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GPECS II 
Global Project
for Electoral Cycle Support II



European Commission
United Nations Development Programme
Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance



EC-UNDP

1 - 31 December, 2017

Electoral Assistance Projects Update

This report provides an overview of all active EU funded and UNDP implemented electoral assistance projects only and should be shared with EU delegations in the respective countries.



NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

The election process and voting in the presidential runoff election was smooth. There were no major incidents to report of a technical nature and voting was conducted in a peaceful atmosphere. On 29 December, the National Elections Commission announced the winner (George Weah) of the runoff elections and the inauguration is scheduled to take place on the second working Tuesday of January 2018 in line with the law.

LIBERIA

The Minister of Interior signed the decree to hold Parliamentary elections nationally on May 6 (overseas between April 22-27, 2018). The respective decree must be signed also by the Prime Minister and by the President of the Republic.

LEBANON

Nepal concluded its historic year of elections by holding the second phase of federal and provincial elections on 7 December. Secretary General Antonio Guterres expressed his hope that the political parties would also be successful in going for other necessary processes and phases following the conclusion of the elections.

NEPAL

Acronyms and abbreviations

ARO	Area Registration Officer
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CMD	Centre for Multi-Party Democracy
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
CVE	Civic and Voter Education
EAs	Education Authorities
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECZ	Electoral Commission of Zambia
EMB	Electoral Management Body
ESP	Electoral Support Project
ETF	Electoral Task Force
FBOs	Faith-Based Organisations
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FMS	Federal Member States
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
IESG	Integrated Electoral Support Group
JTI	Judiciary Training Institute
LADE	Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections
LEAP	Lebanese Elections Assistance Project
LPHU	Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEC	Malawi Electoral Commission
MEHRD	Ministry of Education, Human Resource and Development
MoIFAR	Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation
MoIM	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities

MPLCs	Multi-Party Liaison Committees
NASA	National Super Alliance
NEC	National Elections Commission
NECOF	National Elections Consultative Forum
NIEC	National Independent Electoral Commission
OMSDWA	Office of Minister of State for Women Affairs
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SCE	Supervisory Commission for Elections
SECSIP	Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project
SEPK	Strengthening the Electoral Process in Kenya
SIEC	Solomon Islands Electoral Commission
SRSR	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
ToT	Training for Trainers
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
WIF	Women in Front
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZHRC	Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission
ZIM-ECO Project	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Capacity Building Project

SUMMARY

GUINEA: Local elections have been called for 4 February 2018 in 342 communes throughout the country. - Political arrangements and discussions on alliances have been ongoing between political actors and civil society.

KENYA: Following the inauguration of President Uhuru Kenyatta for his second and final term as the President of the Republic of Kenya, the opposition National Super Alliance (NASA) enhanced their campaign against the new administration, announcing that they would swear-in their leader Rt. Honourable Raila Odinga as the “people’s president” on 12 December 2017. This announcement increased tensions in the country and the opposition later abandoned plans for the swearing-in ceremony. - On 11 December, the Supreme Court issued the detailed judgement of the Presidential Petition. The judges reasoned that the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) had demonstrated compliance with the law in conducting the October 26th fresh presidential elections and that the petitioners’ case lacked merit. During the month, two petitions filed against opposition legislators (arising from the 8 August 2017 elections) were dismissed by the High Court.

LEBANON: The Minister of Interior signed the decree to hold Parliamentary elections nationally on May 6 (overseas between April 22-27), 2018 as part of the commitment of the Lebanese Government to conduct elections on time. The respective decree must be signed also by the Prime Minister and by the President of the Republic. - In addition, in preparation for the upcoming parliamentary elections, the Ministry of Interior launched in December the official logo and slogan of the 2018 elections: “Lebanon Votes 2018”. This logo will be utilized throughout the electoral period and will appear on the electoral materials.

LIBERIA: The election process and voting in the presidential runoff election, held on 26 December, was smooth. There were no major incidents to report of a technical nature and voting was conducted in a peaceful atmosphere. On 29 December, the National Elections Commission announced the winner (George Weah) of the run-off elections and the inauguration is scheduled to take place on the second working Tuesday of January 2018, in line with the law.

MALAWI: A Media Code of Conduct conference has been held with over 100 media houses covering print, radio and TV media outlets. - The National Elections Consultative Forum (NECOF) was held, with a focus on demonstrating the use of the new biometric National ID cards for voter registration purposes. - A Multi-Party Liaison Committee (MPLC) meeting took place to review the operating Guidelines as part of their increased effectiveness as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism. - New Political Parties Bill has been approved in Parliament which forbids

the use of handouts. - 110 civil society organisations (CSOs) have been provided with Civic and Voter Education accreditation by the Malawi Electoral Commission.

NEPAL: Nepal concluded its historic year of elections by holding the second phase of federal and provincial elections on 7 December. - Congratulating Nepali people on the peaceful completion of the 2018 elections, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres expressed his hope that the political parties would also be successful in achieving other necessary processes and phases following the conclusion of the elections.

SOLOMON ISLANDS: UNDP Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP) project deployed three Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) experts to support the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) BVR update process in Western and Choiseul provinces from 14 to 19 December 2017. Two experts were deployed to the above-mentioned provinces and one was posted at the SIEC headquarters to provide technical support to SIEC.

SOMALIA: The National Independent Electoral Commission of Somalia (NIEC) registered seven political parties, a major milestone in preparation of universal elections for 2020. - On 11 December, the NIEC launched a unique lexicon with electoral terminology, in English, Somali and Arabic, and presented the 2017 - 2021 Strategic Plan, a roadmap of how the NIEC intends to deliver universal suffrage elections in 2020. On 17 December, the NIEC commenced its regional consultations with stakeholders in the Federal Member States (FMS), following the Mogadishu Agreement in November between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the FMS to engage and consult within 90 days sub-national partners on electoral challenges and preparations for universal elections.

ZAMBIA: On 18–21 December, the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) undertook a review of its Strategic Plan in light of lessons learned from the 2016 elections. - The ECZ completed its review of the electoral legal framework and submitted its recommendations to the Ministry of Justice. - ECZ completed a Structural Vulnerability Assessment to map trends in election-related violence.

ZIMBABWE: ZIM-ECO project has been providing support in key capacity building and institutional strengthening areas of Biometric Voter Registration (BVR), operational planning for BVR, voter education, stakeholder, engagement, election dispute resolution and gender mainstreaming.

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ONGOING ELECTORAL PROJECTS WITH EU FUNDING

Country	Project Title	Reference	EU Contribution	Start Date	End Date
Georgia	Studies and Research of Media Election Coverage in Georgia for Local Self-Government Elections 2017	ENI/2016/378-735	€ 276,663.00	01.01.17	31.12.17
Guinea	Projet d'Appui au Cycle Electoral de la Guinée – PACEG	FED/2015/367-390	€ 10,000,000.00	06.07.15	05.07.18
Kenya	Strengthening of the Electoral Processes in Kenya Project	FED/2016/372/463	€ 5,000,000.00	13.02.16	12.02.19
Lebanon	EU Support to the Lebanese Elections Assistance Programme (LEAP): Building Sustainability for Implementation of Electoral Reforms	ENPI/2013/333-144	€ 1,810,000.00	01.01.14	31.12.17
	Lebanese Electoral Assistance Programme for the 2013 Parliamentary Elections	ENPI/2013/316-094	€ 3,000,000.00	01.01.13	31.12.17
Liberia	Support to the 2015-2018 Liberian Electoral Cycle	FED/2015/367-723	€ 10,000,000.00	01.06.15	31.05.19
Malawi	Malawi Electoral Cycle Support: 2017-2019	2017/389-162	€ 2,500,000.00	11.10.17	10.04.20
Nepal	Electoral Support Project-Institutional Strengthening and Professional Development Support for the Election Commission of Nepal (ESP)	DCI-ASIE/2012/305-833	€ 10,050,000.00	12.01.12	29.05.18
Solomon Islands	Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP)	FED/2013/328-922	€ 3,500,000.00	01.07.13	31.12.18
Somalia	Joint Programme for Support to the Electoral Process in the Federal Republic of Somalia	FED/2015/366-291 FED/2015/360-953	€ 5,193,878.00	21.11.15	31.12.17
Zambia	Support to the 2015-2017 Electoral Cycle	FED/2015/363-147	€ 5,250,000.00	23.06.15	31.07.18
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Capacity Building Project (ZIM-ECO)	FED/2016/380-895	€ 5,590,000.00	01.09.16	30.08.20



GUINEA

 PACEG

PROJET D'APPUI AU CYCLE ELECTORAL DE LA GUINEE (PACEG)

Since July 2015, the project to “Support the Electoral Cycle of Guinea” (PACEG) provides assistance to strengthen the capacities of the Electoral Commission (CENI) and its field offices, including organizational, technical, communicational, financial and operational capacities. The main objective of the PACEG is to enable a credible, inclusive and peaceful 2015-2017 electoral process in Guinea, complying with international standards, while ensuring the effective and inclusive participation of women and young people through providing civic education and coaching. For more information, please visit the [project's website](#).

HIGHLIGHTS

- Local elections have been called for 4 February 2018 in 342 communes throughout the country.
- Political arrangements and discussions on alliances have been ongoing between political actors and civil society.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

Thirty-eight national United Nations Volunteers (UNV), recruited to support electoral operations, have been trained on 15 and 16 December 2017. The training focused on the electoral legal framework, principles and conditions of the UN electoral assistance and basic knowledge on UN volunteer work.

Following the update of the electoral mapping, CENI determined the eligible period for the submission of candidate applications between 6 and 20 December. During this period, most of political and civil society actors were focused on drafting the lists of candidates and transmitting them to the CENI field offices.

The CENI technical unit¹ (“Cellule d’Action et de Suivi du Processus Electoral”) organised meetings on 14, 18 and 21 December to take stock of the situation and address any potential challenges including

¹ The CENI technical unit is an ad hoc consultation framework implemented by the CENI in order to discuss the electoral operations and address difficulties and challenges. It is composed of representatives of the CENI, political parties, various stakeholders active in the field of electoral assistance, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and international organizations.

the following:

- Difficulties in getting the necessary documents for the candidates (criminal records are hard to get and very expensive in some prefectures);
- Unequal treatment regarding the issuance of documents in certain locations;
- Unavailability of prefectural treasurers in certain areas;
- Lack of fiscal stamps in some courts.

Considering that these issues would negatively affect the candidate nomination process if left unaddressed, the CENI technical unit agreed on the following recommendations:

- Dedicated additional support from the Ministry of Finances and Economy to the technical unit's work by:
 - Providing additional fiscal stamps to the prefectures;
 - Ensuring increased availability of regional and prefectural treasurers to enable the timely payment of the candidates' deposits;
- Increased support from the Ministry of Justice to facilitate the issuance of criminal records;
- Encourage the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization to ensure that territorial agents comply with the transparency and neutrality principles in the electoral process;
- The CENI should consider extending the deadline for nominations, in order to maximise the number of registered lists and ensure a more inclusive process.

Considering the low number of nominations received at the time and heeding the advice and recommendations of the CENI technical unit, the CENI decided to extend the nomination period by one week, until 26 December.

II. Plans for the next period

The following activities are expected in January 2018:

- Deployment of the 38 national United Nations Volunteers to the 33 Independent Prefectural Electoral Commission (*Commissions Electorales Préfectorales Indépendantes*) and to the five Independent Local Electoral Commissions in the city of Conakry (*Commissions Electorales Communales Indépendantes de la ville de Conakry*).
- Raise awareness about the Electoral Code, in French and national dialects and ensure the dissemination of the Code throughout the country.

For more information on the Projet d'appui au cycle électoral de la Guinée (PACEG), please contact Mr. Abdoul Latif Haidara, abdoul.haidara@undp.org and visit the [project's website](#).



 IEBC Communications Department

STRENGTHENING THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN KENYA (SEPK)

The UNDP Electoral Assistance Project in Kenya (SEPK), provides technical assistance to the Kenyan Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and other stakeholders to support credible and peaceful electoral process. The project started in February 2016 and focuses on strengthening the legal and institutional framework for the electoral process, increasing electoral participation with specific attention being paid to youth, women, and disable people, and consolidating electoral justice and dispute resolution mechanisms to increase compliance with electoral framework.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Following the inauguration of President Uhuru Kenyatta for his second and final term as the President of the Republic of Kenya, the opposition National Super Alliance (NASA) enhanced their campaign against the new administration, announcing that they would swear-in their leader Rt. Honourable Raila Odinga as the “people’s president” on 12 December 2017, coincident with the commemorations of the 54th Jamhuri day for Kenya. This announcement increased tensions in the country and the opposition later abandoned plans for the swearing-in ceremony.
- On 11 December, the Supreme Court issued the detailed judgement of the Presidential Petition. The judges reasoned that the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) had demonstrated compliance with the law in conducting the October 26th fresh presidential elections and that the petitioners’ case lacked merit. During the month, two petitions filed against opposition legislators (arising from the 8 August 2017 elections) were dismissed by the High Court. More decisions are expected in January 2018 as the 6-month time-frame for hearing and determination of the electoral petitions expires. By-elections are expected in the first quarter of the year, should the High Court uphold the petitions and subsequently nullify any electoral results.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

The following activities were conducted during the month:

- *Production of popular version of Political Parties Act*: SEPK continued to provide technical and financial support to the Office of Registrar of Political Parties in the development of this publication.
- *Validation of human resources policy for the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC)*: SEPK supported a workshop where consultants formally presented to the Commission the aforementioned policy document.
- *Production of electoral dispute resolution booklet*: in partnership with the Judiciary Training Institute (JTI), SEPK procured printing services for the production of the aforementioned publication, which is to be released in January 2018.

II. Plans for the next period

The activities planned for the following reporting period include:

- *Technical reviews of thematic areas of support rendered by SEPK to IEBC and other stakeholders*: SEPK will support review workshops focusing on electoral technology, electoral security and voter education;
- *Finalization of policy documents of IEBC*: SEPK will support validation of risk management framework of IEBC as well as the gender policy;
- Corporate Governance Training for IEBC Commissioners;
- *Annual Review and Planning for 2018*: SEPK staff and selected stakeholders will hold a retreat to review activities conducted in 2017 and formulate the workplan for 2018;
- *Project Steering Committee Meeting*: This is scheduled in mid-January 2018 and will be preceded by a Project Donor Group meeting;
- *Preparations for post-election evaluation*: SEPK will assist IEBC in developing terms of reference for conduct of the aforesaid evaluation.

For more information on the project on Strengthening the Electoral Process in Kenya, please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. Joram Rukambe, joram.rukambe@undp.org.



LEBANON

UNDP LEAP

LEBANESE ELECTIONS ASSISTANCE PROJECT (LEAP)

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Minister of Interior signed the decree to hold Parliamentary elections nationally on May 6 (overseas between April 22-27), 2018. The respective decree must be signed also by the Prime Minister and by the President of The Republic.
- In addition, in preparation for the upcoming parliamentary elections, the Ministry of Interior launched in December the official logo and slogan of the 2018 elections: "Lebanon Votes 2018". The logo was prepared and designed with the support of UNDP LEAP, process in which over ten different options and designs have been considered. This logo will be utilized throughout the electoral period and will appear on the electoral materials.

I. Project activities during the reporting period



Official logo of the Lebanon 2018 elections

In this reporting period, UNDP LEAP continued its support to the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) in the following areas:

BRIDGE Training on Elections Management and Operations

From 6 to 8 December 2017, LEAP joined elections officers from the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) and members from the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) in a BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections) workshop on "Elections Management & Operations". The three-day workshop aimed to increase the knowledge and awareness of the participants on elections management and operations following the adoption of a new electoral law and to build their capacities to implement the new procedures in an inclusive manner to have free, fair and transparent elections. The topics discussed were as follows: free and fair elections, parliamentary election 2018 legal framework, elections



BRIDGE workshop on Elections Management and Operations, 11 December 2017.
Photo credits: UNDP Lebanon

management, electoral calendar in 2018, candidates and lists registration, ballot paper design, voting procedures, results management, seat allocation, voting process simulation, elections stakeholders and planning for the electoral event.

Candidate's registration

The project provided IT equipment in order to upgrade the candidate's registration system that will be utilized for the upcoming parliamentary elections. The new system includes features that

enable the registration of candidates in a first phase and the registration of lists of candidates in the second phase.



BRIDGE workshop on Elections Management and Operations, 11 December 2017.
Photo credits: UNDP Lebanon

Access for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

In the context of the efforts to enhance the accessibility of the PWDs to the electoral processes, the Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union (LPHU) was provided a grant in order to conduct a comprehensive assessment of ten major future polling stations from a PWD perspective. Interdisciplinary teams were deployed to each location and a technical and procedural assessment was conducted. The results will be consolidated in a report that will highlight the ways in which the ten locations could become pilots for other locations and showcase sustainable methods to increase accessibility to the electoral processes and, by this, respect the legal provisions and international standards in this area.

II. Plans for the next period

Candidates Registration System

The upgraded candidate's registration system is expected to be fully functional and operational at the end of January 2018 to have time to be tested before the registrations starts. UNDP LEAP will also provide support in the set-up of the premises in which the registration will take place.

Operations and logistics

As the electoral period is fast approaching, the preparations for the upcoming polls included operational support from the project in the procurement of the following electoral materials:

- 10,000 Ballot boxes;
- 10,000 Polling booths; and
- 15,000 Vests and caps for polling officials.

Supervision and monitoring of elections

Supporting the establishment and operational capacity of the supervisory body for electoral campaigns, the Supervisory Commission on the Elections (SCE), the project will continue in the first quarter of the year with the provision of consultancy and training capacity to the newly recruited SCE monitors and staff. Also, the project will support the establishment and consolidation of the media monitoring unit, including hardware, software and capacity development.

Voter Registration Update process

For the upcoming exhibition and challenges period the project will develop and produce an awareness campaign encouraging voters to verify their electoral data and correct it, as required. The exhibition and challenges will start in February and will be concluded on the 10 March, followed by the revision and approval of the final voter roll on 30 March.

Women's participation in elections

Under this component, LEAP will co-organize with the Office of Minister of State for Women Affairs (OMSDWA), Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) and UN-Women a thematic workshop which will take place under the Patronage of the President of the Council of Ministers. The event will focus on enhancing women representation and participation in the upcoming elections. The participants in the workshop will include representatives from the main political forces, who will have the opportunity to discuss and exchange opinions on the possibilities of increasing women representation in the next parliament.

In addition, the project will conduct, together with Women in Front (WIF), eight info-sessions in different regions of the country involving women, potential candidates and civil society activists on relevant themes.

For more information on the project on LEAP, please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. Dan Radulescu, dan.radulescu@undp.org and visit the [project's website](#).



LIBERIA

Election Project/UNDP Liberia

SUPPORT TO THE 2015 – 2018 LIBERIAN ELECTORAL CYCLE

The project to support the electoral process in Liberia aims to strengthen the capacity of the National Election Commission (NEC) to successfully carry out electoral processes within the electoral cycle 2015-2018. Key in this regard is the preparation and conduct of the Presidential and General elections scheduled for 10th October 2017. Among other specific objectives, it introduces modern administrative systems and procedures, enhances its communications and public outreach and supports voter registration ahead of the elections. In addition, the project seeks to enhance the participation of women in the elections and in political activities, support civic and voter education and strengthen NEC's capacity to engage with the stakeholders and resolve electoral disputes. For more information, [please visit the Project's website.](#)

HIGHLIGHTS

- The election process and voting in the presidential run-off election, held on 26 December, was smooth. There were no major incidents to report of a technical nature and voting was conducted in a peaceful atmosphere. On 29 December, the National Elections Commission announced the winner (George Weah) of the run-off elections and the inauguration is scheduled to take place on the second working Tuesday of January 2018, in line with the law.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

The UNDP continued to support the National Elections Commission (NEC) in the legal challenges and appeals to the outcome of the first round of the election. National legal counsel supported by the project represented the NEC throughout the hearings process. Following the Supreme Court decision to dismiss the appeal, the services were retained to handle any complaints and appeals following the run-off presidential election on 26 December 2017. Prior to the run-off, refresher training was supported for 42 hearing officers and clerks on complaints and appeals handling.

In partnership with Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), UNDP supported the deployment of a team of information technology experts to support the NEC to clean the final register, pursuant to the Supreme Court order. Following a further de-duplication process, 274 entries were removed from the voter register. A total of 420 new voter identity cards were also issued to ensure there is no multiple identity numbers in use. The revised number on the voter register stood at 2,183,268.

A refresher training for 29,435 trainers and polling staff was completed prior to the run-off elections, with the project's support to the operations department in preparation, planning and implementation of the training. Updates to training material were also supported to ensure compliance with the Supreme Court order.

UNDP also supported logistics and operations and assisted in the preparation, delivery and retrieval of sensitive and non-sensitive election material together with coordination support with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for air support.

Key communications and press conference statements delivered by the Chairman of the National Elections Commission were drafted in consultation with National Elections Commission counterparts to ensure more consistent public messaging. A short final phase of civic and voter education was also re-launched following the resumption of election preparations for a two-week period.

The project provided technical IT support to develop reporting formats and tools for online and hardcopy provisional and final results' updates. The goal is to ensure transparent and timely release of election results for the presidential run-off election.

II. Plans for the next period

In the immediate post-election period, the project's annual workplan for 2018 will be finalized in consultation with the National Elections Commission and partners. The project also plans to support a set of evidence-based policy driven round-tables to examine election observer's recommendations that will inform the next phase of the electoral cycle. This will also include a fresh focus on the institutional capacity building and strengthening administrative systems for the NEC, including tools for increased efficiency in processes, drawing lessons from the 2017 election. Activities will follow a post-election lessons learnt process and a gap analysis that has been conducted in 2017. In the immediate post-election period field, level feedback will be collected and preparations made for debriefing and lessons learnt exercises to inform programming going forward. Results per polling station will be published online in line with international and regional best practices.

For more information on the support to the Liberia electoral cycle, please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. George Baratashvili, george.baratashvili@undp.org and visit the [Project's website](#).



MALAWI

Malawi Electoral Commission

MALAWI ELECTORAL CYCLE SUPPORT 2017-2019

The “Malawi Electoral Cycle Support 2017-2019” project is supported by a basket fund that is currently financed by the EU and UNDP. The project will support the internal capacities of the Malawi Electoral Commission through stronger planning, operational and administrative support, as well as in the areas of dispute resolution, communication, voter education, voter registration and results transmission. It will also encourage and support female aspirants to stand for office through mentoring, as well as ensuring that the political and cultural landscape is more accepting of the role women in the political life. The project will also partner with the Centre for Multiparty Democracy-Malawi, the organization that brings political parties together around common interests, to assist political parties to be more resilient organisations working around genuine political programmes and principles of transparency, accountability, fairness and merit.

HIGHLIGHTS

- A Media Code of Conduct conference has been held with over 100 media houses covering print, radio and TV media outlets.
- The National Elections Consultative Forum (NECOF) was held, with a focus on demonstrating the use of the new biometric National ID cards for voter registration purposes.
- A Multi-Party Liaison Committee (MPLC) meeting took place to review the operating Guidelines as part of their increased effectiveness as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism.
- New Political Parties Bill has been approved in Parliament which forbids the use of handouts.
- 110 civil society organisations (CSOs) have been provided with Civic and Voter Education accreditation by the Malawi Electoral Commission.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

December saw increased procurement and events-related activities, underscoring the fact that the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC)’s project is picking up momentum. Several key developments took place, positively affecting the electoral environment as well as the organization of the 2019 Tripartite elections.

The project supported the civic and voter education (CVE) accreditation event whereby successful

civil society organisations (CSOs) were formally identified as being able and credible civic and voter education partners. This accreditation was based on the past experience of having worked with some of the CSOs, whereas new CSOs were evaluated in the field in order to judge their real operating capacities. This should make it easier for CVE donors to identify the most appropriate partners when supporting this dimension of the elections.

The project also supported the holding of a Media Code of Conduct conference which concluded with the signing of all media houses (print, radio and TV), whether national or community level, of a new Code of Conduct that was drafted during the workshop. Pertinent comments that improved the document were received from the attendees and all signed the document at the end. The main theme of the conference was 'Responsible Journalism'.

The project supported the first pre-election National Elections Consultative Forum (NECOF). This forum brings together senior political party leadership, traditional and religious leaders, civil society and media to discuss with the Electoral Commission issues related to the organisation of the forthcoming elections. The main focus for this session was to demonstrate and explain how the new national biometric ID cards would be used for voter registration purposes. The session was well received and no objections voiced.

Project resources were also used to review the Multi-Party Liaison Committee (MPLC) Guidelines. MPLCs are alternative electoral dispute resolution structures at the District level that report to the Malawi Electoral Commission. The operating Guidelines were in need of updating in order to improve the abilities of MPLCs to undertake their functions more effectively. The MPLC representatives provided feed-back and guidance which are now being used to improve the document. A new reporting template was also presented which should encourage more MPLC activity on this front.

Finally, the Political Parties Bill was passed through Parliament. Through project support, the Centre for Multi-Party Democracy (CMD) has engaged in consultations, lobbying and advocacy of both Government entities and the political parties. This Bill has now made it illegal for political parties to issue hand outs (or bribes) as a means of winning support and has clarified the process for registering and de-registering political parties.

II. Project activities during the reporting period

January will see the hiring of several experts that will be working on the new MEC Strategic Plan, the new Voter Education Strategy, and a new Dispute Resolution Procedure for MEC's new Legal Department. The project will also be hiring a Procurement specialist to accelerate procurement processes in the project as well as an international Capacity Development and Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist as well as a Gender Specialist, meaning the Project Team will shortly be at full strength.

For more information on the Malawi Electoral Cycle Support Project, please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. Richard Cox, richard.cox@undp.org.



ELECTORAL SUPPORT PROJECT (ESP)

The Electoral Support Project- Phase II (ESP) is a technical assistance initiative which focuses on a long-term institutional and professional capacity development of the Election Commission (ECN) for conducting credible, inclusive and transparent elections at a national. The objectives of the project are 1) to strengthen the capacity of the ECN to function as an independent and credible institution, 2) to allow the conduct of the election cycle in an effective, sustainable, and credible manner, and 3) to increase democratic participation, particularly for under-represented and disadvantaged segments of the Nepali society. For more information, [please visit the ESP website](#).

HIGHLIGHTS

- Nepal concluded its historic year of elections by holding the second phase of federal and provincial elections on 7 December.
- Congratulating Nepali people on the peaceful completion of the 2018 elections, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres expressed his hope that the political parties would also be successful in achieving other necessary processes and phases following the conclusion of the elections.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

With support to the House of Representatives and State Assembly elections completed, Electoral Support Project (ESP) started preparing post-electoral and end-of-project work.

The project team held a retreat on 26 and 27 December in order to review project activities in 2018 with a special emphasis on the review of the electoral process and ESP support, identify areas for improvement and prioritize support for the remaining months of the project.

The Project Executive Board meeting extended ESP duration from January to May 2018.

II. Plans for the next period

- In the context of post-electoral phase and end-of-project work, the project team will produce a report containing the consolidation of main findings of the post-electoral internal review exercise conducted during the project retreat.
- The project will also conduct an analysis of voter registration with population data, an analysis of invalid votes and an analysis of the cost of elections.
- The Annual Progress Report will be finalized.
- The five regional project offices hosted within the regional offices of the Election Commission of Nepal will be closed and their equipment handed over to the national counterpart.

For more information on the Nepal ESP, please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. Vincent da Cruz, vincent.dacruz@undp.org, and visit the [Project's website](#).



SOLOMON ISLANDS

SECSIP

STRENGTHENING THE ELECTORAL CYCLE IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS (SECSIP)

Since 2013, UNDP Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP) has contributed to the inclusiveness and integrity of the electoral process. The project supported the successful introduction of a new comprehensive biometric voter registration system which resulted in a more inclusive and reliable voters' roll and continues to provide assistance in terms of its updating and sustainability. The project also supports the review of the electoral legal framework with a view to promote the strengthening of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) and assist to the fulfilment of its mandate. It also strengthens the capacity of the SIEC to advocate for women's political participation and supports the national authorities and civil society organizations in raising awareness of the population regarding voting and civic engagement. SECSIP is generously funded by the European Union, the government of Australia and UNDP.

HIGHLIGHTS

- UNDP Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP) project deployed three Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) experts to support the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) BVR update process in Western and Choiseul provinces from 14 to 19 December 2017. Two experts were deployed to the above-mentioned provinces and one was posted at the SIEC headquarters to provide technical support to SIEC.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

Training of Trainers in Makira province

On 14-16 December 2017, the Communications Awareness team comprised of Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) Senior Media Officer and UNDP Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP) national consultant on voter awareness conducted the training for trainers (ToT) with a view to enhance knowledge of citizens on the voting system in order to have confidence in electoral processes and to increase voter participation and engagement. During this

exercise, a new voter awareness programme manual was utilized. The ToT was initially planned for 20 trainers including participants from the remote island of Temotu and Makira; however, due to weather conditions, the flight from Temotu was cancelled and participants from this island were unable to attend. The communication awareness team successfully conducted a 3-days training for 10 trainers selected amongst the civil society and faith and religious groups from the province of Makira which was well received by the attendees.

The training was aimed at building the capacity of civil society trainers to better understand and expand their knowledge on electoral procedures. The ToT also provided an excellent opportunity for the Electoral Commission to continue building its outreach capacity by establishing a network of potential partners for voter awareness actions in Makira province.

Poster and Essay competition

At the request of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD), the deadline for the competition was extended to Wednesday 28 February 2018. This extension was notified through a formal announcement to all Education Authorities (EAs) also announced in SIEC's radio program broadcasted twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays. Additionally, SIEC's website link providing information on this competition has also been sent to schools and civil society organisations (CSOs).

Deployment of Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) experts to support the SIEC BVR update

Three BVR consultants arrived at Honiara on 6 December 2017 to provide support to the BVR update conducted in Choiseul and Western Province. Two experts were deployed to the above-mentioned provinces and one was posted at the SIEC HQ to support the data centre.

The deployed consultants provided helpdesk services solving hardware and software issues arisen during the 2 weeks deployment in the above referred provinces also contributed to the enhancement of BVR data entry skills of the Area Registration Officers (AROs). The support offered by these 3 consultants was positively appreciated by SIEC officials.

SIEC Activities for the BVR update

Following the closure of the BVR update process in Western and Choiseul, the retrieval of all the registration kits was successfully carried out. On 28 December 2017, all data from registration kits were completely extracted and stored in the main server, while a manual verification process of registration forms was also conducted. The verification is done to rectify human errors during registration of voters. Then, these new records will be matched with old records to determine if there are any duplicates. If duplicates were found, SIEC will decide whether to keep separate records or to update the voter's data. After all processes are completed, SIEC will print provisional voter lists to be displayed.

II. Plans for the next period

List of activities planned for the following reporting period.

- Contract to be awarded for a gender research on women's leadership and political participation;
- ToT for 50 constituency development officers on 23 -25 January 2017;
- Completion of the recruitment of the M&E United Nations Volunteer Officer;
- Review and finalization of 2018 annual work plan.

For more information on the SECSIP, please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Ms. Olga Rabade, olga.rabade@undp.org.



UNDP/UNSOM JOINT PROGRAMME FOR SUPPORT TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA

The overall strategic objective of the UNDP/UNSOM Joint Programme for “Support to the Electoral Process to the Federal Republic of Somalia” is to prepare the country for universal elections through institutional capacity development of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), the development of the legal framework for elections, and support to promote better understanding of electoral processes.

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 3 December, the National Independent Electoral Commission of Somalia (NIEC) registered seven political parties, a major milestone in preparation of universal elections for 2020.
- On 11 December, the NIEC launched a unique lexicon with electoral terminology, in English, Somali and Arabic, and presented the 2017 - 2021 Strategic Plan, a roadmap of how the NIEC intends to deliver universal suffrage elections in 2020.
- On 13 December, donor partners approved support for the UNDP / UNSOM Programme Document of electoral support for 2018, which has a budget of USD 6.5 million channeled through a multi-partner trust fund. At this stage, committed and envisaged donors include the European Union, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- On 17 December, the NIEC commenced its regional consultations with stakeholders in the Federal Member States (FMS), following the Mogadishu Agreement in November between the Federal Government (FGS) and the FMS to engage and consult within 90 days sub-national partners on electoral challenges and preparations for universal elections.
- On 24 December, the Electoral Task Force (ETF) comprising the Ministry of Interior, the NIEC, and representatives of different other relevant ministries presented to the Cabinet different options of systems of representation, to be defined during the drafting process of the Electoral Law.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

NIEC consultations with regional stakeholders

Following the Mogadishu Agreement on 5 November between the Federal Government (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS), the NIEC commenced on 17 December its consultative meetings with local stakeholders in the different member states. The NIEC met in December leaders of the federal member states of South-West, Jubaland and Hirshabelle, local administration, traditional elders, religion leaders, women, youth and other stakeholders. The NIEC will continue the regional consultations in January in three to four places per FMS, including Puntland and Galmudug, and as well as Benadir and the Somaliland community. The NIEC's regional consultations have been welcomed by local stakeholders and received wide media coverage (Somali radio, TV, social media). The UNDP/UNSOM Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) assisted the NIEC with the development of a facilitation guide and provides logistical and budgetary support to the field missions.

NIEC registration of political parties

On 3 December, the NIEC organized a certificate awards ceremony for the first seven political parties who have complied with temporary registration requirements. These new parties mark a crucial step toward the 2020 elections, and it is expected that more relevant parties will register in the future. Once voter registration is underway, parties will be able to proceed to the official stage of registration. This will require 10,000 registered voters indicating their support through a signature campaign that must be representative of 9 of the 18 regions.

Launch of electoral lexicon and NIEC Strategic Plan

The public launch on 11 December of the NIEC's five-year Strategic Plan (2017-2021) and the first Somali lexicon with electoral terminologies, brought back to the attention of the Somali general public and the international community the challenge for universal elections to be conducted in 2020. The event was attended by representatives of the newly registered political parties; civil society organizations; parliamentarians; international partners; and government officials. The UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the UNDP Country Director reiterated the UN's commitment to 'stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the people and leaders of Somalia as they seek to advance the country's democratic transition through realizing universal suffrage elections'. The preparation of both documents was intensively supported by the UNDP / UNSOM IESG during 2017.

Cabinet briefing on systems of representation

The Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MOFAIR) briefed on 24 December the Cabinet's "subcommittee on inclusive politics" on the drafting process for the electoral law and the electoral systems under discussion. The Electoral Task Force headed by MOIFAR plans in January a first consultation meeting with key partners of the Federal Member States.

II. Plans for the next period

- Continuation of the NIEC regional consultations with subnational stakeholders;
- Engagement of the Electoral Task Force with representatives of the FMS on systems of representation and the drafting process of the Electoral Law;
- Start of the renewed UNDP/UNSOM “Joint Programme for Support to Universal Suffrage Elections in the Federal Republic of Somalia”.

For more information on the UNDP/UNSOM Joint Programme, please contact Filip Warnants, filip.warnants@undp.org.



ZAMBIA

Public Relation Department of the Commission

SUPPORT TO THE ZAMBIA ELECTORAL CYCLE

The project “Consolidation of the Electoral Process in Zambia: Support to the Electoral Cycle” provides targeted support to the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) and other national entities to enhance the quality and credibility of electoral processes. Building upon previous electoral support, the project focuses on developing the capacity of the ECZ, enhancing public confidence in election results, strengthening modalities for dispute resolution and support to key electoral partners and stakeholders (political parties, media, CSOs, security agencies). The project started in February 2016, supported by the European Union, DFID, Irish Aid, USAID and UNDP.

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 18–21 December, the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) undertook a review of its Strategic Plan in light of lessons learned from the 2016 elections.
- The ECZ completed its review of the electoral legal framework and submitted its recommendations to the Ministry of Justice.
- ECZ completed a Structural Vulnerability Assessment to map trends in election-related violence.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

Review of ECZ Strategic Plan: Following completion of a series of activities to identify lessons learned from the last electoral cycle, the project supported a three-day workshop (18-21 December) to facilitate the ECZ review of their five-year Strategic Plan. The workshop enabled the Commission to review its performance against set objectives, assess its priorities in light of election lessons learned and identify recommendations for its adjustment.

Review of Election Legislative Framework: The project provided technical assistance to the ECZ to facilitate completion of their internal review of the electoral legal framework. This review analysed the applicable laws and provisions of the Constitution in order to identify gaps and inconsistencies and to make recommendations for their harmonization. The ECZ submitted its recommendations to the Ministry of Justice in December 2017.

Structural Vulnerability Assessment: The project provided support to enable the ECZ to complete a nationwide 'Structural Vulnerability Assessment'. The assessment was developed to give the ECZ a broader and deeper understanding of the trends of election-related violence in the country, and to assist the ECZ in restructuring the informal election conflict management system.

Domestic Observation Framework: The project and the Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG), one of the main domestic observer groups in Zambia, agreed upon a concept and initial workplan to engage stakeholders on considering development of a sustainable framework for domestic observation. The initiative aims to convene other domestic observer groups to discuss the development of a strategy to support sustainable long-term national election observation.

Ministry of Justice Legislative Reviews: As part of the Ministry of Justice process for legislative review, the project provided technical support to the Ministry of Justice in the development of their plans for stakeholder validation of the draft Political Parties Bill and for public and stakeholder consultations on the Public Order Act to be done during the first quarter of 2018.

II. Project activities during the reporting period

- Meeting with the Steering Committee of CCMG to agree details for stakeholder engagement on the framework for domestic election observation (12 January);
- Agreement with the Ministry of Justice on the roadmap for public consultations for the review and amendments of the Public Order Act.

For more information on the Support to the Zambia Electoral Cycle, please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Ms. Katie Green, katherine.green@undp.org.



ZIMBABWE

UNDP Zimbabwe

ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT (ZIM-ECO)

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Capacity Building Project (ZIM-ECO) focuses on developing the institutional and organizational capacity of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to meet its Constitutional mandate. The project provides technical assistance to voter registration process to promote its credibility and inclusiveness, strengthens election dispute resolution mechanism, fosters gender mainstreaming during the electoral cycle and promotes participation of women, youth and people with disabilities in the electoral process.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ZIM-ECO project has been providing support in key capacity building and institutional strengthening areas of Biometric Voter Registration (BVR), operational planning for BVR, voter education, stakeholder, engagement, election dispute resolution and gender mainstreaming.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

Technical Assistance for Voter Registration Operations: With the support from ZIM-ECO project, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) started the implementation of the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) process. There were four Phases of BVR, the Phase-1 started on 10 October 2017 across the country and each phase spanned over 16 days with approximately 2,500 registration centres per phase. This mobile registration drive ended on 19 December 2017. After the completion of four Phases, 4.87 million people have been registered, which is 67.5% of the total eligible voter population. The target set up by ZEC as part of its Strategic Plan 2016-2020 is 80% of the eligible voter population. Based on the demand from political parties and civil society organisations (CSOs), ZEC is planning to extend the voter registration for 30 days (January–February 2018). It is expected that with this extension, ZEC will reach the target of registering 80% of eligible voters.

Upgrade of Data Centre: With the technical and financial support from the project, ZEC has been able to upgrade its data centre with additional capacity to store, process, analyse and report the voter registration data. The data centre now has de-duplication, consolidation and production servers and disaster recovery equipment. All the equipment and related software were configured and tested before handing over to ZEC. UNDP together with ZEC has put together a medium and long-term capacity building plan for strengthening the capacity of ZEC staff to manage the new equipment.

Stakeholder Consultations: The stakeholder consultations are continuing with political parties, CSOs, faith-based organisations (FBOs), media and the diplomatic community to discuss issues and challenges regarding the implementation of the BVR process and general preparation for elections. Discussions are being held with ZEC to institutionalize these consultations and develop a link to the Multi Party Liaison Committees, which is a formal forum available in the Electoral Act to undertake conflict management, but only gets established after the nomination process. One of the areas that is being discussed is to develop ZEC capacity on conflict management, as the primary role of MPLCs is to mitigate and manage conflicts among political parties and candidates.

Voter Education Strategy and its Implementation: The success of the BVR campaign, designed by ZEC together with the CSOs, has been recognized and acknowledged by the citizens. This was for the first time that ZEC used several communication mediums and tools to reach out to stakeholders with a focus on women, youth and people with disabilities. The BVR Campaign used print and electronic media, SMS messages, call centres, road shows and voter educators. A “Voter Education Mid-Stream Evaluation Workshop” on the BVR Campaign was organized with participation of CSOs to get feedback, views and opinions on the BVR Campaign and to do necessary adjustments to the Campaign. The feedback was very positive and the Campaign was appreciated with some tweaks recommended for the extension of voter registration.

Human Rights and dispute resolution: Based on the agreed areas between the UNDP and Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC), an Election Strategy was developed during a stakeholder consultation on 14-15 November 2017. The key areas identified in the strategy include, i) Active monitoring by ZHRC to strengthen the integrity of the electoral process and promote public confidence, ii) Capacity building of human rights monitoring teams to promote and protect human rights during elections iii) Advocacy and education efforts in responding to human rights violations, iv) Protection and promotion of key Civil and political rights envisaged in the Constitution of Zimbabwe related to Rights to Freedom of Assembly, Freedom of Opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom from fear and intimidation etc. Based on the Election Strategy, targeted interventions will be undertaken in coming months.

Gender Mainstreaming: UNDP is working in partnership with UN Women to implement gender mainstreaming interventions across all project activities. A gender baseline survey, with nationally represented sample, was conducted and its findings are being used to develop a gender policy for ZEC and to identify key interventions to bring improvements in areas of voter registration, voter education, women’s political participation and media coverage.

II. Project activities during the reporting period

- Starting the extension phase of the Biometric Voter Registration Process;
- Mid Term Project Evaluation, to review project progress and identify new / additional areas of support;
- Discussion on media monitoring and conflict management training with ZEC;
- Continued implementation of Voter Education activities;
- Implementation of the ZHRC strategy.

For more information on the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Capacity Building Project (ZIM-ECO), please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. Azhar Malik, azhar.malik@undp.org.