Not to expand the portfolio, but to provide more in-depth involvement, greater critical mass in the existing projects, better advisory services, more innovative approaches, etc. An increase in external funding (in cash or in kind) will be sought – especially in cases where the generation costs are considered reasonable.*

Recommendation 2.4
DIPD needs to create the role of Chief Operating Officer (para. 48)
 DIPD needs a Chief Operating Officer to oversee project management, internal structures and processes, and office management. The COO post would improve internal functioning and communication

Additional staff both in the programme section and in the areas of administration would undoubtedly be an advantage from both a work-life balance point of view and from office management points of view.

However, with limited financial resources available, choices have to be made, and DIPD does not see sufficient evidence in the report for this particular recommendation. (See also recommendation 2.6).

No specific action will be taken.

Recommendation 2.5
DIPD should seek greater in-house political expertise (paras. 49 and 50)
 The fact that the majority of staff come from a development background has not presented particular problems for DIPD, but greater political expertise would improve project planning and management, and links with the political parties. This expertise might be through the employment of new staff or the secondment of party staff to the secretariat

DIPD agrees to the general thrust of this recommendation, although it is not entirely clear with the limited arguments presented that there is the direct link between party background and improvements in project planning and management as indicated by the report.

It should also be noted that all recruitments since the very beginning have always mentioned the importance of attracting people with a background, one way or the other, in the political party area. Some applicants have also had such a background, but surprisingly few actually.

Specific actions:

- 1.** *Be creative to identify ways to continue to enhance the involvement of party political expertise in the projects through involvement in planning, thematic working groups, task-specific hiring, joint missions, etc.*
- 2.** *As the majority of staff has a strong expertise in democratization and political change processes, it will in particular be the **party** political expertise residing in the political parties that it will be relevant to draw on.*

Recommendation 2.6

DIPD needs more in-house financial expertise (paras. 51-53)

DIPD is dependent on external accountancy support to fulfil auditing and accounting requirements. But DIPD needs in-house finance support to help staff to analyse project finance, forecasting and budgeting

DIPD agrees that this is needed at this point in the development of DIPD.

Specific action:

1. A financial officer will be employed in the Secretariat to take care of financial project support for both multi-party and party-to-party projects and to undertake key financial functions relation to DIPDs overall annual budgets and accounts, etc.

Recommendation 2.7

DIPD needs to ensure its communication strategy runs through the organisation (para. 54)

DIPD needs to ensure that the communications strategy is absorbed and operationalised by the various parts of the organisation. The internalisation of that communications strategy depends on clear messages being reinforced from the Board and through the staff and political parties.

DIPD agrees with this recommendation, but also finds that it repeats what is already in DIPDs communication strategy and what DIPD is already working hard to achieve. One aspects of this is that the political parties also provide material for the website in particular, and that they use their own communication channels to inform about DIPD. While the situation may not be ideal, it has certainly improved over the last year. The recent KV13 Study Tour has seen a lot of good information material from several parties. But more can obviously be done.

It is suggested that 'clear messages' from the Board can contribute, but it is not clear from the report what this amounts to concretely. The Board of course can be seen to send messages through the adoption of a certain strategy, but apart from this the DIPD Board has not been playing a role in this area.

Specific action:

1. Communication will continue to be part of the relationship between the secretariat and the parties.

Recommendation 2.8

Communications material should highlight multi-party and party-to-party work (para. 55)

DIPD's communications material should emphasise both the multi-party and party-to-party aspects of its work, highlighting consistently the links between the two strands of work and the aspects that are common to both as part of the Danish approach to party strengthening.

DIPD agrees with the recommendation, but would also argue that this has already been the case, both in the annual reports and in the brochures published. In the stories on the website, the specific examples of Egypt and Tanzania, where both types of projects take place, this has also been a key dimension.

But it is also a fact that the work is still at a very early stage, and both types of projects have had their hands full in getting off the ground. It is likely that the 'link' will become more visible in the coming years.

DIPD also considers the following observation to be important: "The political parties are expected to contribute to the communications through their own resources, and there does not appear to be a high level of awareness within the parties of the communications strategy." (para 55). This need to be improved.

Specific action:

1. DIPD will strengthen the 'link aspects' of its communication, through the publication of specific stories that can illustrate the link in reality.
2. More effort will be invested in strengthening cooperation between the secretariat and the parties.

Recommendation 2.9

Communications material should emphasise DIPD's strengths (para. 56)

Much of DIPD's communications appears hesitant about its work, and the likelihood of success. In the next phase DIPD should be clearer in its publications about what it is doing, why it is doing it and what results it expects to achieve.

DIPD believes that as soon as the results of our work start to show, it will naturally be much easier to present examples of success stories. But we also believe that we need to communicate the difficulties and complexities and even failures that will necessarily be there when you operate in a very sensitive area of work.

As also mentioned in the response to the draft version of the report, we disagree that the type of communication can be interpreted as "hesitancy about its work". It should rather be seen as an honest communication about how difficult this work can be, and the undeniable fact that not much evaluation of past investments in this area has been done, according to experts like Thomas Carothers.

Specific actions:

- 1. DIPD will be alert to this recommendation in the next publications and communications, making sure that it cannot be misunderstood.*
- 2. The 2013 Annual Report will be an opportunity to work on this, because the idea is to present stories that show how we have delivered compared to the ideas we had to start with.*

Part 3: Project implementation and measuring results

Review Recommendations	DIPD Response & Actions
<p>Recommendation 3.1</p> <p>DIPD should continue to support the parties to build their capacity to initiate and manage projects (paras. 61 and 62)</p> <p>The ability of the parties to run party-to-party projects varies significantly. In developing the DIPD approach to party-to-party work we believe DIPD should continue to develop best practice amongst the parties, and encourage the sharing of knowledge and lessons learnt within and between the parties.</p>	<p><i>DIPD agrees, and it will be given priority as before in the annual planning – moreover new measures will be taken to this end. The review report notes that among parties “there was a demand for a higher level of support in project delivery”. (para 64)</i></p> <p><i>The report only mentions the monthly meetings among coordinators, but the Secretariat is both pro-active and responsive in support to project delivery.</i></p> <p><i>The Secretariat not only organizes monthly informal brown bag networking meetings, but also bi-monthly lessons learned democracy seminars covering particular themes (political analysis, etc). Moreover, ad hoc joint seminars are organized with the parties i.e. on voluntary engagement in the political parties’ projects, political developments in Swaziland, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Finally, cross-party working groups have been initiated on youth, local party organisation and DIPDs capacity development approach. The secretariat also communicates training opportunities to the political parties and functions as a knowledge bridge to the international community. Lately, training courses have been held in political party programming and management.</i></p> <p>Specific actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>It is hoped that the on-line launch of the Global PPPNetwork, developed by the network of international party support institutions, will link up DIPD more easily with the international knowledge hub.</i> 2. <i>Solutions need to be found, as it is a challenge for the party staff to find time to participate in these capacity development activities</i>
<p>Recommendation 3.2</p> <p>Political parties should have a greater involvement in the planning and implementation of multi-party projects (para. 67)</p> <p>The institute risks not properly utilising the expertise of the political parties in the design of multi-party projects, unless there is a more systematic and routine form of discussion on such projects. This might be achieved by including the party project managers in a pattern of Board meetings, consultations by the secretariat, or extraordinary meetings of the Board to examine opportunities identified by the parties.</p>	<p><i>DIPD agrees in broad terms with the challenge identified by the review, and would like to add that the substantive inclusion of the political parties in the multi-party projects has been on the agenda all along.</i></p> <p><i>DIPD would also like to state that there has been substantive involvement in both Nepal and Egypt already, although this has not been recognized by the review to the extent that DIPD thinks would be reasonable. Danish party political expertise has been a prominent feature in developing both the Youth Guide (Egypt) and the Local Party Guide (Nepal). Training in Egypt has directly involved members of the youth wings, and parties have been involved in training in Nepal as well.</i></p> <p><i>The multi-party projects are defined by taking departure in the needs and opportunities of political parties in the cooperation countries, and often party political expertise is also drawn from within the region or from other party political actors in the country as well. This has been the case in Zimbabwe, where direct involvement from the Danish parties so far has not been re-</i></p>

requested or needed; also the case of Myanmar, where party representatives will contribute in 2014; and the case in Bhutan, where a long preparatory phase has been necessary, before party representatives start getting involved.

Specific actions:

1. The Board will define the way forward in this area as part of developing the new strategy, and the Board will follow developments through the normal reporting taking place at every meeting.
2. The Board will consider ways of involving party coordinators in the deliberations of the Board when specific proposals are on the agenda, ensuring that this will not compromise the normal rules for the decision-making procedures.
3. The next phase of long-term multi-party programming for Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Egypt, Tanzania and Zimbabwe will include specific proposals for party involvement, based on discussions with the multi-party platforms being supported.
4. The Danish parties will also be encouraged to consider how cross-political and multi-party expertise can be of value in their bilateral projects.

Recommendation 3.3

The secretariat’s role in advising, monitoring progress and ensuring quality across all projects needs to be more clearly defined. (paras. 62 – 64)

At present the secretariat is performing multiple roles in designing, amending, approving, managing and monitoring all projects. The secretariat is the only part of the institute that can ensure proper process and progress. The secretariat should be given clear authority by the Board to monitor and call to account.

DIPD agrees with the observation of the role of the secretariat to ensure proper process and progress, and it is our understanding that this is also understood by most of those involved in implementing DIPD-funded activities.

The key documents on Approval Procedures outline the role of the Board and the secretariat, and a DIPD Note describes the secretariat’s role in advising, monitoring progress and ensuring quality across all projects.

However, the recommendation is very general, and it is difficult to see what the operational implication is.

No specific action to be taken.

Recommendation 3.4

The secretariat needs to encourage flexibility in project implementation (paras. 62 and 65)

DIPD has emphasised the importance of flexibility in its approach. But project implementation is occasional inflexible. We believe that refinements to the reporting system should allow project managers to vary activities and outputs, but still retain a focus on the project’s outcomes.

DIPD has been aware of the challenges that the MFA regime for fund management poses to the political parties and to DIPD projects in general. But it has been a matter of principle that DIPD should not question the MFA framework or negotiate a “lex DIPD”.

We also take note of the mention in the report that “DIPD has made great efforts to conform to the MFA’s reporting structures. However, some of these processes have created rigidity and an administrative burden for the organization which may, in the long-run, undermine its ability to deliver.” (p.4)

Specific actions:

1. DIPD will seek a dialogue with the MFA on these issues, but this will not be an effort to argue for a special regime for DIPD only.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. In the 2014-16 period, project documents for a three year project cycle framework will be pursued, with budgets and activity plans at a less detailed level than has been the case in the first funding period. This should meet some of the concerns about detailed planning and flexibility (obviously parties will still need to do detailed annual action plans). 3. Annual refresher courses will be held on the programmatic guidelines and the management guidelines for the political parties. 4. The final reporting format has four key questions and does thus not require much work. The periodic reporting will in the future be annual and thus be less work demanding and allowing for more flexibility. However, the less frequency of reporting will require better on-going monitoring of the projects.
<p>Recommendation 3.5</p> <p>Involvement of local project partners (para. 69)</p> <p>DIPD should seek to involve project partners more closely in the development of projects. We hope that as DIPD evolves so it will develop a format for developing proposals which incorporates partners at every stage.</p>	<p>DIPD agrees with the recommendation, and it is our understanding that this is already being implemented where ever possible.</p> <p>From the very beginning in 2011, the appraisal process and format for new projects has underlined the involvement of the local partner. The special funding for project development approved by the Board in 2013 emphasizes a joint planning process. The cooperation agreement with partners also stress the joint partnership. This aspect is also at the forefront in the draft DIPD partnership approach.</p> <p>But it can obviously be argued that good intentions have not been reflected through the reality on the ground, whether it is about multi-party or party-to-party programming. Various explanations can be offered:</p> <p>One such reason is that this has been new territory for most of the Danish parties; there is no doubt that joint or shared planning is much more normal today than at the beginning.</p> <p>No specific action to be taken.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3.6</p> <p>Partnerships with implementing agencies (paras. 70- 72)</p> <p>Communication and collaboration with other implementing agencies should be a priority in country. We recognise that DIPD has sought to engage with other agencies and we hope that DIPD will continue to make great efforts to co-ordinate and collaborate with other agencies.</p>	<p>DIPD agrees with the observation that a lot of attention and effort has been devoted to this. It has taken many forms and shapes, but just to mention a few examples, because the review report in par. 71 points to instances where coordination could have been better – without documenting this in any way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → DIPD has from the start been very active in sharing information in Nepal, but unfortunately without this being reciprocated by much larger institutions; → DIPD has done a lot of mapping in Myanmar, making sure that we know what institutions like IFES, IDEA, IMS, NDI and UNDP are doing; DIPD has actively involved several of these organisations in its programme; and DIPD has been part of initiating regular meetings for political party support agencies; → DIPD took the initiative to start closer cooperation and coordination among Nordic Community, as

	<p>part of the Christiansborg Seminar in 2012;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → DIPD is an active participant in the Global Community, despite the limited human resources available. → All DIPD project proposals need to account for the activities and possible synergies with other related agencies in the same field. <p>No specific action to be taken.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3.7</p> <p>Reporting procedures should be streamlined so they create less work (paras. 63/73-74)</p> <p>Although we commend DIPD on developing a very thorough system of reporting, we believe that this is overly elaborate. We urge the MFA and DIPD to identify ways in which the level of reporting can be reduced without compromising accountability.</p>	<p>Contrary to the argument of the report, we believe that reporting formats for the projects currently are quite simple, and the final reporting format has only four key questions (as mentioned in 3.4.).</p> <p>With the new three year cycles, the reporting will be annually and not bi-annually, thus reducing the reporting load.</p> <p>However, DDP welcomes the need to discuss with MFA how the overall progress of DIPD should be reported on, and to ensure that DIPD in the process of presenting its new three year plan is not unduly drawn into an indicator regime that makes little sense.</p> <p>We agree with the reports observations regarding alternative forms of monitoring and results documentation.</p> <p>Specific action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The issue will be discussed with the MFA as part of the drawing up of a new agreement for 2014-16. As previously indicated, this will not be done to establish a special "lex DIPD".
<p>Recommendation 3.8</p> <p>An effective progress management system should combine quantitative and qualitative indicators (paras. 75-78)</p> <p>Providing DIPD with the 'holy grail' is way beyond the scope of an evaluation. We suggest that DIPD seek a system which combines measures of quality and quantity, distinguishes between correlation and causation, and is aware that the wrong indicators mean you end up doing the wrong things.</p>	<p>DIPD is very appreciate of these observations, in a hugely contested territory that seems to present difficult challenges to both small and large institutions.</p> <p>Specific actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress monitoring systems combining qualitative and qualitative data are envisaged to be developed together with the planned PME system for DIPD, which is to be integrated with or linked up with our financial management system. 2. DIPD will draw on international expertise in the field and arrange for learning visits to likeminded organisations. 3. DIPD is not planning to develop global indicators, which in the political field have proved to fail. DIPD will rather be working on tracing change in "result fields" and along the "chain of change".