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



EC-UNDP

1 - 31 December, 2019

Electoral Assistance Projects Update



SUMMARY

ARMENIA: ESPA is finalising the project on 31 December. UNDP Armenia continues Electoral Support Project in Armenia 2 (ESPA 2) until 31 December 2020. - The Central Electoral Commission of Armenia (CEC) held the official opening of its Training and Resource Center supported by ESPA. - The presentation of the Post-Election Survey findings, supported by ESPA and ESPA 2, is held at the CEC. - A total of 9,796 Precinct Election Commissions (PEC) Members have been successfully certified by the CEC through the online electronic examination platform developed with the support of ESPA and ESPA 2. - The project organised and supported the CEC of Armenia experience sharing visit to the CEC of Georgia. - ESPA continued the development of management systems and introduction of ICT solutions for the CEC. - ESPA supported a Smartmatic visit to replace the batteries and faulty hardware components in voter authentication device (VAD) equipment.

GUINEA-BISSAU: Presidential election runoff was held on 29 December. Provisional election results were announced on 1 January.

LIBERIA: From 9 to 18 December, the Elections Project supported the BRIDGE training for National Elections Commission's (NEC) staff. - The electoral reform proposal has been submitted to the NEC Board of Commissioners. - NEC held a press conference, including on 2020 Senatorial Elections and Referendum. - The rehabilitation of NEC magisterial warehouses is about to start.

NEPAL: Nepal completed counting and result announcements for the 30 November by-elections. - The National Judicial Academy completed its series of capacity-building workshops. - ESP handed over two provincial Electoral Education and Information Centres in Biratnagar and Surkhet to the Election Commission, Nepal. - The Project Executive Board extended the project till 28 June 2020.

SOLOMON ISLANDS: The Electoral Office simultaneously conducted Provincial Assembly Elections in Makira on 11 December and by-elections for East Makira Parliamentary seat. - Three women

have been elected members of Parliament for the first time in Solomon Islands. - On-going implementation of Outstanding Women of Solomon Islands Initiative.

SOMALIA: The Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) hosted the renowned and highly regarded Judge Johann Krielger from South Africa in Mogadishu to conduct a series of workshops on building trust in the electoral process in a politically difficult environment. - The National Independent Electoral Commission conducted information meetings on 9 and 15 December for provisionally registered political parties, focusing on electoral models and party registration. - On 15 December, the NIEC Chairperson Ms. Halima Ismail addressed the House of the People and provided an overview of the NIEC's work in preparation for the forthcoming federal parliamentary elections scheduled to be held in 2020/2021.

NB: See the list of all ongoing joint EU-UNDP electoral projects on page 1.

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ONGOING ELECTORAL PROJECTS WITH EU FUNDING

Country	Project Title	Reference	EU Contribution	Start Date	End Date
Afghanistan	UN Electoral Support Project (UNESP)	DCI-ASIE/2015/368-884	€ 15,500,000.00	29.12.15	31.12.19
Armenia	Electoral Project Support in Armenia (EPSA)	ENI/2018/404-610	€ 1,500,000.00	25.07.18	31.12.19
Guinea-Bissau	Support to Electoral Cycle in Guinea-Bissau 2018-2019	EDF 2018/401-213	€ 3,500,000.00	15.10.18	14.04.20
Lebanon	EU 2018-2020 Electoral Support to Lebanon	ENI/2018/395-460	€ 2,750,000.00	01.01.18	31.12.19
Liberia	Support to the 2015-2018 Liberian Electoral Cycle	FED/2015/367-723	€ 10,000,000.00	01.06.15	31.05.20
Madagascar	Soutien au Cycle Electoral à Madagascar (SACEM)	FED/2018/398-673	€ 1,500,000.00	04.07.18	03.05.20
Malawi	Malawi Electoral Cycle Support: 2017-2019 (MECS)	2017/389-162	€ 3,355,817.27	11.10.17	30.06.20
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	28.12.19
Libya	Promoting Elections for the People of Libya (PEPOL)	ICSP/2018/395-667	€ 5,000,000.00	01.11.17	01.11.20
Solomon Islands	Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP)	FED/2013/328-922	€ 3,500,000.00	01.07.13	31.12.19
Tunisia	Tunisia Electoral Assistance Project (TEAP)	ENI/2019/405-945	€ 2,000,000.00	01.07.19	30.06.21
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Capacity Building Project (ZIM-ECO)	FED/2016/380-895	€ 5,590,000.00	01.09.16	30.08.20



ELECTORAL SUPPORT PROJECT IN ARMENIA (ESPA)

HIGHLIGHTS

- ESPA is finalising the project on 31 December. UNDP Armenia continues Electoral Support Project in Armenia 2 (ESPA 2) until 31 December 2020.
- The Central Electoral Commission of Armenia (CEC) holds the official opening of its Training and Resource Center supported by ESPA.
- Presentation of the Post-Election Survey findings, supported by ESPA and ESPA 2, has been held at the CEC.
- A total of 9,796 Precinct Electoral Commission (PEC) Members have been successfully certified by the CEC through the online electronic examination platform developed with the support of ESPA and ESPA 2.
- The project organised and supported the CEC of Armenia experience sharing visit to the CEC of Georgia.
- ESPA continued the development of management systems and introduction of ICT solutions for the CEC.
- ESPA supported a Smartmatic visit to replace the batteries and faulty hardware components in voter authentication

I. Project activities during the reporting period

Support to the CEC's capacity building

Precinct Electoral Commission (PEC) Members Licensing Training

While the Precinct Electoral Commission (PEC) Members Licensing Training officially ended on 29 November, ESPA, through the Training Coordinator, continued to support the Central Electoral Commission of Armenia (CEC) in compiling a comprehensive report of the training in view of improving the process with a long-term perspective. According to statistics collected from the CEC, 14,731 applicants had registered for the PEC Members Licensing Training, while only 11,166 (76%) applicants took part in the training among those registered. A total of 9,807 (87.73%) successfully passed the exam. The statistics show that while women represented 60% participants, the passing rate was even higher for women (61%). See table below for the detailed statistics.

Statistics of applicants/participants of the PEC Members Licensing Training implemented countrywide			
	Number of citizens registered in the system		
	A. Registered in the system	B. Participated in the training	C. Passed the exam
Female #	8,288	6,646	6,014
Female %	56%	60%	61%
Male #	6,443	4,520	3,793
Male %	44%	40%	39%
Total	14,731	11,166	9,807
Passing rate			87.73%

With regards to the pilot electronic exam, which was implemented in Yerevan, 162 participants took part in the pilot with a passing rate of 86%, as per the table below.

Statistics of participants who took part in the pilot electronic exam in Yerevan		
	Participated	Passed
Female #	95	83
Female %	59%	59%
Male #	67	57
Male %	41%	41%
Total	162	140
Passing rate		86%

Furthermore, an evaluation questionnaire was developed through ESPA's support to assess the different aspects of the training as well as the impact of ESPA's support. A total of 101 participants (28.8% men, 71.2% women) participated in the evaluation. Out of them, 71.2% said that they were able to use the e-Learning links that were sent through SMS, and 62.8% said that they were able to familiarise themselves with the course content through the e-Learning sample electronic questionnaire. A total of 99% of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of the trainers and 100% said they would recommend the training to others. A total of 67% agreed that the training contained required information to serve as a PEC member, and 46% felt that the requirement to pass the test immediately after taking the training is correct. Finally, recommendations proposed by the respondents include, among others: conducting the test a day after the training, organising a separate training for the PEC Chair and Secretary positions and integrating a hand-on training. The feedback from the participants shall be considered by ESPA and the CEC to further enhance the PEC Members Licensing Training process in the long term.

The article related to the PEC Members Licensing Training can be viewed [here](#).

e-Learning platform

During this period, the project's e-Learning Content Developer conducted an in-depth assessment of the CEC's e-Learning platform in close collaboration with the CEC Secretary and IT Department to understand the priorities towards further improvement as well as through researching international best practices for electoral e-Learning instructional design and considering adaptation to the local context. Several proposals have been made to further enhance the effectiveness of the platform focusing on making the system more interactive and user-friendly. The proposals shall be further discussed with the CEC in early 2020 in order to move forward with the implementation of the proposals.

Establishment and opening of the Training and Resource Center

The project continued its support to the establishment of the CEC's Training and Resource Center. The setup of the Center including the library with donated publications as well as the digital area equipped with a smartboard and ten laptops was completed by mid-December. Consequently, the official Opening Ceremony of the Center was organised on 20 December at the CEC premises with the presence of international partners and government representatives. The ceremony began with an official welcome by the CEC Chairman and UNDP Resident Representative followed by ribbon cutting and a photo opportunity. The CEC Chairman continued with a presentation of the summary of results of ESPA and ESPA 2 of the year 2019, which was followed by remarks by the Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Armenia, Ambassador of Japan in Armenia, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Armenia, Minister-Counsellor and Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of Sweden in Armenia and the UN Resident Coordinator. Among others, representatives highlighted the importance of the establishment of the Training and Resource Center to ensure sustainable institutional development of the CEC following the successful conduct of the 2018 Pre-term Parliamentary Elections. The CEC Secretary then introduced the Training and Resource Center and key training initiatives notably the PEC Members Licensing Training and presented a Demo of the CEC e-Learning platform.

Finally, key results of the Post-Election Survey were presented by the Executive Director of Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) Armenia.

The article related to this event can be accessed [here](#).

Results summary of the Post-Election Survey can be found [here](#).

Advanced Training on Conflict Management and Negotiation Skills

As a follow up to the training on "Conflict Management and Negotiation Skills" implemented in October and based on strong interests by the CEC to furthering their skills, an advanced training on Conflict Management and Negotiation Skills was organised by the CEC with the support of ESPA on 12 and 13 December in the city of Tsaghkadzor. The training was designed based on the Harvard Negotiations Project (HNP) methodology and conducted by the ESPA Consultant, International Trainer on Conflict Management and Negotiation Skills. A total of 21 CEC members/staff (16 women and 5 men) participated in the training. The objective of this second training was to enable CEC members and staff to acquire techniques on managing difficult conversations, negotiation, coalition building, persuasion and storytelling as well as training techniques.

Experience sharing visit of the CEC of Armenia to the CEC of Georgia

The CEC of Armenia with the support of ESPA organised an experience-sharing visit to the CEC of Georgia on 16 and 17 December. The objective of the mission was to follow up on the visit of the CEC of Georgia to Armenia which took place in September 2019 as well as to strengthen the working relationships of the two CECs, and share best practices and experience on the strategic planning process and institutional development of the EMBs, learn about the Training Center of CEC Georgia and further elaborate on issues related to election dispute resolution (EDR) and election administration. The Armenian delegation was led by the CEC Secretary and accompanied by a CEC member and 4 CEC staff as well as the ESPA Chief Technical Advisor and 3 members. The delegation was received by the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and a Commissioner of the CEC of Georgia. The mission consisted of an intensive 2-days of meetings with the different departments of the CEC of Georgia to discuss thematic issues. A visit was also organised to the Exhibition of Election History and CEC Library and the CEC Training Center. This mission enabled the two CECs to further strengthen their partnership. The best practices and experience shared during the visit will be taken into consideration by the CEC of Armenia in its ongoing efforts towards strengthening the institute and enhancing electoral processes.

Voter authentication machine (VAD) hardware maintenance

Jointly with Smartmatic Inc. (VAD equipment provider), the ESPA performed the replacement of VAD's internal CMOS batteries based on the results of inventory showing the widespread failures of these batteries early in June 2019. In the scope of this activity, Smartmatic Inc. replaced all CMOS batteries of 4000 VADs, which ensure the working status of the devices for the upcoming 8 years. Smartmatic also ensured that all VAD machines have now user replaceable CMOS battery rather than previously used proprietary battery system. Smartmatic Inc also replaced 361 plastic details of printer's paper boxes of the VADs' which marked as defective and revealed during the 2018 parliamentary elections.

ESPA is in the process of developing VAD and operators' registration and management system allowing to facilitate the management of VADs during elections and after the election period in the CEC warehouse.

Enhancement of the CEC and other stakeholder's IT equipment

ESPA initiated comprehensive hardware and software needs assessment of the CEC data center, and based on the assessment results, performed the procurement of necessary equipment. The equipment includes a central computation unit with five servers, one data storage, one enterprise level UPS, two firewalls, two network routers and three network printers. The software components of the data center including the licenses and software components also were updated. Besides, 4 standalone servers and data backup equipment, including 8 external data storage, were also provided and installed in the CEC from the pool of 13 servers procured in 2018 during the parliamentary elections.

In addition to data center equipment, ESPA also procured and provided 18 laptops, two small-sized printers, and an interactive screen for the newly renovated training center room on the third floor of the CEC building.

ESPA enhanced the hardware and software capacities of the Passport and Visa Department of Police by providing server complex including one server, one UPS, network switch, and other necessary hardware and software components to support the online data exchange of Passport and Visa

Department with the CEC during elections.

ESPA renovated the CEC data center, which helped to manage the level of humidity, harming the data center equipment. The metallic doors and other security measures were applied, limiting the entrance to the data center only for the authorized staff.

The electrical components of the CEC building were replaced and enhanced to ensure the continuous electrical supply during the electoral cycles. Two redundant independent regular electrical lines have been established as well as automatic diesel generator has been procured and installed ready to support the critical components of the CEC building in case of regular electrical lines outages.

ICT Capacity Building (implementation of management systems for CEC)

ESPA organised and delivered Database and Networking IT training courses to enhance the IT knowledge and skills of CEC IT staff.

II. Plans for the next period

N/A

For more information on the Support to the Electoral Support wProject in Armenia (ESPA), please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. Shalva Kipshidze, shalva.kipshidze@undp.org and visit the [project's website](#).



GUINEA-BISSAU

Photo credit: IESU

SUPPORT TO THE ELECTORAL CYCLE 2018-2019

The “Support to Elections Cycle in Guinea-Bissau 2018-2019” project aims to address the Guinea-Bissau capacity to hold legitimate, transparent and credible elections in accordance with domestic legislation and international standards.

The project provides technical assistance to the Elections Management Bodies (CNE – National Election Commission - and GTAPE – Bureau of Technical Support to the Electoral Process) on areas of voters’ registration, elections logistics, electoral operations, civic education, information technologies. It also provides financial assistance to these operations and for the purchase of polling station kit’ consumables.

For more information, please visit the project’s [website](#).

HIGHLIGHTS

- Presidential election runoff was held on 29 December.
- Provisional election results announced on 1 January.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

UN Electoral Assistance to the electoral management bodies in Guinea-Bissau – the National Electoral Commission (CNE), and the Technical Support Office to the Electoral Process (GTAPE) – is being provided through the UN Integrated Electoral Support Unit, comprising staff of UNDP and United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS).

The National Election Commission (CNE) published the official “edital” with final results of the first round of the presidential election on 2 December. The day after, 3 December, the CNE held its plenary session with permanent and non-permanent members to draw the order of appearance of candidates’ names in the ballot paper for the second round. As a result of the draw, Domingos Simões Pereira was positioned number 1 and Umaro Sissoko Embaló was positioned number 2 on the ballot paper.



Photo credits: IESU UNDP

During the reporting period, the UNDP/IESU logistics adviser was involved in producing updated logistics tables for the CNE for the second round operations (ballot paper and forms quantities, non-sensitive materials requirements for polling station operations, procurement of additional quantities of ink and plastic seals). A new consignment of indelible ink, procured through the UNDP system, arrived in Bissau on 11 December as well as supplementary/contingency stocks of plastic seals. The UNDP/IESU logistics adviser also supported the CNE with logistics and security planning for the arrival of the ballot papers for the second round.

Ballot papers and other sensitive documents for the second round were received as in-kind contribution from Portugal on 14 December. The occasion was signaled with a handover ceremony at Bissau International Airport. The received ballot papers and other sensitive documents were transported with escort to the CNE warehouse in Bissau; permanent and non-permanent members of the CNE conducted a verification visit to the CNE warehouse on 16 December. Electoral materials were packaged into CRE/regional lots in the CNE warehouse and dispatched to the regions and the Diaspora between 20 and 22 December. The logistics adviser coordinated these operations.

Throughout the month, the Regional Electoral Advisers (REAs) assisted the Regional Election Commissions (CREs) in the compilation of data on gender voting from the first round and in lessons learned exercises (based on the experience of the first round) conducted in most CRE's plenary sessions. The REAs participated in several meetings with CREs and international observers deployed in the country. They monitored CREs activities in preparation for the second round. They assisted in the reception, storage of materials and preparation of polling station kits (which started in most regions on the 22 December). The polling stations kits were later deployed to the electoral districts on 28 December and in the first hours of election day, 29 December, along with the polling agents and police escort.

Early voting for special groups was held on 26 December, 3 days before election day, according to the

electoral law. The exercise was conducted in a regular way, although there was low turnout of military and security forces in some regions, due to a decision to allow for security personnel to vote on regular election day in the electoral districts to which they would be assigned.

The Presidential Election runoff, between PAIGC candidate Domingos Simões Pereira and candidate Umaro Sissoko Embaló, supported by MADEM's, PRS and APU-PDGB, was successfully held on 29 December in Guinea Bissau. Polls opened on time at 7am in a wide majority of polling stations and voting proceeded smoothly. Early morning turnout was higher than at any other period of the day; generally, voter turnout was quite uneven and the major tendency was for some slow going to the polls, therefore moderate participation. A high presence of female voters at the polling stations was reported by field monitors during the day.

International observers from the African Union and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) held a joint press conference on 30 December to present their preliminary mission findings on the 2019 presidential elections. ECOWAS also presented its preliminary statement the same day. The 3 international observers' groups considered the second round of the presidential election to be free, regular, transparent; voters exercised their right with calm and serenity and the country demonstrated democratic maturity. CPLP emphasized the high quality of work carried out by the electoral authorities. The three groups called on the candidates to accept the will of the people expressed in the election results and to solve any electoral disputes by legal means only.

Candidates	Total votes	Percentage
Domingos Simões Pereira	254 468	46,45
Umaro Sissoco Embaló	293 359	53,55
Registered	761 676	100
Participation	553 521	72,77
Abstention	208 155	27,33
Blank votes	3466	0,63
Null votes	2228	0,40
Votes Protests/Complaints	0	0
Valid Votes	547 827	98,97

On 1 January, the CNE announced the provisional results of the presidential election runoff. The participation rate was 72,67% with a total number of 553,521 voters; Domingos Simões Pereira obtained 46,45% of the votes, while Umaro Sissoko Embaló obtained 53,55% and was declared the winner. The CNE President took the opportunity to congratulate and thank all the stakeholders involved in this electoral process – CNE and CRE officers, polling staff, candidate representatives and polling agents, security and defense forces, civil society organisations, international observers, international community and the people of Guinea Bissau. CNE President also informed that the presented election

results would be published in “edital” according to article no. 94, law no. 10/2013, 25 September and displayed publicly in the CNE premises.

II. Plans for the next period

- Debriefing exercises for the PACE project;
- Announcement of final results by 13 January.

For more information on the Support to the Electoral Cycle 2018-2019 project in Guinea Bissau, please contact Jose Malam Jassi, jose.m.jassi@undp.org and visit the [project's website](#).



LIBERIA

Election Project/UNDP Liberia

SUPPORT TO THE 2015 – 2018 LIBERIAN ELECTORAL CYCLE

Support to the 2015-2018 Liberian Electoral Cycle project was established in order to strengthen the capacity of the National Election Commission (NEC) to successfully carry out electoral process within the 2015-2018 electoral cycle. Among other objectives, it introduced modern administrative systems and procedures, enhanced communications and public outreach, supported voter registration and election results management process. 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. The project is supported by the European Union (10.85 million USD), Sweden (2,757,039 USD), UNDP (1 million USD), Canada (749,625 USD) and Ireland (568,828 USD).

For more information, [please visit the Project's website.](#)

HIGHLIGHTS

- From 9 to 18 December, the project supported the BRIDGE training for National Elections Commission's (NEC) staff.
- The electoral reform proposal has been submitted to the NEC Board of Commissioners.
- NEC held a press conference, including on 2020 Senatorial Elections and Referendum.
- The rehabilitation of NEC magisterial warehouses is about to start.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

BRIDGE training

From 9 to 18 December, the Elections Project supported the BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections) training for 3 categories of the National Elections Commission (NEC) staff:

new staff, middle-level managers and directors, and logisticians. Three modular courses, namely Introduction to Elections Administration, Voter Registration, and Elections Logistics were delivered by the team of international and national facilitators, 74 staff (56 males and 18 females) benefited from the training. The training was highly valued by the NEC, as the Election Management Body is preparing for the mid-term elections in 2020, and a Constitutional referendum, including a major voter roll update process. The BRIDGE training was therefore intended to enhance a capacity of the NEC staff to perform their duties and responsibilities effectively, as well as to strengthen the electoral institution, to professionally execute its mandate for upcoming electoral processes and beyond. To enhance national ownership and strengthen national capacities, the project will seek to support NEC in organising own training for external electoral stakeholders as part of the upcoming project cycle.



BRIDGE Training participants and facilitators: Voter Registration Module



BRIDGE Training: Facilitators preparing for the next day session

Electoral reform

The Technical Working Group (TWG) on electoral reform, with the advisory support of the Elections Project, made significant progress with preparation of the zero-draft proposal. The proposed amendments to the election law were submitted to the NEC Board of Commissioners (BoC) for their review and consideration. Once approved by the BoC (pending), the proposals will go through an international validation exercise, to be subsequently submitted to the Legislature for amending the existing 2016 election law. The reform takes into consideration the recommendations of the observers to the 2017 General Elections and aims at bringing the Liberian electoral process further in line with international standards and best practices. Meanwhile, the Project supported NEC in developing a concept note for radio jingles to carry messages promoting public awareness on the reform process and the outcome of related public consultations (NEC's final approval is pending).

NEC press conference

In December 2019, NEC held a press conference to assure Liberians of its continued commitment to enhance democratic governance through the consistent and effective delivery of “free, fair and credible” elections. The conference addressed the six-year strategic plan, the upcoming 2020 special senatorial elections and referendum and the timeline, Government’s financial commitment to the 2020 voter roll update process, procurement plan, and the electoral reform process, among others.

Rehabilitation of warehouses

The procurement process has been completed for the rehabilitation of warehouses, and construction of fences and generator rooms in the NEC Magisterial Offices. At this stage, the project is supporting the NEC to renovate 12 out of 19 warehouses. The activity aiming towards strengthening NEC's infrastructure and security of both sensitive and non-sensitive electoral materials, and thereby strengthening the integrity of the electoral process. This process is expected to commence in January and complete no later than April/May 2020.

II. Plans for the next period

- Commencement of the warehouses' renovations and construction;
- Recruitment of site inspector/engineer and quality assurance consultant for warehouse renovation;
- Renovation of 2 security boots at NEC headquarters;
- Cataloging of NEC's fixed assets in magisterial offices;
- Retrieval of elections/voter registration equipment and materials from magisterial warehouses for the assessment of the logistical plan;
- Recruitment of the ICT consultant to evaluate ICT infrastructure for the NEC voter registration;
- Recruitment of the Data Center consultant;
- Organisation of the Project Board meeting (2020).

For more information on the support to the Liberia electoral cycle, please contact Ms. Lenka Homolkova, lenka.homolkova@undp.org and visit the [Project's website](#).



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 level. 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 completed counting and result announcements for the 30 November by-elections.
- The National Judicial Academy completed its series of capacity-building workshops.
- The project handed over two provincial Electoral Education and Information Centres in Biratnagar and Surkhet to the Election Commission, Nepal.
- The Project Executive Board extended ESP till 28 June 2020.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

The Election Commission, Nepal (ECN) completed the counting and announced the results of the 30 November by-elections within two days. No disputes of the results were registered.

The Electoral Support Project (ESP) continued to focus on strengthening the capacity of ECN and other electoral stakeholders, as well as on supporting civic and voter education.

This month, the National Judicial Academy (NJA) and the Nepal Transition to Peace Institute (NTTP-I) completed their series of workshops, implemented with support from the project. The six NJA electoral justice workshops reached 147 participants, mostly high court judges, including 11 women. The UNDP Social Cohesion and Democratic Participation project completed its engagement with NTTP-I. Their



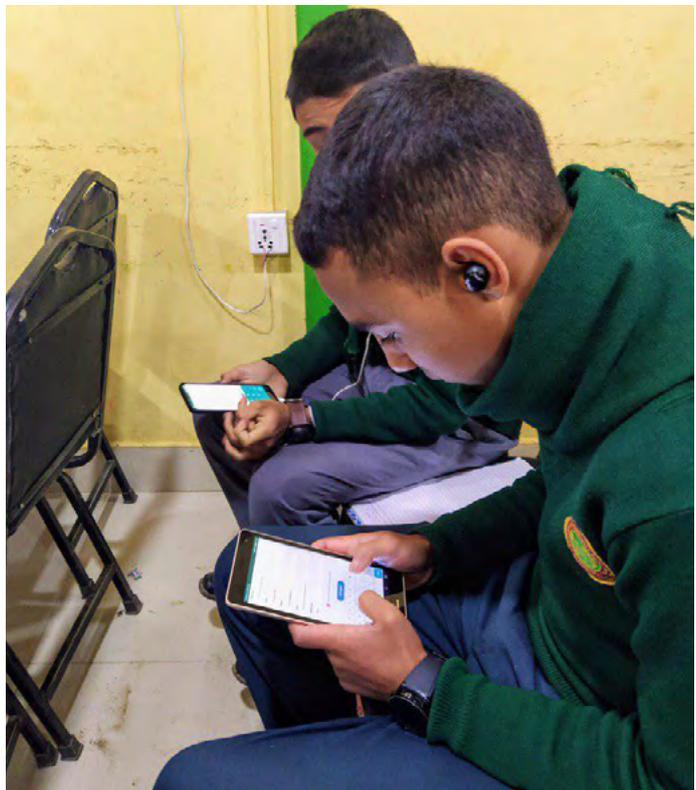
Teachers accompany students at the EEIC in Kathmandu.

workshops and provincial dialogues from the past months culminated in a national-level workshop that was organised this month. In the final workshop, participants discussed issues that risk leading to electoral violence in the longer term. It will present the findings to ECN.

The project supported ECN in establishing provincial Electoral Education and Information Centres (EEICs) in their Biratnagar and Surkhet offices. These serve as training hubs and have interactive displays through which visitors can learn about democracy and elections. The two centres were completed and handed over to ECN this month. The project complemented this investment in infrastructure by organising a Building Resources in Democracy Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) workshop on Civic and Voter Education for the EEIC educators at ECN. The workshop also served to accredit two ECN staff members as BRIDGE workshop facilitators, thus maintaining the ECN pool of facilitators. The project has now provided ECN with operational EEICs in five locations across Nepal, which ECN will use to provide civic and voter education to the general public, especially schools.

The project also completed the first version of a mobile application to deliver civic education content targeting students and teachers. This version was field tested and presented to ECN in December and is now being finalised by the developer. The content was produced by the ESP team based on the social studies teacher curriculum.

The project supported the production of 17 civic education booklets on themes including the constitution, democracy and elections. Designed by the Educational Resource & Development Centre Nepal with support from ECN and ESP, they are being printed and distributed by ESP for the Ministry of Education's community learning centres across Nepal.



Students partake in a piloting on mobile application for civic education.

II. Plans for the next period

In January, ESP will continue to consolidate the knowledge and learning from the capacity-building initiatives it supported in 2019 and present these to ECN. The indirect National Assembly Elections are scheduled for 23 January and while limited external support will be required for these, they will be the main focus for ECN during that month. ESP will use this time to prepare support for ECN high-level interactions with electoral stakeholders and also start the closure process of the EU contribution agreement to the project.

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 organisations 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.

For more information, please visit the [project's website](#).

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Electoral Office simultaneously conducted Provincial Assembly Elections in Makira on 11 December and by-elections for East Makira Parliamentary seat.
- Three women have been elected members of Parliament for the first time in Solomon Islands.
- On-going implementation of Outstanding Women of Solomon Islands Initiative.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

Electoral operations support

The 2018 Electoral Act granted competence to organise provincial elections to the Electoral Office (EO). Accordingly, for the first time ever, the EO planned and conducted on 11 December 2019 the Makira Provincial Assembly elections simultaneously with the by-election for the National Parliament seat for East Makira. The project's support contributed to the training of returning officers and their assistants and also it was instrumental to facilitate the organisation of voter awareness in different wards of East Makira and the capacity building of electoral staff. The project's Field Coordination Assistant supported the

preparatory work for the nomination of candidates. Additionally, SECSIP provided support to coordinate the process of accreditation and deployment of 3 domestic observers for these elections.

Support to women's political participation

Building on the project's plan to support women's political participation, the project in the lead up to the East Makira by-election organised and facilitated individual training sessions for each of the 2 women candidates running for this parliamentary. As per previous agreement with the Provincial Council of Women, by-election and provincial assembly candidates were encouraged to use the candidate resource centre located in Kira Kira (Makira provincial capital). As a result of the by-election, Hon. Lily Maefai secured 3371 votes and was chosen Member of Parliament (MP) to represent East Makira. Her nearest contestant, a former MP for the East Makira Constituency in the last Parliament, received a total of 1196.

The other woman candidate, Murray Rose obtained the third position out of 9 candidates. As a result of this by-election, for the first time ever Solomon Islands National Parliament has now three women MPs (6% female representation) which constitutes an important milestone in the history of Solomon Islands and in the Pacific region.

Two women candidates ran for the Makira provincial assembly and scored runner-up positions in their respective wards.

Outstanding Women (OW) Initiative in Solomon Islands

With the support of SECSIP Women's Leadership and Political Participation Adviser, the OW initiative was conducted in Makira province. The project's adviser visited main province wards to raise awareness, develop initiative implementation plans and encourage participation. Eight Makira wards (4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 16) out of 20 wards participated in the outstanding women initiative resulting in the nomination of eight women from these wards for the Makira Outstanding Women provincial election. On 13 December, a total 40 people representing people from religious groups, chiefs/traditional leaders, senior citizens and youth as well as Makira Provincial Government representatives voted to choose Ms. Julia Mavetau from Ward 9 as Makira Ulawa Outstanding Woman.



This initiative has been designed as a tool to raise awareness and contribute to normalise women leadership's at the community level. With a view to maximise the impact of this initiative and continue raising awareness on women's leadership, the project has engaged a video producer for the filming of a series of short videos on the Outstanding Women initiative and its implementation across the country.

II. Plans for the next period

- Completion of Outstanding Women (OW) initiative in remaining provinces;
- Review and edition of OW videos and preparation of dissemination plans;
- Preparation of SECSIP Work plan and budget and presentation to the Project Board.

For more information on the SECSIP, please contact the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Ms. Olga Rabade, olga.rabade@undp.org and visit the [project's website](#).



★ SOMALIA

📷 Ilyas Ahmed/UN Photo

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.

For more information, please visit the [project's website](#).

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) hosted the renowned and highly regarded Judge Johann Krielger from South Africa in Mogadishu to conduct a series of workshops on building trust in the electoral process in a politically difficult environment.
- The National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) conducted information meetings on 9 and 15 December for provisionally registered political parties, focusing on electoral models and party registration.
- On 15 December, the NIEC Chairperson Ms. Halima Ismail addressed the House of the People and provided an overview of the NIEC's work in preparation for the forthcoming federal parliamentary elections scheduled to be held in 2020/2021.

I. Project activities during the reporting period

Building trust in electoral process

The Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) hosted the renowned and highly regarded Judge Johann Krielger from South Africa in Mogadishu for a short visit in December to follow up on his

previous discussions with the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) earlier in 2019 and to conduct a series of workshops on building trust in the electoral process in a politically difficult environment. He provided guidance and advice to the NIEC on defining the way forward on establishing an electoral dispute resolution mechanism. As a result, the NIEC now has an overall framework on how the electoral dispute resolution mechanism can be established within the NIEC. Judge Kriegler also met with representatives of civil society in Somalia to hear their views about their role in building trust in the electoral process, supporting peacebuilding and promoting democratization in Somalia.

National Electoral Security Task Force inaugural meeting

The National Electoral Security Task Force (NESTF) held its first meeting on 9 December which was chaired by the Somali Police Force Commissioner. Security representatives from the relevant ministries, NIEC, Federal Member States (except Jubaland and Puntland), African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) Police and UN participated in the meeting. UN representatives briefed on 'Lessons Learned from 2016 Elections' and on the proposed project to equip and train operations centers. AMISOM and UN shared a draft Concept of Security for Voter Registration and a draft TOR for the Task Force. The next meeting is scheduled for early January.

Political party consultations on electoral timelines and draft law

The NIEC conducted information sharing meetings on 9 and 15 December for provisionally registered political parties, focusing on electoral models and party registration. The NIEC updated the political parties on the timetable for delivery of voter registration equipment which may be purchased once the electoral law is adopted. Also shared was preparations underway to plan for voter registration including voter education outreach activities and the timeline for voter registration. NIEC informed the parties about NIEC's field offices established in each of the Federal Member States and encouraged parties to share this information with their members around the country. Party representatives were informed that every citizen must register to vote; otherwise, they will not be able to vote on election day. Political party representatives called on Parliament to protect women's rights and ensure 30% quota for women in the next parliament.

NIEC Chairperson addresses Parliament

On 15 December, the NIEC Chairperson Ms. Halima Ismail addressed the House of the People and provided an overview of the NIEC's work in preparation for the forthcoming federal parliamentary elections scheduled to be held in 2020/2021. The Chairperson welcomed efforts by lawmakers to move the country towards a more inclusive electoral model. She welcomed the support of international partners as one of the stakeholders in the electoral process for their financial and technical support for a credible electoral process in the country and reminded members of parliament of the pledge by the UN Security Council to support universal suffrage elections in Somalia. The Chairperson urged Parliament to seriously consider the NIEC's submission of their concerns about the draft electoral law during their deliberations on the law.



4 December 2019. Judge Kriegler and IESG staff meet with members of civil society in Mogadishu.

II. Plans for the next period

N/A

For more information on the UNDP/UNSOM Joint Programme, please contact Mary Cummins, mary.cummins@undp.org, and visit the [Project's website](#).