

Institutional Support to Civil Society Organisations in Nicaragua

Final Evaluation
Final Report

**Lars Eriksson
Lola Ocón Núñez
Ruth Santisteban
Maaria Seppänen**

Impact Consulting Oy Ltd
November 2012

ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
ALAC	Anti-Corruption Legal Advice Centre
AOP	Annual Operating Plan
AOT	NGO Alliance for Transparency (Nicaragua)
CAFOD	Catholic Agency For Overseas Development
CCSICA	Consultative Committee of the Central American Integration System
CEAP	Centro de Estudios y Análisis Político [Political Analysis and Research Centre]
CENIDH	Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos [Nicaraguan Centre for Human Rights]
CGR	Contraloría General de la República [Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic]
CINCO	Centro de Investigación de la Comunicación [Centre for Communications Research]
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development – Great Britain
EIRENE	Internationaler Christlicher Friedensdienst
EUEOM	European Union Electoral Observation Mission
EyT	Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia [Ethics and Transparency Civic Group]
FADES	Programme for Strengthening of Self-Management for Social Development, Chontales, 1995-2003 (Finnish)
FED	Reproductive Rights Fund
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation
IBIS	International Bistand, International Solidaritet (Danish NGO)
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IEEPP	Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas [Nicaraguan Institute of Strategic Studies and Public Policies]
INIFOM	Nicaraguan Institute for Municipal Development
INKOTA	German ecumenical development organisation
ISCSO	Institutional Support to Civil Society Organisations
LiD	Life in Democracy Programme
MAEF	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
MHCP	Ministry of Finance and Public Credit
MINED	Ministry of Education
MINSA	Ministry of Health
MuniTIC	Integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the sector of Municipal Management and Decentralisation, 2006-2010 (Finland)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NOVIB	Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Bijstand (Dutch organisation for international development cooperation)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OAS	Organisation of American States

PDDH	Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos [Office for the Defence of Human Rights]
ProGestión	Municipal Management and Local Development Strengthening Programme in Boaco, Chontales and Zelaya Central, 2004-2008 (Finland)
PYM	Local Cooperation Fund/Paikallisen yhteistyön määräraha
RAAN	North Atlantic Autonomous Region (North Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua)
REDCEPAZ	Red Centroamericana para la Construcción de Paz y la Seguridad Humana [Central American Peace Building and Human Security Network]
TI	Transparency International
UN	United Nations

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
1. INTRODUCTION	10
2. CONTEXT	12
3. THE EVALUATED INTERVENTION	14
3.1 Introduction	14
3.2 Fundación Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia (EyT)	15
3.2.1 Description of the organisation	15
3.2.2. Description of the project (strategic plan) and Finnish support	16
3.2.3 Specific aspects of the municipal evaluation	17
3.2.4 Anticorruption, transparency and accountability	18
3.3 Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas (IEEPP)	19
3.3.1 Description of the organisation	19
3.3.2 Description of the program (strategic plan) and Finnish support	20
3.4 Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos (CENIDH)	21
3.4.1 Description of the organisation	21
3.4.2 Description of the programme (strategic plan) and Finnish support	22
4. FINDINGS	23
4.1 Relevance and Design	23
4.1.1 Introduction	23
4.1.2 Ética y Transparencia (EyT)	24
4.1.3 Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas (IEEPP)	24
4.1.4. Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos (CENIDH)	25
4.2 Effectiveness and Impact	25
4.2.1 Introduction	25
4.2.2 Effects and impact on governance, transparency and accountability	26
4.2.3 Results, Effects and Impact on Human Rights; CENIDH	28
4.3.1 Introduction	31
4.3.2 Ethics and Transparency	31
4.3.3 IEEPP	32
4.3.4. Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos (CENIDH)	33
5. SUSTAINABILITY	35
6. AID EFFECTIVENESS AND FINNISH VALUE ADDED	36

7. CONCLUSIONS	36
8. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	37
8.1 To Finland and Other Cooperation Agencies	37
8.2 To Civil Society Organisations	38
9. LESSONS LEARNED	38

Annex I Sources and Documents Consulted

Annex II Interviews

Annex III Terms of Reference

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Terms of Reference for this evaluation indicate that “during 2010–2012, the Government of Finland has financed two civil society support programmes in Nicaragua, “Institutional Support to Civil Society Organisations” and “Life in Democracy”, which are coming to an end during the second half of 2012. The most important point to note is that the purported programme to be evaluated is not actually a programme. It is in fact a group of three independent projects with two common characteristics: i) they receive economic support from Finland for implementing their respective strategic plans, and ii) they are implemented by Nicaraguan non-profit or civil society organisations. Therefore, it is not possible to evaluate the advantages or disadvantages of a “programmatic approach” (as called for in the TORs). Instead, it is correct and fair to evaluate each of the three supported organisations and the implementation of their respective strategic plans as separate and independent projects. The three organisations evaluated are: *Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos* (CENIDH), *Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia* (EyT) and *Instituto de Estudio Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas* (IEPPP).

The evaluation was made by a team of four consultants who, in turn, had the task of evaluating the Life in Democracy programme, also funded by Finnish cooperation. It has been necessary to organise the work very conscientiously with a view to visit and interview an adequate representative sample of all categories of stakeholders: Municipal Evaluation Committees (for transparency assessment) committees, municipal officials, human rights promoters, government authorities and donors. A way to ensure this has been to optimally balance the individual and collective work of the team members. The main methods used for collecting information were: semi-structured individual interviews, focus groups, discussions and analysis of abundant documentation. The three organisations have shown great willingness and ability to facilitate the work of the evaluation team in different ways. Officials from the Embassy of Finland were also very willing to support the evaluation team in the search for documents and in arranging interviews with people who were difficult to contact for the evaluation team. Special thanks are due to all these colleagues.

The set of institutional support projects for civil society organisations (ISCSO) was the result of several factors, both external and internal, in Finland’s cooperation policy regarding the changing political situation in Nicaragua and the subsequent reformulation of cooperation priorities among donors. Previously (until 2005), Finland had supported civil society organisations within the framework of the Local Cooperation Fund, aimed at civil society organisations with legal status. In 2007, as a result of the parliamentary elections in Finland, there was a shift in Finland’s cooperation policy, standing out, among other initiatives, the withdrawal of Finland from the Budget Support Group. The origin of the “programme” under evaluation dates back to the decision of Finland (and four other donors) to withdraw from the Anticorruption Common Fund in February 2009 and the subsequent decision to include three civil society organisations in a support programme (a meta-programme called Transparency and Accountability).

In this context, the term “civil society institutional support” means that external funding is granted for the implementation of the strategic plans of each organisation. Finland has not been involved in the strategic or operational implementation of the activities carried out by the organisations. Project monitoring by Finland appears to have consisted of analysing and approving the annual operating plans and quarterly audits. Therefore, Finnish support for the implementation of the strategic plans of the three organisations is, to a large extent, budget

support. This modality has ultimately defined the support for all three organisations as a "programme".

Brief description of the beneficiary organisations

The Nicaraguan Centre for Human Rights (*Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos*) is a non-profit civil organisation formed in May of 1990. It is conceived as a social, humanitarian and non-partisan organisation dedicated to promoting and defending human rights comprehensively, with gender and generational approaches. CENIDH has become a national reference organisation in the defence of human rights in Nicaragua, maintaining a high level of credibility and presence in various related issues, and creating among the population a new vision and understanding of the effective exercise of human rights. Its scope of work is mainly national, but it also carries out policy advocacy work in international and regional spaces (UN and OAS). The organisation is headquartered in Managua and has affiliates in three departmental capital cities. It has four programmes: defence and denunciation, institutional strengthening, advocacy and promotion, including education, communications and a documentation centre. CENIDH aims to promote a culture of human rights among the population through education and popularisation of the doctrine of human rights. It has a broad network of human rights promoters (volunteers) in a good part of the national territory.

Ética y Transparencia (EyT) is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan organisation founded in 1996. EyT has stood out in the Nicaraguan scene especially in election observation, and it has a network of 12,000 volunteers distributed in 153 municipalities throughout the country. The other scope of action of EyT is the fight against corruption. In recognition of this work, EyT was officially appointed national chapter of Transparency International (TI) in 2003. EyT is responsible for preparing national reports on corruption rates for Transparency International. It is also responsible for preparing civil society reports on the periodic review of the conventions of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations (UN) against corruption, signed by the Nicaraguan State. It is in this field that EyT has been supported by Finland, mainly at the municipal level. A large percentage of EyT's partner municipalities in recent years are concentrated in the area where Finland has implemented municipal projects for more than a decade (Boaco, Chontales and Zelaya Central). From this perspective, EyT's work has been a continuation of the projects that were at that time FADES, ProGestión and Municipal ICTs (MuniTIC). Parallel to the municipal evaluation, EyT has carried out activities and initiatives in the field of anti-corruption, especially in the formation of national and international networks on transparency and accountability.

Founded in 2004, IEEPP is a non-partisan, non-profit civil organisation dedicated to improving and supporting citizen participation in public affairs and providing conceptual and methodological support on public policies for good governance. Its strategic objective is to strengthen cooperation relations between civil society and decision-makers to increase transparency and efficiency in public administration, based on the promotion of an informed, public and responsible dialogue between the two sectors by: i) providing information, technical and academic tools to decision-makers, national leaders and civil society that allow them to properly substantiate their public policy proposals and decisions, and; (ii) advancing in the consolidation of the legal and administrative frameworks and instruments that enable civil society control and competences in the formulation of security and defence policies consistent with national development plans. IEEPP has four areas of work: research and analysis, dissemination of information, advocacy and support for strategic partners, and partnership building and strengthening. Its work is focused on two main themes: public administration transparency and efficiency and democratic security. Its work is aimed at the following target

groups: parliamentarians, civil servants, civil society organisations working on these themes and the media.

Findings

In a context such as Nicaragua, characterized by high political discretionary power, systemic corruption on a large or small scale, and historically rooted (neo)patrimonial state and state capture, all initiatives against corruption and in favour of transparency, probity, democratic governance and human rights are highly relevant. Similarly, in a hybrid political context that combines democratic and authoritarian traits, where spaces for political participation and citizenship building are increasingly reduced and the state is hostile towards democracy, restricting enforcement of the constitutional order, all initiatives that encourage citizen participation and defence of political and civil rights are welcome and relevant. The modality called institutional support has been highly relevant in the three cases evaluated. This support has been soundly used for true organisational and institutional strengthening. Support in the form of one or more projects would not have allowed for achieving the same level of strengthening.

In terms of effectiveness and impact, it should be underscored that Finland has funded permanent or recurrent activities, rather than projects with "a pre- and post-intervention situation". Therefore, an evaluation model based on a logical framework cannot be strictly applied inasmuch as the effects and impact are mixed or confused with results and even activities. Where effects can be determined with a little more certainty is in the area of organisational and institutional strengthening, and a more or less strong positive impact on institutional strengthening can be observed in all three cases. In the case of EyT and IEEPP, an impact is observed, although subdued, on legislation (Public Servants Probity Act, National Boundary Act and Public Acquisitions Act, to name a few). In the municipal field, municipalities with the best ranking in transparency (EyT) have been able to capitalise their good ranking to attract additional external cooperation. Studies produced by IEEPP are read by parliamentarians, especially by the opposition, but also unofficially by the majority, and it is disseminated with some frequency by the media. As regards the work carried out by CENIDH, the impact is the multiplier effect of the denunciation, accompaniment and promotion actions that foster mobilisation for filing complaints, denouncing and defending against acts of injustice. CENIDH defenders have a high level of professional credibility among departmental and municipal authorities, who do not necessarily trust the permanent staff of the relevant public institutions. The same is true for citizens in general.

In summary, to the extent that intelligent public debate spaces have shrunk in recent years in Nicaragua, we consider that the work carried out by organisations like CENIDH, IEEPP and EyT is very justified and useful, be it directly by solving urgent specific problems or indirectly at the level of shaping public opinion and educating citizens in the long term.

In terms of efficiency and management, a common denominator has been a lack of financial stability owing to Denmark's sudden departure that has affected the level of implementation of the Finnish funds in 2011 (due to the need to first use the Danish funds). Following Denmark's departure, Finland assumed the financial side, but without the equivalent amounts of what would have been the Danish contribution. Reduced cooperation, especially from European donors ("like-minded" or Nordic+) has reduced the spaces for manoeuvre of these organisations, which are heavily dependent on external cooperation.

CENIDH, EyT and IEEPP have existed for 20, 16 and 8 years, respectively. They have worked in their respective areas during four, three and two governments, both liberal and socialist. The three organisations have the necessary technical capacity and professional experience to continue working on their own. The main threat to their continued existence is economic. In their specific areas of work, it is difficult for these organisations to generate income from the sale of services and cannot expect any financial support from the State, especially at the present time, but rather the opposite. The other threat is political in nature. The attitudes of confrontation – or antagonism – between these organisations, on the one hand, and the government, on the other hand, are very strong. In short, the scenario in which these analysed organisations work is quite conflicting, shifting and insecure. Continued international support would mean much to improve their chances of continuous existence and work. In the short term, it is essential to help preserve some degree of political pluralism in order to defend human rights and recover or improve democratic governance in the country.

In conclusion, it can be stated that "institutional support" is a good instrument when it is aimed at organisations with sufficient professional and technical capacity to take advantage of the flexibility of this modality.

Recommendations

- ✓ In all three cases, it would be convenient to continue cooperating under the modality of institutional support.
- ✓ Finland could consider greater focalisation where its previous ProGestión and MuniTIC programmes worked well. It has been observed that these projects have left a footprint that still facilitates work for strengthening local governments and enhancing transparency.
- ✓ It is recommended to combine (strengthen) institutional support projects with some transfer of Finnish technology (coaching, internship programmes, study visits, etc.) and not limit them to purely economic support. This, however, should not subtract autonomy from the recipient organisations regarding the strategic and operational implementation of their projects.
- ✓ When opting to provide cooperation through the modality of "institutional support", it should be remembered that the idea behind this modality is to place the primary responsibility of the project or programme in the hands of the recipient partner. This being the case, it is contradictory to exercise an excessively detailed oversight of the executing institutions (either one trusts them or one does not). It is more justified and useful to engage in substantive technical and strategic monitoring and one way to do this is to add an expatriate technical specialist to the project(s), who can combine monitoring with advisory work and transfer of technology (dialogue).

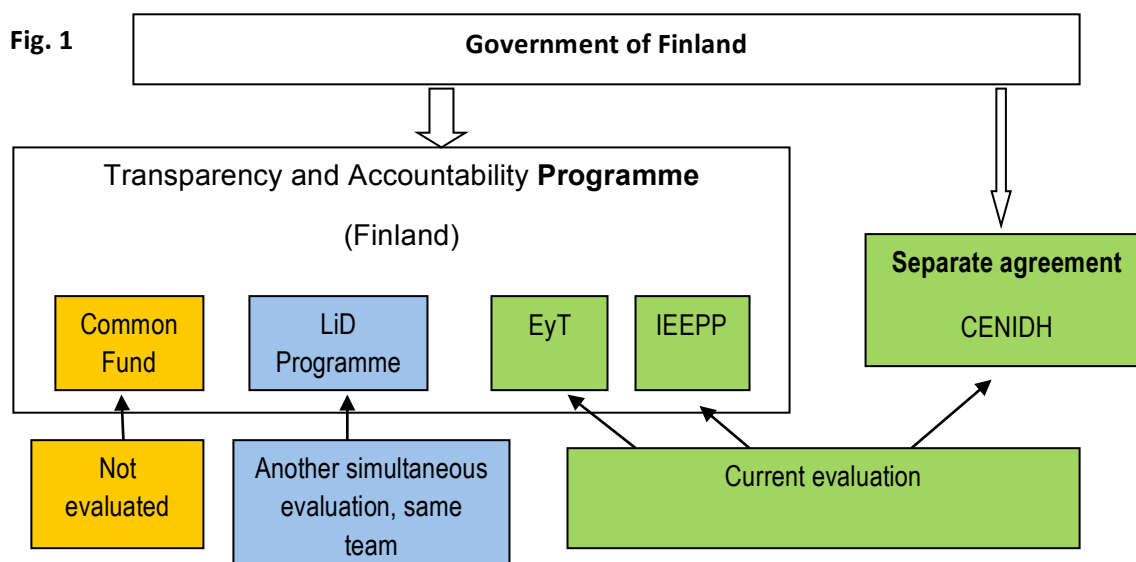
1. INTRODUCTION

One important point to be noted in the introduction of this final evaluation report is that the purported programme to be evaluated is not actually a programme. It is a group of three independent projects with two common characteristics: i) they receive economic support from Finland for the implementation of their strategic plans, and; (ii) they are executed by Nicaraguan non-profit organisations or civil society organisations, if we prefer to call them that way. Two of these organisations work in the area of governance, transparency and accountability: *Fundación Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia* (EyT) and *Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas* (IEEPP). The third organisation is the *Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos* (CENIDH), whose name describes its area of work (human rights).

The terms of reference for this evaluation¹ indicated that "during 2010-2012, the Government of Finland has financed two programmes to support civil society, i.e. "Institutional Support to Civil Society Organisations in Nicaragua" and "Life in Democracy Programme" (LiD), which end in the second half of 2012. In the initial phase of the evaluation, a dialogue was held with the Finnish Embassy and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, in which the following was clarified:

"In reality, there is no programme called 'institutional support to civil society', but a larger programme called 'transparency and accountability programme', which includes support for the strategic plans of EyT and IEEPP, Life in Democracy [Programme] and Common Support Fund for civil society. The latter, however, is not evaluated on this occasion. On the other hand, support for the strategic plan of CENIDH was approved separately and does not form part of the [transparency and accountability] programme."²

The situation described above can be graphically seen in the following "organisational chart" (Fig. 1). This issue is commented in greater detail in Chapter 2 – Context.



¹ See the complete TORs in Annex IV.

² Comment to the Inception Report received on August 24 from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (own translation).

This somewhat cumbersome analysis is included in the introduction of the report because it is necessary to explain why it is not possible to evaluate the advantages or disadvantages of the 'programmatic approach' in this case (as called for in the TORs) and why it is correct and fair to evaluate each of the three organisations and the implementation of their respective strategic plans as separate and independent projects.

The evaluation was made by a team of four consultants who had the task of also evaluating the Life in Democracy programme as mentioned above. In the two programmes evaluated, not less than 10 organisations have been involved, one of which has been involved in both. Between these organisations and the two programmes, a large number of municipalities and communities have been covered with a highly diverse cluster of beneficiaries and stakeholders in different parts of the country. This means that the work had to be organised very conscientiously in order to visit and interview an adequate representative sample of all types of agents who could provide useful information and viewpoints, including Municipal Evaluation Committees (for transparency assessment), municipal officials, human rights promoters, government authorities and donors. A way to ensure this has been to strike an optimal balance between individual and collective work of the team members.

The main methods used for collecting information were semi-structured individual interviews, focus groups, discussions, and analysis of abundant documentation. A small survey of participants/beneficiaries of the two programmes was also conducted to try to capture something about their levels of knowledge and opinions regarding the current socio-political situation in Nicaragua. A preliminary analysis of the responses showed that the survey could not make any reliable and useful contribution to the evaluation, based on a rigorous statistical analysis, as the intention had been. The main reason is the great heterogeneity of the actors involved in the programme in different ways. Nevertheless, the work done to carry out the survey produced some qualitative information that was useful for the evaluation.

The evaluation team had available a large number of documents related to the implementation of the strategic plans of the three organisations (agreements, plans, different types of reports, etc.). Most of this material was initially provided by the Embassy of Finland in Nicaragua and then it was successively completed with other documentation provided by the partner organisations. It has been a rather demanding task to manage all of this documentation since it was received in a far from systematic manner.

On the other hand, the three organisations have shown great willingness and ability to facilitate the work of the evaluation team in other ways. EyT and CENIDH have been efficient in organizing field visits and have even offered transportation. CENIDH also helped to organize a one-day organisational self-evaluation workshop with some 30 participants, where the evaluators had the chance to deepen their analysis of the efficiency and effectiveness of this organisation and the impact and sustainability of its work. IEEPP, which only works in Managua, provided very useful support in contacting relevant actors in the public sector (parliamentarians, police) and facilitated its premises for meetings. Officials from the Finnish Embassy were also very willing to provide support in the search for documents and in arranging some interviews with people who were difficult to contact for the team. We express our thanks to all these colleagues.

2. CONTEXT

The set of projects aimed at providing institutional support to civil society organisations (ISCSO) was the result of several internal and external factors related to Finland's cooperation policy and to the changing political situation in Nicaragua and the subsequent reformulation of cooperation priorities among donors.

On the Nicaraguan side, the installation in early 2007 of the government of President Ortega and the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) meant the termination of a "liberal" or "neoliberal" phase that had lasted 16 years. Now the intention was to construct a new model for economic, political and social development, called Citizens' Power – included in the National Plan for Human Development. In this way, the government hoped to create a direct democracy based on the participation of the citizens. According to this model, the participation is channeled through a new entity with local roots, the Citizens' Power Council (CPC), which should be the principal tool for ensuring the satisfaction of the people's interests when making decisions and so embody the idea of a "President People". However, the Citizens' Power system turned into an instrument for injecting the government's and the ruling party's ideas into the population (top-down) instead of a channel of communication of proposals and ideas from the grass-roots level to the rulers. Now began a process of reducing spaces of action for the civil society organizations that did not agree with the government's policies.

A 2009 study on the popular ideas about democracy in Nicaragua, which served as a basis for the formulation of another programme supported by Finland (Life in Democracy) contains the following very skillful analysis³ of the official discourse, the situation of the civil society and the possible grounds of common interests between the two elements.

"Official discourse

- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are instruments of the parties (opponents) and behave as political adversaries.
- CSOs play roles imposed by the international cooperation in accord with a neoliberal project, in opposition to the new revolutionary government project.
- The problem is only with a politicized segment of intellectuals from CSOs that have their own political project in opposition to the FSLN and the Government.
- The CPCs are the true organised expression of the popular sectors and represent a revolutionary alternative to the spaces co-opted by false representatives.

The situation or position of civil society

- Nicaraguan civil society continues to be weak and is limited by the weakness of the state institutions.
- There are no democratic political channels to articulate the demands and interests.
- There is a culture of corruption within the state environment.
- There has been a decrease in social public services.
- Persistent generalised poverty.
- Tendency of the CSOs to take on tasks that should be carried out by the State, especially in the areas of social services and defence of human rights; this could result in a further weakening of the state institutions.

³ Belli, Antonio y Pineda, Claudia: *Construcción de una nueva identidad – Vida en Democracia*; presentación en PowerPoint, sin fecha.

Possible common points of interest

- Strategies for strengthening civil society that include a more specific vision on how to also strengthen the State.
- A need to build trust in the institutions, their democratisation and social control.
- A strategy to revert structural poverty by modifying the structure of inequality, profit redistribution and access to social services.
- A strategy of incentives for the more dynamic sectors of the economy and small and medium enterprises, based on the individuals' capacity to create their own opportunities."

Until 2005, Finland on its part had supported civil society organisations within the framework of the Local Cooperation Fund (PYM in Finnish), aimed at civil society organisations with legal status, according to the guidelines and strategies of each embassy. The Paris Declaration in 2005 and the position of Nicaragua at that time, as part of the pilot initiative of 14 OECD/DAC *partner countries*, which arose after the Rome High Level Forum (2003), resulted in two common support funds for NGOs at national level: the Gender Equality and Reproductive Rights Fund (FED) and the Civil Society Fund for Democratic Governance, as a result of which the Local Cooperation Fund ceased to function as a separate mechanism. The two funds continue to operate to date, although the Governance Fund stopped operating for a period of time between two phases.⁴ According to the regulatory framework of these funds, it is only possible to provide funding to individual Nicaraguan NGO projects.

In 2007, there was a shift in Finland's cooperation policy due to the results of the Finnish parliamentary elections in March of that year, standing out, among other initiatives, the withdrawal of Finland from the Budget Support Group and the introduction of a support plan (officially called "participation plan") as of 2008. In May 2009, the political guidelines for Finnish cooperation in Nicaragua established direct support, especially to non-governmental organisations, as a priority.

Internal documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFAF) justified the new initiatives for support to civil society organizations with the argument that the weakness of the Nicaraguan public administration had caused problems for the so-called programmatic cooperation. It was pointed out that the dialogue with the governmental counterpart was feeble, that it was difficult to obtain adequate information and that there was no transparency in the use of public finance. The rendering of accounts to the country's tax-payers as well as to the donors was considered unsatisfactory. This meant that the promotion of good governance and rule of law could be done better with the civil society than with the government.

The ISCSO programme, even though it only had two components (EyT and IEEPP), as compared to the current three, formed part of a large 'package' to support non-governmental organisations. More specifically, this 'package' of various 'components' (Life in Democracy and Governance Fund), which was justified in the same document, is called "Transparency and Accountability Support Programme" and has a single code of intervention in the MFA administrative and accounting systems.

The origin of the Finnish transparency and accountability (meta-)programme dates back to the decision made by Finland, DfID, Denmark and Germany to withdraw from the Common Donor Fund against Corruption in February 2009. Of the programmes included in transparency and accountability, the only one that already existed was the Governance Fund, as mentioned earlier. In the financing proposal to the MFA in 2009, it was "packaged" together with the

⁴ To see how the funds operate, visit www.fed.org.ni and www.fondogobernabilidad.org.ni.

participation of Finland in LiD and the support to IEEPP and EyT. It is worth mentioning that at this point in time Finland and Denmark were working together in all of this (incl. IEEPP and EyT). The initial contribution of Finland was made to support and complete the larger contribution made by Denmark.

Finland, along with a vast majority of the European donor countries (plus some others) had participated in the Anticorruption Fund since its inception in 2002. However, in 2009, it was deemed that the new government plan presented to the donors did not fulfil its role because it did not include contributions to civil society, the media,⁵ universities, and/or the private sector in relation to their projects or proposals in favour of anticorruption. It proposed to focus support on the Attorney General's Office, then strongly partisan, following a pattern that resembled direct budget support. As a 'farewell gift' to the Anticorruption Fund, Denmark and Finland funded a study on corruption in Nicaragua⁶ and at the same time began to plan and formulate new programmes to support civil society (among others, Life in Democracy).

The four components of the transparency and accountability (intervention code 36420301) programme were: 1) Municipal Transparency (EyT); 2) Transparency in Public Administration (IEEPP); 3) Governance Fund and; 4) Life in Democracy. Although it has a single intervention code in the MFA, in practice components 3 and 4 have been considered as independent from the other two components, which were then seen as a single programme of institutional support to civil society, along with the support for CENIDH (which has another intervention code). The Governance Fund is managed by an international NGO (IBIS Denmark) and Life in Democracy took on a life of its own, completely separated from the rest.

Apparently, what ultimately united all three organisations in an ISCSO programme in the eyes of the MFA, was the institutional support modality, that is to say, financing the implementation of the strategic plans of the organisations. In other words, the fact that a kind of "budget support" was given to the organisations marked the identity of this purported "programme", to the extent that they were placed in the same evaluation bag, along with the TORs for this joint evaluation. However, even in 2010 when Denmark withdrew and Finland took over, IEEPP and EyT appeared as two components of Transparency and Accountability in their operating logical frameworks (and the absence of CENIDH stands out).

The proposal to include CENIDH in a programmatic support was presented to the MFAF in September of 2010. In the background documentation, the proposal is justified with the observation that, over the last few years, there has been a regress in the consolidation of democracy and the respect for human rights in Nicaragua. It is pointed out that the human rights violations have uncovered the weaknesses in the rule of law; the government institutions do no longer support the fight against these violations: the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman has become politicized.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED INTERVENTIONS

3.1 Introduction

As pointed out and discussed in Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Chapter 2 (Context), this evaluation focuses on three projects with three independent organisations that only justify the

⁵ For example, Norway's support to UCA's investigative journalism came from the Anticorruption Fund.

⁶ Peñalillo et al, 2009.

epithet "programme" in a very formal or administrative way from the perspective of the donor. There is no operational interdependence between the three projects. On the other hand, they are similar in one important aspect: the nature of the Finnish support and monitoring.

It has been confirmed in multiple interviews and corroborated in various documents that the Embassy of Finland has not been involved in the implementation of the strategic or operational activities based on its support. Nor has Finland provided technical assistance. The Finnish monitoring of the projects has consisted mainly of analysis and approval of the annual operating plans and quarterly audits. Even though the latter have been management audits that also try to evaluate the degree of fulfilment of the operating plans (activities), it can be stated that Finnish support for the implementation of the strategic plans of the three organisations has, to a large extent, the nature of budget support. In this context, it should be recalled that the title "programme" contains the adjective "institutional support". In discussions with representatives of the Embassy of Finland it has been clarified that this term does not refer to "institutional strengthening" or "organisational development", but refers to the modality of "institutionalised programme" that is used in the Embassy to denote an intervention that is "owned" by the partner/recipient organisation in the spirit of the Paris Agenda.

In view of the above, it is necessary to briefly describe each of the three organisations and their strategic plans, which in this case are the objects and *raison d'être* of the Finnish support.

3.2 Fundación Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia (EyT)

3.2.1 Description of the organisation

Ética y Transparencia (EyT) is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organisation founded in 1996 by a group of intellectuals, academics, entrepreneurs and respected political figures. EyT has stood out in the Nicaraguan scene, especially in election observation, and it has a network of 12,000 volunteers distributed in 153 municipalities throughout the country.

The first election in which they participated as observers was in 1996 when they started to use the "quick count" methodology at the exit of the polling stations. Thanks to this methodology, throughout its history EyT has been able to monitor and control official figures, confirming in some cases the official results against allegations of fraud and, in other more frequent cases, verifying irregularities. The quick count methodology developed by EyT has been "exported" and has been used internationally, among others, in Colombia, Guatemala, Dominican Republic and El Salvador, and it has been presented at international conferences, for example, in Mexico and Spain.

The other field of action of EyT is the fight against corruption (along with transparency and accountability). In recognition of this work, EyT was officially appointed as national chapter of Transparency International (TI) in 2003 and it is a member of TI's network of national chapters in Central America. In recognition of EyT's international reputation, it held the presidency of the Lima Agreement⁷ in 2005-2008. EyT is responsible for drafting national reports for TI's annual report on corruption (and for the Corruption Perceptions Index and Global Corruption

⁷ The Lima Agreement is a network/coalition of civil organisations in favour of anticorruption at a continental level (Latin America and the Caribbean).

Barometer Survey). It is also responsible for preparing the civil society reports on the periodic review of the conventions against corruption of the Organization of American States (OAS) and United Nations (UN), signed by the State of Nicaragua, and the implementation at national level of the recommendations expressed in the reviews, especially as an input for parliamentary legislative work.

It is in the area of transparency and fight against corruption that EyT has been supported by Finland, mainly at the municipal level. The vast majority of EyT's partner municipalities in recent years are concentrated in the area where Finland has conducted municipal projects (Boaco, Chontales and Zelaya Central) for more than a decade. From this perspective, the work performed by EyT in the context of institutional support to CSOs has been a continuation of the projects that were then FADES, ProGestión and Municipal ICTs (MuniTIC).

3.2.2 Description of the project (strategic plan) and Finnish support

In January 2010, EyT signed a financing agreement with Finland for a total of 814,357 Euros for 2010-2012. The first disbursement was made shortly after the agreement had been signed and the annual amounts released came to about 295,500 Euros in 2010 and 252,643 Euros in 2012. The signed agreement follows the standard format of Finland's agreements and conventions in the context of external contracting. The modality was institutional support for the implementation of the institution's strategic plan.

EyT's Strategic Plan 2009 – 2013 describes the external political environment in three points: a) a strong political-partisan bias that leads to political polarization and creates complexity in the electoral processes; b) the international financial and economic crisis, and; (c) the closure of observation spaces and restrictions on access to information in some government branches. It establishes as a strategic objective: "To contribute with ethics and professionalism to the strengthening of the democratic system and governance in Nicaragua, promoting citizen participation, public probity and management capacity of the state." Concurrently, activities aimed at institutional and organisational strengthening would be developed.

Based on the lessons learned in the previous plan, the core issue in the 2009-2013 Strategic Plan was summarized as "a strong increase in wrongful practices and widespread corruption, inefficiency and ineffectiveness of government institutions". To address this issue, the plan proposed three lines of work, called areas: Governance Area (election observation), Transparency Area (municipal governments and anti-corruption culture), and Justice Area (observation of access to justice). On another level, the fourth area would be institutional and organisational strengthening. Of these, Finland was in charge of financing the areas of transparency and institutional and organisational strengthening, and Denmark was supposed to finance the rest, but the plan was seriously affected by the sudden departure of Denmark. The 2009-2013 Strategic Plan, as designed in 2009, was based on a budget of US\$9 million for the period 2009-2012, which finally amounted to US\$3-4 million after all contributions were added up.

Due to the drastic reduction of the budget that affected the implementation of the Strategic Plan, there were no activities in the area of justice as of 2010. Other major factors have also contributed, among others irregularities in the appointment of Supreme Court Judges, whose appointments were extended without the parliamentary ratification required by law and the institutional and political struggles that made it difficult to access government information. In

the course of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, EyT made a (wise) decision to focus on a smaller number of areas in order to be more effective.

EyT's work in the area of transparency, probity and accountability originally began in 2005 with funding from the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The administrations of the ministries, other government institutions and local governments were evaluated in terms of how contracting and procurement processes were managed. In the municipal governments, compliance with the Citizens' Participation Act [Ley de Participación Ciudadana] was also evaluated, especially in relation to the municipal budgeting cycle, as well as access to information regarding municipal investments and other uses of public funds.

Until January 2007, EyT worked with 120 municipalities whose administrations represented the entire range of political parties that exist in the country. As of January 2007, access to official bodies was blocked and 72 municipalities managed by the ruling party had to stop participating in the programme's training and other activities. After the 2008 municipal elections, all Sandinista local governments denied access to public municipal information⁸ and EyT was left with some twenty municipalities that were still cooperating with the municipal evaluation, giving access to information. In addition to this 'yes' group, EyT worked with some forty municipalities that denied access to public information, having developed a different methodology for this situation.

Parallel to the municipal evaluation, EyT has carried out activities and initiatives in the specific field of anti-corruption. This outcome from the Finnish support is described in a separate subchapter below.

3.2.3 Specific aspects of the municipal evaluation

In the municipalities where the municipal administration gives access to public information, EyT forms Municipal Evaluation Committees, consisting of 4 members: one representative from the rural areas, another from the urban areas, a coordinator (usually but not always EyT's municipal coordinator) and a person who is respected by all (for example, a priest, an engineer, a Red Cross representative, or similar). The committee and the municipal administration are trained in the management of the evaluation forms that at first glance look very complicated. In total, there are 78 indicators of transparency, participation and legality based on the main laws that govern the operations of the municipalities:

- Municipality Act and Municipal Budget System Act
- Citizens' Participation Act
- Municipal Contracting and Procurement Act

The forms also include elements from the Public Officials Probity Act, especially those referring to the annual income and asset declaration and its verification by third parties. The indicators consider different scores in cases where a copy of the original voucher was obtained, where the original could be visually seen, or where it was only verbally reported. As a result, the evaluation has sometimes implied significant expenditures in the municipal budgets, especially in municipalities that do not have a photocopier (another complaint in some municipalities was ecological because of the amount of paper needed for photocopies). The vast majority of the participants in the evaluation committees are women and many of them are young. The content of the indicator forms is summarised in Table 1.

⁸ According to field interviews, this refusal to carry out the municipal evaluation was based on "orders from above", against the personal will of some mayors.

Table 1: Indicators for Municipal Transparency Evaluation

Transparency, citizen participation and budgetary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organisation and dissemination of municipal council discussions - existence of municipal development committees - probity of mayors and council members
Progress in participatory budget process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - publicity and dissemination of activities - participatory budget preparation, formulation, regulation and enabling process
Financial and administrative performance in the management of the municipal budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compliance of the timetable of the Municipal Budget System Act - delivery of the approved budget to CGR and INIFOM - successful execution of the budget per programme - compliance with and reports on the principles and rules of the Municipal Budget System Act. - existence of a database of identified taxpayers - collection of fees and taxes, existence and application of procedures manual, existence of inventories, updated organisational charts, staff performance evaluations, etc.
Evaluation of recruitment system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advertising and dissemination of general procurement programme - formation and composition of tender committees - existence of competitive bidding documentation and means for challenging contracts - transparency in the submission, opening and evaluation of tenders, etc. - transparency in the exclusion procedures - quality of the supervision and evaluation of public works - evaluation of citizen participation and gender equity in municipal contracts

In the municipalities that do not give access to information for one reason or another (which according to the Public Information Act should be accessible to all citizens), EyT forms and trains the evaluation committees that fill out the same forms as in the 'yes' municipalities. The difference is that they use methods "from outside". The committees, both in the 'yes' and 'no' municipalities, felt that the training provided by EyT adequately prepared them for the task. Another EyT activity at the municipal level has been the promotion of public information offices.

The results of the municipal evaluations are published and the three best qualified municipalities receive a monetary or in-kind award (computer equipment, for example). The municipalities of Boaco, Chontales and Zelaya Central, where ProGestión and MuniTIC were implemented, are almost always at the top of the list as the best municipalities in transparency and probity. It is hard not to think that this is due to the previous Finnish programmes that fostered both transparency and citizen participation in municipal affairs.

3.2.4 Anticorruption, transparency and accountability

During the time of the Finnish support to EyT – and thanks to it – the organisation has focused efforts on two major initiatives. The first is the Nicaraguan NGO Transparency Alliance (AOT) and the second is the Anticorruption Legal Assistance Centre (ALAC).

The first call to Nicaraguan non-governmental organisations to form a coalition for transparency and accountability was made in 2010. Some 50 NGOs responded and finally 30 organisations and associations remained in the initiative. An underlying idea was to unite so as to defend from legal and physical harassment that at that time was being directed by the government against civil society. In 2011, EyT organised a forum on civil society accountability at national level with the participation of 125 organisations from eight departments of the country.

The Alliance has brought Latin American experts to train organisations, and its membership in the Latin American network/coalition for transparency and accountability was signed in 2012.⁹ EyT and IEEPP were delegated as signatories to the agreement on behalf of AOT. Currently, seven organisations are filling out the accountability forms, which follow a standard continental format. EyT is part of AOT's national coordination group.

The other area of work in the field of anticorruption is the Anticorruption Legal Assistance Centre (ALAC). It is a global platform¹⁰ developed by Transparency International (TI) and delivered (in March 2012) to its 60 national chapters and, consequently, to an equal number of countries, seven of which are Latin American countries. The platform has a space for reporting alleged cases of corruption and it guarantees legal and practical assistance to the complainants before the competent authorities. So far, about 30 complaints have been received. More publicity is needed for this site which, for example, has no link to EyT's web site.

3.3 Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas (IEEPP)

3.3.1 Description of the organisation

IEEPP is a non-partisan, non-profit civil organisation dedicated to improving and supporting citizen participation in public affairs and providing conceptual and methodological support on public policies for good governance. It pays special attention to the analysis of national and regional processes that contribute to strengthening transparent and democratic public administration. IEEPP is inserted in civil society through a management scheme that involves the organisation of efforts to generate public policy proposals. It connects with the State by serving as a point of reference and space for dialogue, and by influencing decision-making and the formulation and control of public policies for better governance.

IEEPP began to operate in 2004. In 2006, an area of work was established to analyse situations and processes that favour public sector transparency, a better poverty reduction strategy approach and responsible management of public budgets.

Given the nature of its work – mainly producing and disseminating research – IEEPP does not have a large physical presence outside Managua like CENIDH and EyT. In its main and sole

⁹ www.rendircuentas.org Regional Initiative for Transparency and Accountability of Civil Society Organisations in Latin America and the Caribbean.

¹⁰ <http://www.alac.org.ni/>

office located in the capital city, IEEPP currently has 23 employees, of which 6 work in the administrative area, 3 in communications, 7 in the governance programme, 5 in the democratic security programme and 2 in general management.

3.3.2 Description of the program (strategic plan) and Finnish support

IEEPP submitted its 2009-2012 Strategic Plan proposal to the Embassy of Finland in Nicaragua (among other donors) at the end of 2009 and requested support for its implementation. The strategic objective of this plan is to strengthen cooperation relations between civil society and decision-makers for increasing transparency and efficiency in public administration, based on the promotion of an informed, public and responsible dialogue between the two sectors. This means: i) providing information to decision-makers, national leaders and civil society, as well as technical and academic tools that enable them to properly substantiate their proposals and decisions on public policies and; (ii) advancing in the consolidation of institutional, legal and administrative frameworks and instruments that enable civil control and competence in the formulation of security and defence policies consistent with national development plans.

The 2009-2012 Strategic Plan sets out four strategies:

1. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS: GENERATION OF EVIDENCE

Produce diagnostic reports on public budgets, institutional performance for poverty reduction and attention to children, public security, foreign policy, public contracting, audit of public investments in the water sector, military and police budgets, etc. Research studies seek to offer concrete proposals that could improve public policy and budget decision-making, striving to make them accessible to those people who are directly or indirectly involved in the design and implementation of public policies. Therefore, the research reports are written in a simple but methodologically rigorous language.

2. DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION: SOCIALIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Disseminate the information that is produced to key decision-makers and to organisations or bodies which generate public opinion, with the objective of visualising to them the results of the research activities. It seeks to expand knowledge and ownership among citizens of the themes studied by the Institute. Dissemination is carried out through the distribution of research reports to the bodies described above, as well as public debates and reflections. An essential component in the dissemination is the www.iepp.org web site. A newsletter is also distributed twice a month to more than 1,500 people throughout the hemisphere, regarding events, news, or situations that have to do with the issues analysed by the Institute.

3. ADVOCACY AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Advocacy is understood as the ability of the Institute to establish and develop a dialogue with decision-makers, other civil society organisations and social networks interested in improving public policy management and performance. An essential element of the advocacy process is that IEEPP is recognized by the political and social actors participating in the dialogue as a body capable of analysing and preparing policy and budget proposals. Advocacy and support to strategic agents and partners is the level of work that allows for exchanges and an analytical and constructive dialogue between the Institute and the various agents or actors of the

legislature, civil society, and executive branch, who work on, or benefit from, the public policies organised and implemented by the state.

4. BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING ALLIANCES

IEEPP bases its work on the conviction that the building of alliances facilitates intervention and impact in public policy-making. The Institute is linked to coalition initiatives that enable dissemination of its work proposals at all levels: i) to territories where it is relatively difficult to access information, being a member of the Local Development Network and the Civil Coordinator¹¹; (ii) to government decision-makers, by working in alliance with the legislative branch; (iii) to the public in general, by working in alliance with the media and; (iv) to the international community, by participating in initiatives such as CCSICA, which supports democratisation of the Central American integration process, and REDCEPAZ, a network of NGO in Central America in the field of security.

In accordance with the Strategic Plan, IEEPP operates three programmes: (i) trans-parency and effectiveness of the public administration; (ii) democratic security; and (iii) alliances with strategic actors. Added to this is an area of institutional strengthening of the organisation itself. Each of these three programmes has qualified full-time human resources and a team of associated researchers. The Plan also defines, under each programme, various lines of work, as well as the expected results, main activities, outcomes and target groups. For example, the public administration transparency and effectiveness programme is divided into two lines of work. The first primarily refers to the analysis and monitoring of social policies. The second line of work deals with the analysis of public budgets and social programmes.

The target groups for the first line of work were public officials, other civil society organisations working with these subjects, and the media. Here, the Strategic Plan proposed to make:

- Seven studies per year to be submitted to the public sector on public policy options regarding social issues, especially oriented towards poverty reduction and attention to vulnerable groups.
- 14 analyses of draft bills and regulations that contribute to poverty reduction and environmental sustainability, in coordination with IEEPP's strategic partners.

In January 2010, the Embassy of Finland, on behalf of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, signed an agreement with IEEPP for a total of up to 642,857 Euros for a period of three years (2010-2012) to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan, which translates into staff salaries and administrative costs of the organisation (60%), as well as studies, dissemination and other specific activities in the field of governance and democratic security (40%). These percentages are calculated on basis of the particular format used for the budgets; obviously, what is classified as salaries for the staff contributes directly to the production and distribution of the research reports. The Finnish support has covered approximately one third of IEEPP's overall budget during these three years.

3.4 Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos (CENIDH)

3.4.1 Description of the organisation

¹¹ An umbrella organisation of NGO (Coordinadora Civil)

CENIDH is a non-profit civil organisation founded in May 1990. It is conceived as a social, humanitarian, non-partisan organisation dedicated to the comprehensive promotion and defence of human rights with a gender and generational approach. The institutional objectives of CENIDH are:

- a) To promote the participation of local actors to defend and demand effective exercise of their rights;
- b) To form national and international alliances for strengthening complaints and information activities as well as joint actions to influence public policies.
- c) To promote public laws, policies and plans to protect the rights of vulnerable sectors through social participation and to develop non-formal educational processes with different sectors of the population.
- d) To encourage public denunciation and monitoring of the enforcement of laws by the population, by generating critical awareness and promoting the defence and self-defence of human rights.
- e) To strengthen CENIDH's management and technical capacity, in order to raise its levels of influence and impact, improve its organisational and functional structure in line with its vision, mission and institutional objectives, and develop a systematisation policy for its internal work processes.

CENIDH has become a lead organisation in relation to human rights in Nicaragua, maintaining a high level of credibility and presence in various related issues, and it has managed to generate a new vision and understanding of the effective exercise of human rights among the population. Its scope of work is mainly national, but it also carries out policy advocacy actions in international and regional forums, such as the UN and OAS. The organisation is headquartered in Managua and has affiliates in the departmental capitals of Chontales, Matagalpa and Estelí. From its headquarters, it has recently started operations in the mining triangle in the RAAN. For the development of its work, it has four programmes: defence and denunciation, institutional strengthening, advocacy and promotion, including training, communications and a documentation centre. CENIDH has received support from various international cooperation agencies, both official and NGO-type, to finance its activities.

CENIDH aims to promote a culture of human rights among the population through education and popularization of the doctrine of human rights, for which practical application of that knowledge is very important, using formal and informal defence mechanisms. The beneficiaries of this education programme are persons whose rights have been affected, those who wish to work as volunteer promoters, as well as community leaders, youth, people in popular and historically marginalised sectors, organisations, associations and unions that want to engage in denunciation and defence work. These people are organised in popular human rights promotion committees, which receive different types of complaints and seek resolutions before the respective authorities. These committees make up the "Padre César Jerez" network in honour of one of the founders of CENIDH. For their educational work, they have a manual of 8 modules on basic knowledge of human rights and manuals on specific topics. They have a code of ethics, which regulates the functioning of the promoter committees and the exercise of the rights and duties of the promoters, as well as a series of technical tools and guides for continuous institutional performance improvement in the defence and promotion of human rights.

3.4.2 Description of the programme (strategic plan) and Finnish support

Finland contributed to CENIDH, institutionally, within the framework of the Finnish Civil Society Fund from July 2000 to June 2004. This made it possible to establish an office in Chontales, which at that time had no financing. Later there was a dialogue between CENIDH and the Government of Finland regarding the possibility of providing institutional support to the organisation, which was concretised in an agreement signed by the two parties in December 2010 for the amount of 594,806 euros. These funds were to be transferred to the organisation in three disbursements: 154,806 Euros in 2010, 220,000 Euros in 2011 and finally 220,000 Euros in 2012. The allocated amount would be used to cover the costs of implementation of CENIDH's Strategic Plan.

In 2011, the Embassy of Finland contributed an additional amount of 70,000 Euros, with the intention that it be used to establish an office in the Mining Triangle.¹² However, CENIDH did not commit itself to this initiative but decided instead to start working in the Atlantic Coast region without establishing a permanent office and using the resources of local human rights organisations in the region. This way it could not only be present but also create spaces for cooperation and learning in advocacy, defence, denunciation and promotion processes, in alliance with actors of civil society in the Caribbean coast, thus respecting local forms and structures in the zone.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Relevance and design

4.1.1 Introduction

In a context such as the Nicaraguan one, with a highly discretionary political power, large and small scale systemic corruption, historically rooted in patrimonialism and the captured State¹³, all initiatives against corruption and in favour of transparency, probity and democratic governance are highly relevant. Not in vain, Finland's guidelines against corruption are gaining importance; this is reflected, for instance, in the recent publication of an anticorruption handbook for development practitioners.

Similarly, in a hybrid political context that combines democratic and authoritarian traits¹⁴ and where spaces for political participation and citizenship building are increasingly reduced and the state is hostile towards democracy, restricting the application of the constitutional order,¹⁵ all initiatives that encourage participation and defence of political and civil rights are relevant.

The modality called institutional support has been very appropriate for the three cases evaluated; it has been well used for true organisational and institutional strengthening. A support in the form of one or more traditional projects would not have achieved the same level of institutional strengthening as "institutional support" (budget support for the implementation of the Strategic Plan). For further comments on this point, see 4.2.3.

In order to analyse the relevance and design of the three projects or interventions, it is necessary to first refer to the respective agreements signed by Finland and these

¹² Name applied to the area between the mining towns of Bonanza, Rosita and Siuna in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN).

¹³ For details, see Peñalillo et al, 2009, Saldomando et al, 2012, Seppänen & Virtanen, 2008.

¹⁴ State of the Region, Chap. 6, citing sources from The Economist Intelligence Unit of 2010.

¹⁵ State of the Region, Chap. 8; also OAS 2011 and EUEOM 2012 on the irregularities in the last elections.

organisations. In all three cases, the agreements refer to the strategic plans of the respective organisations, without adding any specification in relation to the cooperation objectives or expected results. Hence, the three strategic plans and their respective annual operating plans should be used as project documents since no other such documents exist. It is also useful to take into account the background of the organisations.

4.1.2 Ética y Transparencia (EyT)

For the municipal administrations that voluntarily participated with EyT in the entire process of municipal evaluation (training for evaluation, compliance of indicators, and access to information), the effort is relevant because elected municipal officials rarely have prior academic training or specific knowledge about legal issues concerning the rights and obligations of the municipalities and their citizens, and they possess very little managerial capacity. The inhabitants of the municipalities do not always know their rights, or feel they do not have the power to demand respect for their civil and political rights. However, the quality of public services provided by the municipal governments depends, to a large extent, on social monitoring (or audit) by the citizens. Citizen control is particularly relevant in relation to municipal contracting and procurement, especially as regards ordinary exclusion procedures, taking into account that a legal void was left in the Municipal Contracting Act (Act 622) that allows for discretionary powers in the authorization of exclusion procedures by the municipal councils.¹⁶

From the viewpoint of Finnish cooperation in Nicaragua, the work of EyT in the municipalities in Boaco, Chontales and Zelaya Central has been extremely relevant from a historical perspective. Without the municipal evaluations carried out by EyT, both in the municipalities that gave access to information and those that did not, all that had been previously achieved in terms of the quality and extent of citizen participation, the formation and operation of the municipal and departmental development committees would have fallen in disuse, and all Finnish investment in the area through FADES I (mid-1990s) would have been lost.

With its support to EyT, Finland has been able to help preserve at least some of the dynamics and transparency that existed until the 2008 municipal elections within 'its' municipal area of action, although access to public information in compliance with the Public Information Access Act remained blocked in most of the municipalities as of January 2009. This observation is at the same time a verification of the impact of Finland's support to EyT.

4.1.3 Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas (IEEPP)

This project is clearly relevant for the same reasons that have been discussed in the previous chapter, namely the need to defend civil rights and public administration transparency and efficiency, seeking to influence decision-making in the area of national policy-making. IEEPP does this by preparing diagnostic reports and proposals on public budgets and institutional performance and actively working to channel them to the different government branches and public opinion shapers. This work is currently being done in a situation where all the powers of the State are controlled or dominated by the ruling political party.

There are very few institutions or organisations in Nicaragua dedicated to this type of research, so IEEPP fills an important gap in this respect. For example, it is worthwhile to mention the

¹⁶ Perez García 2012.

support provided by the organisation to different members and committees in the National Assembly, who lack other facilities and resources to conduct research for doing adequate legislative work.

4.1.4 Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos (CENIDH)

Without a doubt, institutional support for CENIDH has been highly relevant in relation to the need for adequate management of human rights in Nicaragua. This organisation has filled a void, of greater or lesser size, left by successive governments, to such extent that some officials in the public sector understand that CENIDH is the body responsible for education and promotion in this area (and not just a civil society organisation that is dealing with this voluntarily).¹⁷

The design of the Finnish support to CENIDH is represented by the organisation's Institutional Plan for 2008-2011. In the available documentation, it can be seen that CENIDH commissioned an external evaluation of its work between 2001 and 2006. CENIDH first had an Institutional Plan for 2005-2009, which took into account the recommendations of the evaluation. Then it developed an Institutional Plan for 2008-2011 and decided in 2011 to implement it through annual operating plans.

In CENIDH's planning, two different processes or concepts are mixed: the institutional strategy and the plans that make the institutional strategy operational. So it is possible to improve CENIDH's strategic planning in order to optimise its performance in a scenario of great demand for interventions combined with scarcity of resources.

4.2 **Effectiveness and impact**

4.2.1 Introduction

In cases such as CENIDH, EyT and IEEPP, it should be underscored that what Finland has financed are permanent or recurrent activities rather than projects with "pre- and post-project" situations. Therefore, an evaluation model based on a logical framework cannot be strictly applied because what is normally called effects and impact are mixed or confused with results and even activities. In other words, evaluating the work of CENIDH etc. is like evaluating the work of a hairdresser or dentist. It is easy to determine whether they produce an adequate number of haircuts or oral implants of good quality, that is to say, results. Without a doubt, this has effects and impact on the quality of life of the people who have enjoyed the referred results, but it is virtually impossible to determine, with some degree of objectivity, the characteristics and magnitude of such effects.

Where the effects can be determined with a little more certainty is in the area of institutional strengthening of the organisations themselves, when the intervention has included such thing, then it is possible to differentiate more clearly between a pre- and post-situation after the project.

¹⁷ The evaluation team, with assistance from the Embassy of Finland, requested an interview with the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman, but received a negative answer.

4.2.2 Effects and impact in the area of governance, transparency and accountability

Ética y Transparencia

EyT's Strategic Plan for 2009-2013 defined its development objective as strengthening governance in Nicaragua and transparency in public administration. The objective had three indicators: TI's Corruption Perception Index, the governance indicators of the World Bank, and the national country risk index in/for Nicaragua. In this regard, it can be said that a single civil society organisation, no matter how influential it may be in some aspects, can only minimally influence these indicators. There are too many external factors beyond the control of the organisation. Strictly speaking, there is no impact from the Finnish support because TI's Corruption Perception Index remains the same (2.5 out of 10) after 2008, while it had been one-tenth of a point better between 2003 and 2007¹⁸ (Table 2). The figures in the World Bank governance reports also remain stagnant with a low in 2010.¹⁹

Table 2: CPI Nicaragua (Transparency International)

Year	Index (max. 10)	Range
2004	2.6	97/145
2005	2.6	107/158
2006	2.6	111/163
2007	2.6	123/180
2008	2.5	134/180
2010	2.5	127/178
2011	2.5	134/158

In some of EyT's work areas no signs of impact can be seen as yet. In this category one can mention the ALAC site for denouncing corruption that was inaugurated six months ago and still has not completed and resolved any complaint processes. Also the training and strengthening of the AOT Alliance for NGO Transparency and its membership in the continental network of organisations *Rendir Cuentas* could be included here. These initiatives are recent, and it will take at least a few years before any impact can be seen, either at the level of individual organisations or at national or continental level.

On the other hand, being the liaison with civil society – for the preparation of reports for review and follow-up of the recommendations made in compliance with the OAS and UN conventions against corruption – has allowed EyT to have some impact on the legislative agenda. Thanks to the work of EyT, funded by Finland, legislation concerning the probity of public servants, the legal autonomy of the CGR and the armed forces, is now a little stronger as compared to a situation in which EyT would not have had the resources to make this advocacy work. The international conventions against corruption signed by Nicaragua are not binding in the same way as human rights conventions, but the signatory States have the moral obligation to advance in the fight against corruption. In 2010, EyT conducted a survey of 40,000 people

¹⁸ The index reflects the situation during the year prior to the publication of the results. Therefore, the improvement during the term of President Bolaños (2002-2006) is seen in the 2003-2007 indexes.

¹⁹ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IQ.CPA.PROP.XQ> In 2007-2009 and 2011, Nicaragua had the same index as Niger (3.0), and in 2010 the same index as Nigeria (2.5) - in the same range of countries like Pakistan (2.5-3.0) and Mauritania (3.0).

regarding their acceptance or rejection of corruption (and the result was unanimously a rejection).

In terms of institutional strengthening of EyT itself, there has been a visible impact. The organisation has been able to complete the construction of an office building and provision of equipment, as well as staff training at the level of a master's degree in project management, local development and business management. Accounting systems have been updated. All staff has been trained in the use of Microsoft Office (especially Excel), and EyT now has much more capacity than before to face the challenge of self-sustainability. It is true that a project of the magnitude of a two-storey office building is not a result only of the Finnish support, but of more than one decade of planning. In this way, EyT has shown a certain capacity for long-term strategic planning for institutional strengthening.

At the municipal level, the indicators of the Strategic Plan are better met than at the national level. Sixty percent of the municipalities show an average of 15% improvement in their transparency evaluations. Many, if not all, of those municipal governments that participated in the evaluations, giving access to information, were able to capitalise their transparency indexes and ranking in the list of best managed municipalities by attracting funds from external cooperation (e.g. for infrastructure or business development projects). The evaluation instrument has been adopted by the Local Development Network and has been sent to TI in Berlin to form part of a global tool kit against corruption. It has also begun to be used in other countries, such as Albania, to improve municipal management.

On a smaller scale, the municipal evaluation initiative has been personally important for the participants. The people interviewed in 9 municipalities, including public officials and members of the evaluation committees, unanimously expressed personal satisfaction with the work of EyT. For some, it is a matter of personal gratification because they are able to do better work, e.g. as head of the finance area, or learn more about the municipal laws of Nicaragua, or be able to better serve the community. In the responses received from the committees, there were also expressions of personal gratification because they are able to work for others and participate in municipal assemblies, etc. In the zone where earlier Finnish programmes have been implemented (ProGestión and MuniTIC), responses went further than that: the personal gratification came from being citizens who know their rights and who are able to disseminate information about them.

IEEPP

The organisation has been effective as regards production and dissemination of different types of research reports and studies in the topics listed in its Strategic Plan and annual operating plans. This has been verified by the evaluation team and also within the framework of the quarterly audits that give scores of excellent in this regard. It has also been confirmed that IEEPP has shown effectiveness in reaching various actors of the state or government sector with its conclusions and proposals. The evaluation team was able to interview two current members of parliament (MP) and one former MP, who expressed themselves in very favourable terms about the usefulness of IEEPP's work for various parliamentary committees, for example, the Justice and Economic Committees.

The MPs interviewed belong to the parliamentary "opposition" fractions and the meetings were organised with the help of IEEPP itself. No interview could be arranged with any parliamentary representative of the ruling party, not even with the support of the Embassy of Finland. However, one of the interviewed MPs stated very strongly that politicians from the

ruling party also benefit from the IEEPP studies. He emphatically and literally said: "That they read them, they read them!"

A member of the evaluation team could also participate in the presentation made by IEEPP before some 25 high-ranking officers of the Nicaraguan police, regarding the recently completed fourth annual survey (2012) on the perceptions of the citizens with respect to what happens in their cities and across the country in terms of security and the work of the police. This study was perhaps not too deep or did not reveal any very great news, but the participants showed a lot of interest and questions, answers and criticism were openly exchanged.

With regard to impact, however, it is very difficult to establish, with any degree of certainty, how IEEPP studies may have directly and timely influenced the decision-making processes and hence good governance, either among current government leaders or among political opponents. But to the extent in which intelligent public debate spaces have shrunk in recent years, while the concentration of power in a group/party has increased more than is usually desirable (based on many universal experiences), we believe that the work of an organisation like IEEPP is very justified and useful, even if it is indirectly and by shaping public opinion and educating citizens in the long term.

IEEPP studies are often cited and used as reference material in the newspapers. For example, on October 4 of this year, the daily La Prensa reported in considerable detail the conclusions of a study made by IEEPP on the rates of execution of different lines in the national budget. The article, titled "Poor health of MOH and MINED", said among other things that: "The Ministries of Health and Education are the most inefficient public institutions in the execution of their budgets. Both of them, together with the Institute of Urban and Rural Housing and the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (MHCP), are the four state institutions that by June had achieved less than 13 percent of planned capital expenditures linked to investment projects." This is an example of the kind of criticism that is not well taken by the ruling party and which contributes to the political polarization that is mentioned elsewhere in this report.

All the studies or research reports produced by IEEPP can be accessed through its web site. It shows that the reports produced between October 2011 and October 2012 have been downloaded a total of 3,202 times, which gives an average of 100 down-loads per document. The one that has been most consulted is the report with the title "Citizen Budget. General Budget of the Republic 2012: Shared challenge with regard to transparency and social matters"; it was published in June 2012 and had been downloaded 439 times by the end of October.

4.2.3 Results, effects and impact in the area of human rights; CENIDH

Taking into account that CENIDH carries out education, promotion, defence, denunciation and advocacy activities, the results, effects and impact are analysed in this report, considering the aforementioned activities one by one.

Results, effects and impact on human rights promotion and education

CENIDH reports that 212 educational activities were carried out in 2010, in which 6,293 people were trained, of which 47% participate in the defence of their rights. Of these, 34% work as promoters in their communities. In 2011, 301 educational activities were organised, directly training 8,307 people, of which 14% work as promoters. Among the other people trained, the following can be mentioned: 750 members of civil society organisations, social movements and

leaders of indigenous peoples in the Caribbean coast and Mining Triangle, 291 officials of the Justice Administration System (police, judges, prosecutors) and 3,556 people who actively participate in the defence of their own rights while their cases are being processed. In the first half of 2012, CENIDH has continued the same training pattern.

In 2012, training workshops have focused on the Comprehensive Law Against Violence Toward Women (Law 779), so as to be able to monitor its implementation and carry out social audits of the actions taken by the officials responsible for its enforcement. Training has also been provided on the Public Information Access Law and National Police Law, in order to be able to demand from the authorities that they fulfil their duties and report any abuses committed in the territory.

If the structure of the “logical framework” were strictly applied here, everything that has been stated in the two preceding paragraphs could be regarded as an account of results and activities. However, in a project-process²⁰ as is the work of CENIDH, many of the elements mentioned can, with good reason, be considered to represent progress towards the achievement of what would be specific objectives, which means that there is effectiveness.

The overall objective of CENIDH’s work (i.e. of its strategic plan) is to reduce impunity and it is at that level then that a possible impact is to be sought. Now, it is very difficult to affirm that promotion and education actions have helped reduce impunity in the violation of human rights in Nicaragua. The impact is perhaps to be found more in the multiplier effect that these actions have, which causes mobilisation for complaints, denunciations and defence against acts of injustice. This is evident in the greater demand of the population and marginalised sectors for training from CENIDH in order to better solve their problems: for example, the case of the Sutiaba indigenous community. This occurs in some municipalities, such as Juigalpa, Matagalpa and Estelí, where the coordinators of CENIDH’s affiliates and some advocates have special professional credibility among the departmental and municipal authorities who do not necessarily rely on the permanent staff of relevant public institutions.

Results, effects and impact in the area of denunciation and defence

In accordance with its defence and denunciation strategy and the interviews with the team of lawyers, CENIDH’s work in this area consists of defence actions that are aimed towards the cessation of human rights violations. CENIDH thinks that its actions and response must be swift and timely for those victims who require accompaniment. To this end, it is important that victims are aware of their rights and are able to defend them, that is to say, they should be the protagonists in the defence of their own rights. Restitution and reparation of the rights that are violated is sought through follow-up mechanisms before the relevant bodies. As a result of this work, CENIDH expects a change of attitude among denounced officials, penalties and consequent modification of practices that violate rights. This task includes the presence of the organisation in the conflicts, visits to hot spots of migrants, visits to detention centres, meetings with non-governmental organisations, and firm and well-grounded reports at national and international level until the violation is verified.

According to its annual report, in 2011, for example, CENIDH handled a total of 4,072 new cases, of which 2,698 were received at its main office and affiliates in Estelí, Matagalpa and Chontales. In addition, 1,374 cases were handled by the network of volunteer promoters in different municipalities of the country. Of the total number of cases handled, 2,232 (55%) were

²⁰ See 4.2.1.

complaints, 557 (14%) were requests for handling cases, and 1,283 (31%) were legal consultations. Of a total of 1,611 complaints handled by CENIDH, 86% (1,378 cases) were concluded and in 977 cases the human rights violation was confirmed, accounting for 71% of the total number of complaints. During the first quarter of 2012, 1,698 cases have already been handled, of which 49% are complaints. In 55.48% of the cases, human rights violations were confirmed. The most reported authorities were the police, followed by complaints against individuals, especially in cases of domestic and sexual violence, child support demands and property conflicts. There are also complaints against the judiciary in cases concerning access to justice and, finally, complaints against mayors and the INSS, among others.

During the field visit and interviews with donors, justice authorities and operators, users and citizens in general, one hears statements like "There is no citizen in Nicaragua who does not say thank you to CENIDH", "What would happen without CENIDH?", "CENIDH is the voice of the people", "CENIDH is our Human Rights Office", "If I go to CENIDH, I am brave, if I don't, I am afraid". Statements from the interviewed users, such as "they advise us", "they help us", "they defend us", "they give us comfort", clearly show that there is general satisfaction with the work of defence and denunciation carried out by the organisation and that it is fulfilling its mission, in spite of numerous constraints given the political context of the country. The population trusts the institution when denouncing violations to their rights. The population does not feel alone in their claims. This is impact.

Results, effects and impact in the area of incidence

The scope of incidence achieved is impressive. In Nicaragua, CENIDH is practically the only human rights organisation that does not lose heart when it comes to publicly questioning human rights violations. In 2010, the organisation made 1,343 appearances in the media in relation to 158 human rights issues. In 2011, it made 1,177 appearances in various media despite the closure of spaces (especially radio stations) and self-censorship of some media. Besides all this, it is permanently informing about the work carried out by human rights defenders in the media and several talk shows.

Another important instrument for incidence is CENIDH's report on the situation of human rights in Nicaragua that is prepared each year by the organisation and publicly disclosed. This report is a summary of all the first-hand information that CENIDH receives. It is an instrument that underpins its work and evidences its daily work in the area of defence and denunciation. This report includes an analysis of the situation of human rights at the national level, which is backed up with information on specific cases and activities.

CENIDH participates in all advocacy actions promoted by the Network of Women against Violence and the Strategic Group for the Decriminalization of Therapeutic Abortion. It accompanies the victims during the hearings, prepares briefs and files appeals before the Supreme Court of Justice. Finally, it provides guidance in drawing up *amicus curiae* letters in defence of the decriminalization of therapeutic abortion.

Global impact

As regards CENIDH's final objective and strategic plan, impunity has not been reduced in global terms, but the citizens know more and more about their rights, the topic is hot, and human rights issues enjoy increasing visibility thanks to the work of this organisation. Different sectors have taken ownership of CENIDH's motto ("A right not defended is a right lost"). The protests against the regression of civil and political rights have been accompanied by CENIDH (national identity cards, electoral process, political persecution against CSOs and

demonstrators). This encourages the population to become protagonists of their rights and to exercise the right of citizen participation. The population restores the use of informal mechanisms for the defence of their rights.

By visualising some emblematic cases, the population is motivated to express its rejection and to report other cases in the newspapers, through surveys, on Facebook, etc. There are clear manifestations of solidarity against injustice and human rights violations.

4.3 Efficiency and management of the organisations, their projects and activities

4.3.1 Introduction

The forms of management of the three evaluated interventions have common traits, especially as regards the participation of Finnish and external cooperation in general. On the other hand, there are also clearly different aspects as regards efficiency and management.

Finland's involvement in the management of these projects fundamentally consists of: i) observation of the activities carried out and their compliance with operational plans; (ii) financial monitoring. To carry out both tasks, the officials who are responsible at the Embassy of Finland rely on very detailed quarterly audit reports. The evaluation team has been able to verify, in direct conversations with the auditors, that they have managed to acquire very good knowledge and understanding of the three organisations and their respective projects. It would even seem that the analysis, in the audits, of the work of the organisations is unnecessarily detailed in quantitative terms. On the other hand, a need is perceived for a somewhat more substantive or technical monitoring of the progress of the projects towards their objectives. As part of that, it would be good to pay a little more attention to the activities and results in the area of internal organizational strengthening, for which the three projects have specific funds.

The differences between the three projects, in terms of efficiency of their management, arise from different degrees of overall efficiency of the three organisations.

4.3.2 Ética y Transparencia

Taking 2011 as an example for analysing efficiency, it has been confirmed that salaries and wages in the area of transparency consume 47% of Finland's total contribution to EyT. In addition to 266,214 Euros originally budgeted for this year (equivalent to USD 359,489) a protocol was signed in September 2011 between Finland and EyT for electoral observation for the amount of 25,000 Euros. This contribution was not spent on salaries, but entirely on training, materials, election observation and per diems for voluntary observers. The final audit report for 2011 reveals an overall budget execution of 86 per cent.

Since it was an election year, the work related to municipal transparency could not be carried out as scheduled, but took 2.5 months longer than expected. In other words, the work (municipal transparency evaluation) was less efficient than under normal conditions. On the other hand, the Finnish contribution to election observation seems to have been executed with considerable efficiency. This is the core area of action of EyT, which has already shown a very large capacity for organising election monitoring and observation in the past.

According to the auditors' reports, the fulfilment of the plans was also "very good" in the first quarter of 2012 (index 3.3 out of 5). However, it seems that EyT's efficiency level has fallen throughout 2012, according to verbal reports from the auditors. It is the impression of the evaluation team that perhaps EyT is the organisation of the three participating in AIOCS that has suffered the most from political adversities, having its institutional performance undermined. During field interviews, concern was expressed about EyT's lower profile as compared to earlier years. In addition, the effort to dissociate the anticorruption initiative (ALAC) from the organisation in charge, EyT, can be seen as an expression or reflection of these setbacks faced by the organisation. Under Nicaragua's current conditions, this observation, albeit regrettable, is under-standable because the most visible work of EyT revolves around an issue as central as governance and democracy and, as a result, the country's international image, which lies in the proper functioning of the electoral system (EyT "put its finger directly on the wound" and where it most hurts the government).

Without any external contribution of the type provided by Finland or funds for projects (currently EUR 300,000), EyT would be reduced to its minimum expression, depending on Transparency International and some funds for election observation. At a meeting held with the managers of EyT, it was confirmed that when the Finnish support comes to a conclusion at the end of 2012, this organization will face a difficult economic situation. It is looking for new funding sources, but the discourse of the Executive Director with regard to finance evolved primarily around a strategy of austerity, that is to say, to try to keep on doing the same as before with less resources. A demonstration of this will be seen during the municipal elections in November 2012. EyT will no longer be able to provide as many observers as in other recent elections. In addition, it does not have permission from the authorities to enter the polling stations. For these reasons, it has been promoting the idea that every voter must also act as an election observer ("from the outside" method).

4.3.3 IEEPP

The IEEPP project also consists of implementing part of the organisation's Strategic Plan. To know with greater accuracy what specific project activities are supported and co-financed by Finland, it is necessary to refer to the annual operating plans and audit reports. The AOP contain budgets by activity. The best way, if not the only one, to know what exactly has been paid with the Finnish contribution is to study the audit reports. For example, from IEEPP's audit report in December 2011, useful data can be extracted regarding what was scheduled and what was executed during that year (Table 3). This shows that 75% of the total budget for 2011 was earmarked for salaries and other staff costs. Realized expenditures against these lines were slightly higher than the budget, totalling 80%.

It can also be seen that while 97 per cent was executed on the payroll expense line, the rate of execution for the governance and democratic security programmes was 50% and 37%, respectively. According to information provided by the IEEPP managers, these differences stemmed from the fact that the Danish contribution had to be executed first and quickly, so as not to lose it upon the departure of Denmark scheduled for the end of the year. For that reason, the Danish funds were used first to pay for research and publications, while the Finnish funds were not spent as foreseen. According to IEEPP, the remaining balance in 2011 was transferred to the 2012 budget without any problem, in other words, without any objection from Finland.

Table 3: Budget of the Finnish contribution to IEEPP, 2011 (US\$)		
Description of expense	Scheduled	Executed
PAYROLL EXPENSES: wages, benefits and social expenses	235,241	227,690
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMME	69,400	34,703
Research	36,700	27,987
Publications	18,000	240
Dissemination	12,550	4,773
Transport	2,150	1,703
DEMOCRATIC SECURITY PROGRAMME	15,600	5,736
ALLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC PARTNERS	2,600	229
MANAGEMENT	25,530	16,500
TOTAL	348,371	284,859

In short, it can be argued that financial management has been agile (or flexible) both in terms of the performance of the donors and IEEPP. Similar situations are observed in the other two organisations. Whether it is good or bad to strive to spend its resources quickly is, of course, a question that may deserve quite different answers.

As regards the input/output rate or return on the Finnish investment in IEEPP, it should be noted that during the year gone between mid-October 2011 and the date of termination of this evaluation field work, IEEPP produced, disseminated and promoted the use of 32 studies or research reports, of which 14 were about democratic security, 14 about transparency and national budget, and 4 that concerned various aspects of social inclusion. If one takes this result to be the total quantifiable product of IEEPP in one year and relates it to the total of Finnish funds used during the calendar year 2011, one gets an average cost per report of USD 8,900. We know no bench-mark figure for this kind of indicator, but intuitively one can judge the referred cost as very acceptable. In other words, there is a good cost-efficiency rate. It is appropriate to underline once more that this figure for cost per report includes “everything”, from research work, sometimes including field surveys, drafting, editing and printing, distribution of the printed material and management of the web site to, finally, the work that is dedicated to explanation and “lobbying” with important users.

4.3.4. Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos (CENIDH)

The budget approved for this project amounted to EUR 594,806 (USD 713,768) for a three-year period. This amount would be used to cover wages and social benefits, operating costs and the specific activities of promotion, advocacy, defence and denunciation, and institutional strengthening. Apart from the amount initially allocated, foreign exchange gains totalled USD 72,131, which were incorporated into the 2011 and 2012 budgets.

The Finnish contribution represented on average 28% of CENIDH’s total budget for 3 years. Other donors, such as NOVIB, HIVOS, ICR, CAFOD, EIRENE, the Common Fund and INKOTA also contributed to CENIDH’s overall budget. In three years, the organisation has used 39% of the Finnish contribution for wages and social benefits, 10% for operating costs and 44% for the promotion, advocacy, defence and denunciation programmes. 5% was allocated to the institutional strengthening component and 1% to investment.

CENIDH's work, as a whole, has to be considered as very efficient if we compare its results, which are detailed in 4.2.3, with the resources invested, as well as the time factor. A good part of the staff worked many extra hours, although they receive low wages and sometimes no wages, putting at risk their lives and job stability. They are there because of their commitment to the cause. The local or regional offices have very little staff: 3 persons (a coordinator, an education officer and a financial-administrative assistant). Each of these persons has a sort of "jack-of-all-trades" job; they have to perform the duties of lawyer, ombudsman, educator, facilitator for promoters, financial manager and driver. The logistical conditions are also very limited as a result of the extremely thrifty and austere financial management of this organisation. It is important to point out that the volunteer staff has contributed a great deal to productivity or efficiency, benefiting from a good mentoring and training system.

According to information provided by CENIDH, an internal institutional strengthening programme was added to its already existing programmes under the influence of the Finnish cooperation. This programme aimed to strengthen CENIDH's organisational and technical capacities in the field of promotion and protection of human rights and advocacy. In this regard, the activities include, among others, internal processes for developing institutional strategies (education and advocacy, communications, etc.), General Assembly and Board meetings, programme meetings, situation analysis meetings, AOP preparation meetings, monitoring and evaluation meetings, meetings for drafting narrative and financial reports, organisation manuals and internal control standards and performance evaluations.

In 2010, CENIDH had 37 officers, 18 interns, 1 aid worker and 6 trainers. In 2012, the organisation has a staff of 40 full-time employees, 21 trainees, 2 aid workers and 16 trainers. In the area of defence, the staff is very young, recently graduated from law school and with little experience, which has demanded an induction process and systematic support to ensure quality, restricting other actions beyond case examination to the detriment of research processes. However, CENIDH began training some officials on issues concerning indigenous peoples, women's rights, children's rights, labor rights and migrant rights. However, they do recognize that they need a training plan that responds to the needs of CENIDH's work not only in terms of advocacy, denunciation and defence at national level, but for the work done in the territories by the local officers in the territories. Qualitative steps have been taken in the administrative and financial areas. Accounting and internal control standards were established for the rational use of funds, implementing the recommendations of the audit firm. Efforts were made to build management capacities within the institution, defining areas of action and coordination mechanisms for the implementation of the annual operating plan and monitoring and evaluation of the quarterly work plans. Nonetheless, there are still some weaknesses in the planning processes. CENIDH has produced a manual of functions that should be checked and adjusted according to the structure that is defined for the implementation of the 2013–2015 Strategic Plan.

As regards the role of the Embassy of Finland in the management of the project, it can be pointed out that meetings have been held as needed, usually each time CENIDH has sent semi-annual reports. Only operational and administrative issues have been touched upon at the meetings. The relationship between the Embassy and CENIDH has not included a lot of exchange of knowledge and information in relation to the political context and the situation of human rights.

5. SUSTAINABILITY

Considering that the work carried out by EyT, IEEPP and CENIDH, with support from Finland, has a character of permanent function more than of temporary projects, any discussion regarding the concept of sustainability must be referred to the organisations themselves and their perspectives of survival in the medium and long term.

CENIDH, EyT and IEEPP have existed for 20, 16 and 8 years, respectively. They have worked in their respective areas during four, three and two governments, both liberal and socialist in nature.²¹ The three organisations have the necessary technical capacity and professional experience to continue working on their own. The main threat to their existence is economic in the sense that all of them are almost entirely dependent on international cooperation. Therefore, the sudden disappearance of all those sources, which have already been reducing their total contributions, would be fatal. In their specific areas of work, it is difficult for these organisations to generate income from the sale of services and they cannot expect any financial support from the State, especially now – on the contrary!

The other threat is of a political nature. The attitudes of confrontation or antagonism between these organisations on the one hand, and the government on the other, are very strong. Each of the parties views the 'other' as an opponent. For the government, these organisations are aggressive political opponents, not to say traitors, and for the organisations, the government is an hegemonic entity that does not tolerate any criticism or difference of opinion. This contrast, based on different political ideologies, is reinforced to some extent by personal factors. Nicaragua is a small country with a small "elite", in which "everyone knows everybody else". This state of affairs, far from always facilitating coexistence between different interest groups, often hinders negotiation processes and adjustment of positions that should take place to enhance a common interest. As has been the case since the creation of this Republic, conflicts can exacerbate quickly, sometimes reaching states of total freezing of positions. The possibility that the government may once again repress civil society organisations as it did in 2008, if it deems it necessary, cannot be ruled out. On the other hand, despite its "anti-imperialist" and "sovereignty" discourse, the government is aware that it is not convenient to perform whatever sort of acts that could seriously damage its reputation internationally or ignore any negative opinions that it could generate at that level.²² Sometimes statements also emanate from some civil society organisations that definitely do not favour a "peace process" with the government or the ruling party. In short, the scenario in which the organisations work is quite troubled, unstable and insecure. Continued international support would significantly improve their chances to continue to exist and work. In the short term, it is essential.

There are certain differences between the three organisations in regard to the importance of the work they have done so far to help preserve some degree of political pluralism, defend human rights and recover or improve democratic governance in the country. EyT has played a leading role in election observation in Nicaragua and has set off the alarm about various fraudulent acts that have been committed in the most recent elections. The first condition for returning to "clean" elections is to create public awareness and concern about the lack of such a thing. This has been achieved. The work of EyT in the area of local government transparency is also very significant. Some of these results could survive even in the event of the sudden disappearance of EyT, but its consolidation still depends on that someone continues to drive in

²¹ The governments of Arnaldo Alemán, Enrique Bolaños and Daniel Ortega.

²² In this context, it should be mentioned that although the current Government of Nicaragua has not hesitated in voluntarily distancing itself from several important European donors, it has been carefully maintaining good relations with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

the same direction for a longer time. Something similar can be said about IEEPP, although its role in this scenario has been and would continue to be less dramatic and visible than that of EyT.

As regards CENIDH, it should be noted that the work for raising awareness, advocacy and education on human rights contributes to the formation of leaders and agents of change. Many of those who have suffered violations of their rights at some point become promoters and trainers and advocates for others and their lives are no longer the same. We have seen how the Nicaraguan police, once trained at the Police Academy on the subject of human rights, have changed and have become promoters of this cause within their organisation. Similarly, trainees who are exposed to the defence of cases become lawyers who are more specialised in human rights. Victims who receive support from CENIDH also receive education, so that they are proactive in defending their rights. In this sense, the work of CENIDH is sustainable.

6. AID EFFECTIVENESS AND FINNISH VALUE ADDED

Finnish support to these three organisations has been unquestionably effective, since it has allowed them to keep on working at this difficult juncture and accomplish important objectives, when there is, at the same time, a great need for this work.

In all three cases, the application of the institutional support modality can be considered as a Finnish added value; it has offered a good combination of ownership, operational flexibility and a conscientious control of the use of funds, through quarterly audits.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- ✓ The strategic plans of the three organisations proved to be ambitious in relation to the country's current political context. Most of the expected risks and assumptions have materialised. However, despite the difficulties in the environment, the three organisations have yielded results that justify their existence and the Finnish support.
- ✓ In the areas of work of these three organisations, the great dilemma is that no matter how many good results these organisations produce, there is no guarantee, sometimes not even hope, that their research, suggestions or complaints are taken into account or implemented by a government that does not pay much attention to the constitutional order. This can be seen as a denial of the usefulness of this work, but it can also be seen as a strong argument to continue supporting them because they are especially necessary under these circumstances. The authors of this report lean towards the second interpretation.
- ✓ The evaluated projects show that the "institutional support" modality is applicable to organisations that have the solidity of CENIDH, EyT and IEEPP and which work in the areas of democracy and transparency. Signs are seen that it is indeed advantageous, as compared with the 'traditional project' modality. After all, democracy is something that must, somehow, be created "at home" and not from the outside.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 To Finland and other cooperation agencies

It is recommended that the Government of Finland and other cooperation agencies consider the possibility of continuing to support CENIDH, EyT and IEEPP so that they do not disappear for economic reasons and may continue working in the medium and long term, consolidating and multiplying some of the specific results achieved so far. If a decision is made to start new projects in this regard, it is suggested that the following be taken into account:

- ✓ In the three cases it would be convenient to continue with the institutional support modality because the work carried out by these national organisations is better performed with the degree of flexibility and autonomy provided by this modality and because the organisations in reference have the technical capacity and maturity to work this way.
- ✓ The work should be directed to a larger extent to the entire territory. It has been noted that sometimes political polarisation is less strong outside of the capital city, which could make it possible to reach a more general consensus for solving sensitive issues out there.
- ✓ Finland, in particular, should consider greater focalisation where its previous ProGestión and MuniTIC programmes were implemented. It has been observed that these projects left traces that still facilitate strengthening of local governments and enhancing transparency, as compared to many other municipalities.
- ✓ In the case of Finland, it is also recommended to combine (strengthen) institutional support projects with some transfer of technology (Finnish) and not limit them to purely economic support. This, however, should not take away autonomy from the recipient organisation in relation to the strategic and operational implementation of the project. It is possible to combine ownership and alignment with transfer of technology from other parts.
- ✓ Transfer of technology could be combined with a "coaching" effort that seeks to lessen the conflict or fragmentation that is felt today among key players in both state and civil society. Without exaggerating the prior expectations for impact, Finland could organise, for example, study trips and seminars, with participants from "both sides", to see if this encourages a rapprochement between them on neutral grounds.
- ✓ There is no reason to stick to the idea that the "programmatic approach" would be somehow superior, in principle, to the traditional project approach. The mere fact that there are several financiers and various executors of a series of activities that seem to have some thematic relationship between them and strive for the same objective is not enough to manage them as a purported programme. The programmatic approach exists when there is some temporary and operational interdependence between several projects derived from a previously established programme objective. Alternatively, this is only a problem of different interpretations of terminology.
- ✓ When a decision is made that a programme requires collaboration from and among several institutions or co-executing agencies, it is important that they be fully involved in the design of the programme. This way, their knowledge and experience regarding the local environment can be tapped and the early creation of a team spirit is facilitated.

- ✓ When the decision is to provide assistance through an "institutional support" modality, it should be remembered that the idea behind this pattern places the primary responsibility of the project or programme in the hands of the recipient partner. This is one of the principles of the Paris Agenda and its successors. This being the case, it is contradictory to exercise excessively detailed supervision of the executing institution (it is either trusted or not trusted). It should be more justified and useful to engage in a substantive technical and strategic monitoring and a good way to do this is adding an expatriate technical specialist to the project, who can combine monitoring with advisory work and transfer of technology (dialogue). In the text of this report, the quarterly audits have been described as a positive factor; now, the audits might be even more useful if they were made less frequently, for instance every six months.

8.2 To civil society organisations

No recommendations are made here for civil society organisations in general because they compose a very heterogeneous category of entities. There are some specific recommendations for the three organisations that have been observed in the context of this evaluation.

- ✓ IEEPP: It is possible that the work of this organisation could have a greater impact if it chose to do fewer research projects or studies on a smaller number of topics and instead made some studies of more depth.
- ✓ CENIDH: An analysis of the capacities that exist in the organisation should be made, in order to respond to its strategic guidelines. It is important to develop staff capacities in advanced courses on international human rights law, such as those organised by the Institute of Åbo Akademi of Finland, the Inter-American Centre for Human Rights of Costa Rica, and others.
- ✓ CENIDH, EyT and IEEPP: Participatory and consultative strategic planning should be carried out with professional support, among all those involved in the operations of the entity, so as to ensure ownership. Strategic plans and operating plans should not respond to (or be "targeted" to) donors, and even less to just one donor. They must respond to the views of the organisations themselves. A full strategic planning process includes, inter alia:
 2. Mapping what other similar national and regional organisations do, in order to identify potential strategic alliances.
 3. Analysing the political, social and economic context of the region and Nicaragua.
 4. Identifying strategic lines for:
 - a) mobilising resources;
 - b) developing professional skills to respond to the mission of the institution;
 - c) defining the scope of the operational work;
 - d) analysing the necessary financial resources for the fulfilment of the mission;
 - e) clearly describing the logic of the organisational structure that fulfils the mission, including the organisation's permanent and voluntary human resources.

9. LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ The concepts of "ownership, alignment and harmonization", so celebrated in the area of international cooperation for development, may be easy topics for speeches, but rather

difficult to implement. The projects and organisations discussed in this report have suffered the consequences. As of 2008, there has been a sudden and disorganized flight of many donors who had been present in Nicaragua for many years. Each of them may have had very good reasons to leave during these last years, but this general retreat could, no doubt, have been jointly planned much better among the donors and between them and the Government of Nicaragua.

- ✓ Another symptom of the weak implementation of the ownership, harmonisation and alignment ideals is that many donors come together to co-finance or support certain programmes, projects and organisations, but maintain different specific procedures and without being able to guarantee continuity and timeliness in the management of their contributions. This sometimes causes an excessive administrative workload for recipients and, worse yet, hinders any planning for the medium and long term due to the presence of too many uncertainties.
- ✓ The implementation of the three programmes evaluated demonstrates once again the importance of good design of the projects (or strategic plans that in these cases have taken the place of project documents). In this regard, the following weaknesses have been observed: i) to some extent the organisations formulate or adapt the format and/or content of their strategic plans to what is perceived as requirements or preferences of donors whose support is expected, even at the risk of subtracting coherence or feasibility from the plans; (ii) sometimes enough attention is not given to the analysis of future scenarios and very ambitious or too optimistic plans are prepared.
- ✓ Many civil society organisations — IEEPP, EyT and CENIDH are good examples— produce a large amount of valuable first-hand information that probably could be better used by the international donor community, especially in a difficult political situation as currently prevails in Nicaragua.

ANNEX I REFERENCES AND CONSULTED DOCUMENTS

Bibliografía general

- Estado de la Región (2011) *IV Informe de Estado de la Región*. San José: Estado de la Nación. 524 p. en <http://www.estadonacion.or.cr/index.php/biblioteca-virtual/centroamerica/informe-actual/informe-por-capitulo> (visited 10.9.2012).
- European Union Electoral Observation Mission Nicaragua (2012) Final Report on the General Elections and Parlacen Elections 2011. Brussels: 22.02.2012, en http://www.eueom.eu/files/dmfile/moeue-nicaragua-final-report-22022012_en.pdf (visited 10.10.2012)
- Grupo Cívico Ética y Transparencia (2011) Valoración técnica final del proceso electoral para Presidente y Diputados Nicaragua 2011. Managua: EyT 2011.
- La lenta agonía del voto. *Boletín Perspectivas* No. 64, Agosto 2012. Managua: Cinco Centro de Investigaciones de la Comunicación.
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2007) *El programa para la política de desarrollo de Finlandia: Hacia una política de humanidad justa y sostenible*. Helsinki 2007.
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2012) *Finland's Development Policy Programme. Government-Decision-in-Principle*. Helsinki 2012.
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2012) *Anti-Corruption Handbook for Development Practitioners*. 215 p. Helsinki 2012.
- Montenegro, Sofía (2012) *Persecuciones...?y diálogo?*, Managua: Cinco Centro de Investigaciones de la Comunicación en <http://www.cinco.org.ni/archive/399.pdf> (17.9.2012).
- Montenegro, Sofía y Azahalea Solís (2012) *Comunidad y "desciudadanización" en el modelo de los CPC*. Managua: IEEPP Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas; en <http://www.cinco.org.ni/archive/406.pdf> (10.9.2012).
- Organización de los Estados Americanos (2011) *Informe final de la misión de acompañamiento electoral de la OEA sobre las elecciones generales celebradas en la República de Nicaragua 6 de noviembre 2011*, en http://www.oas.org/es/sap/deco/moe_informes.asp (10.10.2012).
- Peñailillo, Miguel et al. (2009) Diagnóstico de la corrupción en Nicaragua. Informe comisionado por Dinamarca y Finlandia para el Fondo Común Anti-Corrupción de Donantes. Noviembre 2009. 120 p. En: http://www.oas.org/juridico/spanish/mesicic3_nic_diagnostico.pdf (21.9.2012).
- Pérez García, Rodolfo ¿Una nueva Ley de contrataciones municipales o un maquillaje legislativo? *Transparencia y Probidad* Año 1, No. 2 Julio 2012, pp. 14-16. Managua: IEEPP.

Prado, Silvio (2011) "Va a cambiar la gramática política en los municipios a partir de 2013", en *Revista Envío* Año 31 Número 366 Setiembre 2012, pp. 14-20. Managua 2012.

Saldomando, Angel (2012) *Situación de la descentralización en Nicaragua en 2011*, Managua: Cinco Centro de Investigaciones de la Comunicación, en <http://www.cinco.org.ni/publicaciones/400> (28.7.2012).

Saldomando, Angel, E. Cuadra & D. Valle O. (2012) *Un enfoque sistémico para el análisis d la corrupción en Nicaragua. Un instrumento para la transparencia*. Managua: IEEPP y Cinco, marzo 2012.

Seppänen, M. & Pekka Virtanen (2008) *Corruption, Poverty and Gender, with Case Studies of Nicaragua and Tanzania*. Helsinki: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Series: Elements for Discussion, 155 p., en <http://www.formin.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=130589&nodeid=15458&contentlan=1&culture=fi-FI> (15.8.2012).

EyT

Acuerdos Finlandia – EyT
Plan Estratégico 2009 – 2013
Planes Operativos Anuales
Informes narrativos (2)
Informes de auditoría (7)

IEEPP

Acuerdos Finlandia – IEEPP
Plan Estratégico 2009 – 2012
Borrador de Plan Estratégico 2013 – 2016
Planes Operativos Anuales
Informes narrativos (5)
Informes de auditoría (7)
Colección completa de de estudios publicados por IEEPP; <http://www.ieepp.org.ni>

CENIDH

Nicaragua ante los Comités de Derechos Humanos de las Naciones Unidas (Informe 2009).
Nicaragua, Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos.

Derechos Humanos en Nicaragua (Informe 2011). Nicaragua. Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos.

Código de Ética del Promotor de Derechos humanos. CENIDH.

Informe sobre Derechos Humanos y Conflictividad en Centroamérica (2010-2011). Equipo Regional de Monitoreo y Análisis de Derechos Humanos en Centroamérica.

Derechos Humanos, El Camino. Manual Popularizado del CENIDH.

Dónde están los Derechos. Aplicación e impacto de las medidas de la Justicia Penal Especializada. CENIDH.

Plan Institucional 2008-2011. CENIDH

Estrategia Educativa del CENIDH, 2011.

Estrategia de Defensa y Denuncia del CENIDH, 2011.

Varios documentos programáticos, planes e informes sobre la ejecución del apoyo finlandés.
Pagina web del Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos. <http://www.cenidh.org/>

United Nations Human Rights. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Nicaragua.
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/countries/LACRegion/Pages/NIIndex.aspx>

ANNEX II INTERVIEWS

Nicaraguan authorities²³

- ✓ Carlos Langrand, Member of Parliament (MP)/Comisión de Producción, Economía y Presupuesto
- ✓ José Pallais, ex MP/ex President, Comisión de Justicia
- ✓ Víctor Hugo Tinoco, MP
- ✓ Three Police Commissioners /Police Academy and Internal Affairs Division
- ✓ Martha Solórzano, Chief, Chontales Women and Children Commission
- ✓ Gerardo Suarez, Departmental Prosecutor, Chontales
- ✓ Zacarías Duarte, Director, Instituto for Legal Medicine
- ✓ Fátima Cerna Velázquez, Gender Prosecutor, Juigalpa, Chontales
- ✓ María Lidia Jaime, Judge, Sala Penal Tribunal de Apelaciones, Circunscripción Central.
- ✓ Deborah Gail Grandison Samuel, Ombudsman for Women's Human Rights

Embassy of Finland in Nicaragua

Eeva-Liisa Myllymäki, Chargé d'Affaires
Jaakko Jakkila, Governance Counselor
Pekka Muuttomaa, Rural Development Counselor
Leena Haapaniemi, Principal Adviser, Regional Programmes
Lillian Tom, Programme Officer

Internacional cooperation agencies in Managua

José Luis Sandino, COSUDE/Switzerland
Lotta Valtonen, KEPA/Finland
Kathleen Beckman, GIZ/Germany
Ricardo Rodríguez, GIZ/Germany
Silvia Porras, Netherlands
Jakub Dolezel, Luxembourg
Alicia Louro-Peña, European Commission
Patrick Reboud, European Commission
Patricia Gómez, ex employee at Embassy of Denmark (in Helsinki)
Sergio Pivaral, Country Coordinator Nicaragua, IBIS
Jairo Valle, Coordinator Governance Área/ Governance Fund

Media

Patricia Orozco, Coordinator, Radio La Primerísima/Onda Local
Carlos Fernando Chamorro, Director, Confidencial (digital newspaper) www.confidencial.com.ni)

Fundación Grupo Cívico Etica y Transparencia (EyT)

Head Office, Managua

Roberto Courtney, Executive Director
César Martínez, Project Coordinator
Luis Aragón, Manager Transparency
Teófilo Jiménez, Officer Local Governments
Heriberto Herrera, Officer Anticorruption
Ana Dávila, Administrator

²³ With help from the Embassy of Finland and other contacts, the evaluation team tried unsuccessfully to arrange interviews with Members of Parliament from the Government party, with the Vice-Minister of Foreign Relations (for international cooperation) and with the Human Rights Ombudsman.

Municipal EyT Coordinators

Rosibel Martínez, Santa Lucía, Boaco
Melba Suárez, Juigalpa, Chontales
Bernardo Mairena, La Trinidad, Estelí
Marlene López Gómez, San Jorge, Rivas

Mayors' Offices

Santa Lucía, Boaco

Vicente Guzmán, Mayor
Allan Martínez, Responsible for projects

San José de los Remates, Boaco

Marta Sarria, Mayor
Rosa Zamora, Finance Officer
Jorge (George) Isaacs, Planner

Comalapa, Chontales

Germán Otero Arróliga, Mayor
Bayardo Ríos, Projects Director

Villa Sandino, Chontales

José Francisco Lagos, Secretary, Consejo Municipal
Sandra Duarte Rocha, Finance Officer
Judith López, Acquisitions

Potosí, Rivas

Ricardo José Cubío, Vice Mayor
Pedro José Alcocer Navarro, Acquisitions

La Trinidad, Estelí

Douglas Omar Salmerón Vega, Projects Director
Bernardino Ramón Rodríguez Olivera, Finance Officer
Adana Ivania Moreno Blandón, Human Resources

Evaluation Committees

Santa Lucía, Boaco

Mara Alvarez, Marvia Martínez

Comalapa, Chontales

Gerardo Otero D., Jackson Suárez Hurtado

Villa Sandino, Chontales

Kenia Dinarte Sevilla, Augusto Lacayo Gutiérrez, Isela Báez

Santo Tomás, Chontales

Tanya Vado, Braulio Ordeñana, Rosa García, Holman Rodríguez

Juigalpa, Chontales

Rita Mena, Neisa Báez, Lilian Mena

Potosí, Rivas

Mabel González, Elwin Falcón, Catalina Martínez

San Jorge, Rivas

Harvín Rubén García, Roberto Carlos López

La Trinidad, Estelí

Dora Reyes

Yamileth Pauth

Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas (IEEPP)

Head Office, Managua

Claudia Pineda, Executive Director

Alejandro Aguilar, President of Governing Board

Claudia García, Programme Coordinator

Lourdes Arróliga, Communications Coordinator

Elvira Cuadra, Adviser Democratic Security

Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos (CENIDH)

Sede, Managua

Vilma Núñez de Escorcia, President of Governing Board

Mauro Ampie, Executive Director

Marlin Sierra – Deputy Director

María Elena Altamirano Rodríguez, Director Education

Gonzalo Carrión, Director Defense and Denunciation

Norwing Solano, Indigenous Peoples

Natasha Cabeza, Director Administration and Finance

Chontales office

Dennis Antonio Báez Orozco, Coordinator

Phillips Eliecer Gonzáles Jaime, Promotion

Zulma Walkivia Molina Oporta, Administrative Assistant

Trainees

Elizabeth del Carmen Galeano Galiz, Ruddy Antonio Miranda Murillos,

Irayda del Rosario Fonseca Perez

Trainers

Yenitza Sequeria Sequeira, María Karina Ortega Brenes, Guillermo Amencio Miranda Cautillano, Julieth

Xahomara Morales Castilla, Skarlenth Paoska Fernandez

Users/Victims

Cornelio López Miranda, Marta Rosa Amador Lumbi, Saisa Raquel Gonzales Morales

Matagalpa office

Juan Carlos Arce, Coordinator

Fatima Balmaceda, Education

Marlen Rayo, Administrative Assistant

Facilitators

Jackeline Montenegro, Juana Loredo, Ivania Vargas,

Estelí office

Alberto Rosales, Coordinator

Meyling Gutiérrez, Promotion
Glenda Arteta, Administrative Assistant

SELF-EVALUATION CENIDH (19.09.2012)

Grupo 1 – Encargado de analizar el Programa de Promoción

María Elena Altamirano – Coordinadora de Educación
Diamantina López – Miembro del Consejo Directivo, miembro de Asamblea General/Delegada Propietaria CEAAL
Julio Cesar López – Educador Proyecto Resolución de Conflicto y Cultura de Paz para Jóvenes
Meyling Gutiérrez – Responsable de Promoción de la Filial Estelí
Philip González - Responsable de Promoción de la Filial de Chontales
Fátima Balmaceda - Responsable de Promoción de la Filial de Matagalpa
Claudia Jaekel – Cooperante EIRENE

Grupo 2 – Encargado de analizar el Programa de Defensa y Denuncia

Vilma Núñez de Escorcía – Presidenta Consejo Directivo / Delegada FIDH, PIDDH, OEA,OMCT
Gonzalo Carrión – Director de Defensa y Denuncia
Alberto Rosales – Coordinador Filial Estelí
Ana Mercedes López – Abogada Sede Central – Delegadas Suplente en FMMICA
Brenda Rojas – Abogada Sede Central – Delegada Suplente en la RMCV y GEPDA
Carlos Guadamuz – Abogado Sede Central
José Alonso – Abogado Sede Central – Delegado Red de Jóvenes CEAAL
Zulma Molina – Asistente Administrativo Filial Chontales

Grupo 3 – Encargado de analizar el Programa de Incidencia

Mauro Ampí – Director Ejecutivo / Delegado FIDH, PIDDH, OEA,OMCT,FONG
Dennis Baéz – Coordinador Filial de Chontales
Héctor Calero – Comunicador, Delegado suplente en la Red de Migrantes y CONAR
Adelaida Sánchez – Comunicadora, Delegada suplente en la CODENI
Ruth Castillo – CEDOC
Valeria Morales – Asistente de Subdirección y encargada de Redes Sociales
Marlen Rayo – Asistente Administrativa Filial Matagalpa
Juanita Bermudez – Asistente de Presidencia

Grupo 4 – Encargado de analizar el Programa de Fortalecimiento Institucional

Marlin Sierra – Subdirectora /Delegada Propietaria de la RMCV /Migrantes/CONAR/Equipo Regional CA
Natasha Cabezas – Dir. Administrativa Financiera
Winston Téllez – Responsable de Servicios Generales y RRHH
Doris Baraona – Contadora General
Saira Ortiz – Contadora
Juan Carlos Arce – Coordinador Filial Matagalpa
Georgina Ruiz – Asistente de Dirección Ejecutiva /Delegada Propietaria FMMICA/Equipo Regional CA/Delegada suplente PIDDH
Glenda Arteta – Asistente Administrativo Filial Estelí
Blanca Santana – Auxiliar Administrativa

Otras organizaciones de la sociedad civil

Sofía Montenegro, Directora Ejecutiva, Centro de Investigación de la Comunicación (CINCO)
Silvio Prado, Director, Centro de Estudios y Análisis Político (CEAP)

Otras

Markku Lehto, ex Consejero de Gobernabilidad (2008-2010) por Skype desde Nairobi
Mario Zeledón Castillo y colega, auditores del programa AIOSC

Terms of Reference for Evaluation of Institutional Support to Civil Society Organisations in Nicaragua

1. Background to the final evaluation of Institutional Support to Civil Society Organisations in Nicaragua

The Government of Finland has financed during 2010 - 2012 two civil society support programmes in Nicaragua, "Institutional Support to Civil Society Organisations" and "Life in Democracy Programme", that are coming to their completion during the second half of 2012. The evaluation field missions of both Programmes are timed for September 2012, in order to guarantee better conditions for evaluations before the municipal elections of November. Due to the same timing and context, as well as similarities in thematic fields and actors of the programmes, the two evaluations are put together in one contract. This is expected to result in more efficiency and benefits in analysis of the findings, as the two evaluations can be carried out during one field mission and the evaluation teams can contribute to each other's learning process. Both evaluations have, however, their respective Terms of Reference and separate reports will be expected. This is the Terms of Reference for the final evaluation of Institutional Support to Civil Society Organisations in Nicaragua

1.1. Context of the programme "Institutional Support to Civil Society Organisations in Nicaragua"

Political context in Nicaragua

Nicaraguan Civil Society, as it is known today, has developed during the last 20 years, after the Sandinista Revolution of 1979 and the following decade of nationalist – leftist FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional) rule that was marked by civil war and economic difficulties, though also by significant development in social sectors. When the FSLN lost the power in the elections of 1990, a variety of NGO's were founded. Many of them dedicated to advocacy work, others to complement the State institutions in work related to social development, human rights, environmental protection and so on. Many foreign donor countries channeled their funds through these organisations, as the central governments were reducing the public sector budgets.

The 2006 presidential and parliamentary elections brought FSLN back in power after 16 years of right-leaning liberal governments. Although in rhetorics the FSLN continues with its leftist and nationalist tone, in terms of economic policy, it has pursued a line similar to the previous governments, however with a new focus on social development, including many social programmes, and a new understanding of political participation. The Government launched its new development plans including its concept of civil society participation, based on "direct democracy" or "citizen power". Civil society organisations, especially those dedicated to citizen participation, policy advocacy or human rights promotion, however, considered this restricting their autonomy and limiting the right to participation exclusively to party-led structures. The highly questioned municipal elections of 2008 and increased politization of state institutions, among some other factors, followed by strong critics from the civil society, led to open conflict between the Government and Civil Society Organisations promoting democratic governance or human rights in 2008 – 2009. Since then, however, the tensions have been eased. The Government has loosened its control over CSOs, and on the other hand some CSOs have moved away from controversial themes in order to focus their work on other fields. Still,

the most visible CSOs dedicated to democratic governance, citizen participation or human rights have continued their active advocacy work and often criticizing the Government of limiting access to information, right to participation or violating the Constitution. The Government for its part considers these CSOs have taken the role of political opposition, thus not recognizing them as thematically specialised, impartial organisations and not collaborating with them. A constructive dialogue remains lacking.

Institutional support to civil society

Finland, during 2010 – 2012, has supported three CSOs active in human rights and democracy work with the institutional support modality. This type of support began when Finland and other donors were looking for new mechanisms to support the processes of governance and human rights in Nicaragua while closing down the general budget support. *Finland's Development Cooperation Policy* (2007) emphasizes good and democratic governance and human rights as objectives themselves and as cross-cutting themes indispensable in order to create an enabling environment for sustainable development. The Development Cooperation Policy and the *Guidelines for Civil Society in Development Policy* (2010) recognize the importance of "well functioning and wide ranging civil society that supports citizens' participation in society, thereby strengthening the preconditions for the development of democracy and good governance". Among the main roles of the civil society, the Guidelines mentions "promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance". According to guidelines, "civil society plays a key role in monitoring the activities of public authorities".

According to these policies, it was decided to increase support to civil society, particularly organizations that had an established role as "watchdog" organisations. As a result of a process of identifying national needs and organizational capacities in 2009 and 2010, it was decided to fund three well-established actors working on national and local issues like transparency, accountability, budget and impact of public policies, citizen security, and advocacy and defence of human rights. These organizations are *Ética y Transparencia* (EyT), *Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y de Políticas Públicas* (IEEPP) and *Centro Nicaraguense de Derechos Humanos* (CENIDH). Each were considered to be among the main actors of civil society in their respective fields.

CENIDH was founded in 1990 as a non-profit and non-partisan organisation dedicating to defence of human rights. The vision of CEHIDH is to proactively promote and defend human rights comprehensively, with gender and generational approaches, thus contributing to economic, political, social and cultural development of Nicaragua with human dignity. CENIDH accompanies actively the victims of human rights violations in self defence of their rights, through presence in conflicts, propositive mediation, education and communication, local and international alliances, advocacy to authorities, and use of formal and informal defence mechanisms of human rights. CENIDH has received institutional support also from international NGOs, such as HIVOS and Bread for the World. Additionally, project support has been received from variety of donors: SIDA, Embassy of Germany, Multidonor Fund for Democratic Governance, OXFAM-Novib, Diakonia, and others.

Ética y Transparencia was founded in 1996 as a national chapter of Transparency International, dedicating in electoral observation and related investigation and campaigning, social audits to national and local budgets and contracts, anti corruption research and campaigning, training of citizens and civil servants, reception of denunciations and legal assistance related to anti corruption, as well as transparency and accountability promotion and strengthening concerning the civil society. The activities are implemented by the organisation's expert team and national voluntary network. The other donors that have given institutional support to EyT, include Denmark and Luxemburg. The electoral observation activities have been supported through project funding, mainly from NDI and World Learning. The transparency component has received project funding additionally from EU.

IEEPP was founded in 2004 with a mission to monitor and give technical assistance in formulation, monitoring and evaluation of security policies. In 2007 its thematical scope was widened to analysis of transparency of public budgets, and in 2010 to analysis of social inclusion, especially in the fields of education and health with a focus on children, youth and women. The institutional plan for 2010 – 2012 includes two research programmes: democratic security (citizen security, defense and organised crime) and good governance (social inclusion, transparency and public budgets). Additionally IEEPP implements a fund for investigative journalism. During 2009 – 2012 IEEPP has received institutional support from the Governments of Denmark and Finland, and additionally project support from European Union, Multidonor Fund for Democratic Governance, National Endowment for Democracy, Christian Aid, Open Society Foundation, Save the Children.

Collaboration with these organisations was determined to be that of *institutional support*. This means, the funds are assigned to the implementation of their multi-year strategic plans. Each organisation submitted their strategic plan to be appraised by Finland and other donors that were considering this aid modality. In the case of EyT, Finland decided to support its transparency program, which focuses in promoting transparency and anti-corruption in the central and local governments. In the case of IEEPP, Finland supports its research programmes on budget transparency and public policy impact as well as its democratic security programme. In the case of CENIDH, support is given to all components of its strategic plan that includes human rights promotion and advocacy, capacity building and defence of victims of human rights violations. Additionally, all three organizations receive a separate part assigned to institutional strengthening. Since the institutional support allows more flexibility than the traditional project model for organizations to use their resources, the Embassy of Finland hired an auditing firm to carry out constant audits (four times a year) to each organization. Monitoring has been done through visits and reviews of the semiannual reports submitted by each organization.

1.2. Description of the programme Institutional Support to Civil Society Organisations in Nicaragua

The objective of institutional support is to strengthen the capacities of civil society, and especially of the three selected organisations to achieve the goals outlined in their strategic plans and consecutively to influence the fields of transparency, accountability and human rights.

Development objective:

The development objective is to improve the accountability of the Government and the society in general and its commitment to good governance, transparency, and human rights, both at national and local levels.

Objectives of each component:

EyT

To promote strengthening of ethical and professional democratic institutionalality and good governance: to promote citizen participation, respect to and binding of administrative agreements, and strengthen the state's administrative skills.

Expected results are:

- Public awareness of the administrative issues has increased and Public institutions and are more transparent to obtain the public process. Transparency of municipal budgets and contracts has increased. A culture of transparency and anti corruption has been promoted in the society.

- Etica y Transparencia, the organization has been strengthened institutionally and able to work more professionally to achieve its objectives.

Indicators:

- In the end of the Programme, at least 50% of the participating municipalities improve in 20% their transparency indicators.
- Social auditing carried out in 20 municipalities per year.
- At least 40 public institutions have adopted recommendations of social audit exercises.

IEEPP

Strengthening of relations and dialogue between the civil society and policy makers, in order to improve transparency and effectiveness of public administration.

Expected results are:

- Government actions to reduce poverty in Nicaragua have been strengthened through budget and policy analysis and follow up.

Indicators:

- Percentage of policy proposals taken into account by public institutions.
- Increase in demands for technical assistance in social, environmental or democratic security issues by strategic partners (public institutions or civil society partners).
- Democratic security has been strengthened as part of the transparent public policies. Information-based and active public debate has been supported in order to make proposals and increase control and influence at municipal and national levels.

Indicators:

- Proposals of IEEPP in democratic security issues published in national media.
- Collaboration actions with National Police and Municipal Governments.
- Collaboration contract with Parliamentary Defence and Security Committee functioning
- The strategic partners (public and social) have strengthened their collective capacity to institutionalize processes that enable an efficient and transparent public administration; and this has happened through public dialogue and introduction of best practices implemented in the public sector.

Indicators:

- Number of collaboration events between SCO and media in issues related to transparency and democratic security.
- Organization's internal good governance has improved. The processes of transparency and efficiency of are guaranteed.

Indicators:

- Organisational monitoring and evaluation processes functioning as established.

CENIDH

Contribute to the reduction of impunity in human rights violations in Nicaragua. Promote in Nicaraguan society advocacy and reporting practices to require the State effective protection of HR in laws, politics and public policy.

Expected results are:

- Contribute to and encourage a culture of promotion and defending human rights through the popularization of the doctrine of human rights and the transfer of knowledge about formal and informal mechanisms of defence.

Indicators:

- Men and women trained and incorporated into the human rights defence and promotion actions.
- Promote and support awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives with various civil society actors to demand the authorities guarantee the full development and exercise of human rights.

Indicators:

- Number, quality and results of the approved initiatives
- Timely interventions in cases of violation of human rights and assist victims in their struggle for the defence and restoration of their rights.

Indicators:

- 60 % of the denunciations of human rights violations attended by CENIDH have been accompanied during the auto-defence processes.
- Strengthen organizational and technical capacities of CENIDH in human rights promotion, defense and advocacy.

Indicators:

- CENIDH has a tool-kit and technical manuals for improving the institutional management.

Budget

Organisation	2010	2011	2012	TOTAL
EyT	295 500,00 €	266 214,29 €	252 642,86 €	814 357,15 €
IEEPP	214 285,71 €	214 285,71 €	214 285,71 €	642 857,13 €
CENIDH	154 806,00 €	220 000,00 €	220 000,00 €	594 806,00 €

2. Rationale, purpose and objectives of the evaluation

Rationale and purpose: The institutional support agreements between the MFA and three organisations will finish at the end of the year 2012. This evaluation helps to assess the results at the completion stage of the programmes and gives inputs for considering the relevance of this type of assistance under similar conditions. Especially valuable it is to have external opinion on effectiveness, impact and sustainability, as well as conditions required by this kind of aid modality.

Given that the experiences of institutional support by Finland to civil society organisations in Nicaragua are rather recent, one of the main objectives of the evaluation is to analyse whether such aid has resulted in better results and impact compared to traditional project modality. It is of interest to both donor and the partner organisations to learn the principal lessons and recommendations to develop the instrument.

It is expected that the evaluation will provide concrete and strategic recommendations to donors in how to support the Nicaraguan Civil Society effectively and sustainably. Also recommendations to Nicaraguan CSOs in relation to effectiveness and impact of work in fields of governance and human rights in Nicaragua are expected.

Use of the results: The results of this evaluation are to be used in the first place by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and the Embassy of Finland in Managua. They will serve to assess the recent development cooperation in Nicaragua, and it gives inputs for considering possible future cooperation in Nicaragua as well as in other contexts. The evaluation is equally important to the partner organisations as it provides valuable external opinion and recommendations related to their strategies and their implementation. Finally, the evaluation will benefit other donors supporting Nicaraguan civil society.

3. Participation and partnership as an approach to the final evaluation

This evaluation has two main audiences: Finland and other donors who are interested to find effective and sustainable ways to support civil society in general and particularly in the fields of governance and human rights; and civil society organizations which are interested to develop their management and operation. In this sense, it is essential to involve the key stakeholders closely in the evaluation process. These terms of reference have been prepared by the Embassy of Finland, but also have been reviewed by the organizations. Although the Embassy of Finland is the main client of this evaluation, in the field phase of the evaluation it is of fundamental importance to ensure sufficient time for each organization to present their views. Given the political polarization of Nicaraguan society especially in politically sensitive issues that are the emphasis of the work of the organizations supported, it is equally important to ensure sufficient time and effort to interview or otherwise take into account the different sectors of the society. This includes the government, parliamentarians, the private sector, other civil society organizations, representatives of the media, academia and other donors.

4. Scope of the final evaluation

Time span: 2010 - 2012

Stakeholder groups:

The supported organisations themselves. EyT and IEEPP have offices in Managua, CENIDH apart from headquarters in Managua, has local offices in Estelí, Matagalpa and Chontales.

Target groups:

- Parliament: specially committees related to transparency and probity, to economy, production and budget, and to judicial affairs, as well as the heads of parliamentary groups. In addition to current parliamentarians it is necessary to interview former (2007 – 2011) parliamentarians, especially presidents of commissions and parliamentary groups.
- Municipal Governments: EyT has worked with 20 municipalities in departments of Boaco, Chontales, RAAS, Matagalpa, and with 60 municipalities in 2010: Masaya, Carazo, Granada, Rivas, Nueva Segovia, Madriz, Estelí, Matagalpa, Boaco, Chontales and Zelaya Central. Local governments and citizens.
- State institutions: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, National Police, State Auditors Office, Ministry of Finances
- Media: Confidencial, La Prensa, El Nuevo Diario
- Other Civil Society Organisations and private sector: COSEP, Coordinadora Civil, Federación de ONGs, IPADE, Fundacion Nicaragua Nuestra, Red de Desarrollo Local

Donors

Embassy of Finland

DANIDA (has supported the same CSOs)

Embassy of Luxemburg (has supported the same CSOs)

Delegation of European Union (coordinates a group of donors supporting civil society)

Embassy of Germany (lead donor in Basket Fund for Democratic Governance)/IBIS

USAID (supports other components of EyT)

SDC (significant European donor)

UNDP

Geographical area to cover:

- Managua
- Boaco: EyT
- Chontales: EyT and CENIDH
- RAAS: EyT
- Estelí: CENIDH
- Matagalpa: CENIDH
- RAAN / Triangulo Minero: CENIDH

Additionally, EyT implemented activities in 2010 also in: Masaya, Carazo, Granada, Rivas, Nueva Segovia, Madriz, Estelí, Matagalpa, Boaco, Chontales y Zelaya Central.

5. Issues to be addressed and evaluation questions

5.1. Cross-cutting objectives and evaluation questions

A particular emphasis in this evaluation should be placed in gender and social equality, human rights and easily marginalised groups and governance issues. In case of this particular programme these are not only cross-cutting issues, but among the principal development objectives. Environmental vulnerability, climate change and disaster risk issues should be taken into account but not emphasised as their relevance in the advocacy work of governance and human rights organisations is minor. HIV/AIDS is not a major development challenge in Nicaragua, so it is not necessary to be in focus of the evaluation.

Evaluation questions on the cross-cutting objectives

- Was adequate and appropriately disaggregated baseline data available on the cross-cutting objectives for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?
- Were adequate resources and expertise allocated for implementation that promoted cross-cutting objectives?
- Were cross-cutting objectives systematically and explicitly integrated into programme implementation, monitoring and reporting ?

5.2. Evaluation criteria and evaluation questions

The **principal objectives** of the evaluation are to analyse the **relevance** of the strategic plans and functioning and role of each organisation from point of view of both national context and Finland's development cooperation policy; to provide an evidence-based **impact** analysis of the Programme, in spite of the relatively short implementing period i.e. how the organisations succeeded in their goals to improve transparency, accountability, or human rights situation in Nicaragua. The impact of the **institutional support** to visibility and capacity to act of each organisation are among the issues to be addressed. One of the main objectives of the evaluation is to analyse whether such aid has resulted in better results and impact compared to traditional project modality. Of special interest is that of **sustainability** of the activities and functioning of each organisation and of the results they have achieved. Furthermore, the evaluation should provide evidence and analysis on the **efficiency and effectiveness** of the Programme and of each organisation in results based management. Alongside the organisations, also the role of the Government of Finland and the Embassy of Finland in Managua as donor and partner will be analysed.

Relevance

Relevance refers to the extent to which the objectives of the programme are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and Finland's policies.

Problems, needs

- Are the objectives and achievements of the programme still consistent with the needs and priorities of the stakeholders, including the final beneficiaries?
- Who defines the objectives and strategies of the organisations? Whose governance and human rights are they promoting?

Policy priorities

- Are the objectives and achievements of the programme consistent with the policies of the partner country?
- Are the objectives of the programme consistent with Finland's development policy?
- Has the situation changed since the approval of the programme?]

Efficiency

The efficiency of a programme is defined by how well the various activities transformed the available resources into the intended results in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness. Comparison should be made against what was planned.

Value for money

- How well did the activities transform the available resources into the intended outputs/results, in terms of quantity, quality and time?
- Can the costs of the programme be justified by the results?
- Were the donor contributions provided as planned?

Development effectiveness

Effectiveness describes if the results have furthered the achievement of the objectives of the programme. The evaluation is made against the related indicators.

Achievement of immediate benefits

- To what extent did the programme achieve its purpose?
- Are the results/outputs and the programme purpose making a contribution towards improved governance and human rights situation?
- Quality of capacity building?

Development impact

Impact describes how the programme has succeeded in the attainment of its overall objective, i.e. targeted impact for its beneficiaries. The evaluation is made against the related indicators.

Achievement of wider benefits

- Was progress been made towards achieving the overall objective(s) of the programme?
- What is the overall governance and human rights impact of the programme, intended and unintended, long term and short term, positive and negative?
- Do the indicators for the overall objective show that the intended changes have started to take place? In whose lives are the governance and human rights impacts starting to make a difference?
- Did the organisations contribute to accountability relationships and collaboration between state and non state actors?

Sustainability

Sustainability can be described as the degree to which the benefits produced by the programme continue after the external support has come to an end.

Continuation of the achieved benefits

- What are the possible factors that enhance or inhibit sustainability, including ownership/commitment, economic/financial, institutional, technical, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability aspects?
- Are the benefits produced by the programme likely to be maintained after the termination of external support?
- Who is to take over the responsibility of financing the activities, or have they become self-sustaining?

Programme management and administrative arrangements

Sound management

- Benefits of the institutional support modality, compared to traditional project support? Has this kind of aid resulted in more effectiveness, or impact? Have the organisations resulted strengthened due to institutional support? Recommendations for monitoring arrangements for institutional support?
- Quality of the day-to-day management? Were possible problems in implementation adequately addressed?
- What was the quality of work planning, monitoring and reporting incl. use of indicators, resource and personnel management, financial management, cooperation and communication between stakeholders?
- Were important assumptions identified? Were risks appropriately managed, including flexible adaptation to unforeseen situations?

Aid effectiveness (Effectiveness of aid management and delivery)

- The degree of complementarity between the national development plans and political agenda and those of the CSO's?
- Existence of alliances between the CSO's themselves and between the CSO's and public institutions?
- Accountability and transparency of CSO's regarding their activities? Has there been improvement?

Finnish value added

- What was the added value provided by the Finnish support?
- What are the distinctive features of Finland's support?

6. Methodology

The choice of methodology will be left to the tenderer to propose. It is expected, however, that multiple methodologies are used, both quantitative and qualitative. Validation of results must be done through multiple sources. No single statements should be taken as a general outcome.

In the methodology chapter of proposal the following should be included:

- reports, documents, materials to be analysed during the desk study phase;
- the data collection tools that will be used, including any planned surveys, questionnaires, field observations, reference to administrative records and management reports, key interviews, etc;
- data analysis methods to be applied.

The methodology will be developed during the inception phase by producing an evaluation matrix including a detailed description of the methodology to be applied by the evaluators.

7. The evaluation process and time schedule

It is expected that the evaluation will be completed in **13 weeks**, from the signing of the contract, according to the following indicative schedule. The evaluation field missions of both programmes (Life in Democracy and Institutional Support Programme) are timed for September 2012, in order to guarantee better conditions for evaluations before the municipal elections of November.

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8	WEEK 9	WEEK 10	WEEK 11	WEEK 12	WEEK 13
Desk study, field trip preparation and inception reports (of both evaluations)	█	█											
Approval of the inception reports by MFA		█	█	█	█								
Travel to Nicaragua				█									
Field Trip to Nicaragua: Managua (briefing and de-briefing at the Embassy, meetings with all the organisations, other donors, government and non state actors), municipal visits.				█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Travel									█				
Presentation of the findings in the MFA									█				
Draft final reports										█	█	█	█
Comments of the MFA											█	█	█
Final report													█

8. Reporting

The evaluation team must submit the following deliverables, separate for each evaluation (i.e. for each Terms of Reference), all in English and the final report and presentation also in Spanish:

➤ Inception report

The desk study results are included in the inception report as a concise analysis of the policies, guidelines, and other documents studied for the evaluation. The Inception report must also contain a plan for the field study, i.e. what kind of questions need to be clarified by interviews, who will be interviewed in the Ministry and in the Embassy, who will be interviewed in the partner organisations and in the field, outline of the questions to be asked in the interviews etc.

The Inception report must include detailed work methodologies, a work plan and detailed division of labour within the evaluation team, list of most important meetings and interviews (including questions), detailed evaluation questions linked to the evaluation criteria in an evaluation matrix, reporting plans including proposals for tables of contents of the reports.

➤ Presentation on the field findings

Presentation on the field findings must be given in the Embassy of Finland in Managua and in the MFA.

➤ Draft final report

Draft final report amalgamates the desk study and the field findings. The evaluation report presents findings, conclusions based on evidence, recommendations and lessons separately and with a clear logical distinction between them and integrating the evaluation results on cross-cutting objectives.

The MFA and the relevant stakeholders will submit comments on the draft final report to the consultant. The comments will be submitted in 1 ½ weeks after receiving the draft report. The draft final report is commented only once. The commentary round is only to correct misunderstandings and possible mistakes, not to rewrite the report.

➤ Final report

The final report must be submitted 10 days after receiving the comments. The final report must follow the report outlines agreed on during the inception phase.

➤ Presentation on the evaluation findings

The evaluation team is expected to give a PowerPoint supported presentation on the evaluation findings, both English and Spanish versions.

The reports should be organized logically according to the dimensions detailed in the chapter on evaluation criterias and they should be written in clear and concise language. Each report is subjected to specific approval. The evaluation team is able to move to the next phase only after receiving a written statement of acceptance by the MFA.

9. Expertise required

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is looking for an experienced evaluation team. Preference is given to experience from developing and/or transition economy countries, preferably from various contexts, including Central America. References from the last 15 years are regarded as the most relevant. Team Leader shall have fluency in written and spoken English. Other proposed persons of the Team(s) shall have fluency in Spanish and working knowledge of English.

The evaluation task of the programme “Institutional Support to Civil Society Organizations” suits well to 2-4 experts, of whom one is named Team Leader. In search of mutual contributions between the two evaluations (“Life in Democracy” and “Institutional Support to Civil Society Organizations” – programmes), the Team Leader should be the same person in both of them. It is possible also to combine the tasks of different expertise areas below (a-b, a-c, a-d, b-c, b-d, c-d) or with that of thematic expertise of “Life in Democracy” evaluation, provided that the qualifications are met in the same person. In case of combination of the tasks, the roles of each expert and the division of tasks between them must be clearly defined.

Expertise areas:

1. **Team Leader, International** (0-30 points)
 - Proven solid experience in planning, implementing, monitoring or evaluation of civil society support programmes, especially focused on good governance and human rights. (0-15 points)
 - Proven experience as a Team Leader in development cooperation evaluations. (0-12 points)
 - Proven understanding of development questions, knowledge of Finland’s development cooperation policy is considered as an advantage. (0-3 points)
2. **Strategic Planning, National or International** (20points)
 - Proven solid experience in organisational strategic planning (0-15 points).
 - Proven experience of civil society work. (0-5 points)
3. **Democratic governance, International** (0-20 points)
 - Proven experience in planning, implementation and/or evaluation of development programmes or projects related to democratic governance (0- 15 points).
 - Proven knowledge of democratic governance development in Central America (0-5 points)
4. **Human Rights , International** (20 points)
 - Proven experience in planning, implementation and/or evaluation of development programmes or projects, related to human rights (preference given to political and civil rights) in developing or transition countries (0-15 points).

- Proven knowledge of human rights situation in Central America. (0-5 points)

Team as a whole (0-20 points)

- Understanding of Central American political contexts (0-5 points)
- Experience of the whole Team(s) in planning, monitoring and evaluation of development interventions with Project Cycle Management (PCM) and Logical Framework Approach (LFA) approaches, preference is given on participatory planning (0-5 points)
- Team(s)'s education in addition to the minimum requirements (0-3points)
- Team's language capabilities in addition to the minimum requirements, Finnish is deemed as an asset. (0-2 points)
- Experience in mainstreaming cross-cutting objectives (gender and social equality, climate sustainability) in project/programme evaluation, planning or monitoring (0-5 points)

10. Budget

A lump sum of 120.000 Euro in total is budgeted for the implementation of both evaluations: "Life in Democracy Civil Society support program" and "Institutional support to civil society organizations"

11. Mandate

The evaluation team is entitled and expected to discuss matters relevant to this evaluation with pertinent persons and organizations. However, it is not authorized to make any commitments on behalf of the Government of Finland.

ANNEXES:

1. OECD/DAC and EU quality standards for evaluations
2. Outline of Evaluation Report