

UNDP Solomon Islands

**Strengthening the Electoral Cycle Project in the Solomon Islands
Final Evaluation**

Evaluation Report

10 July 2017

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Abbreviations

A/CEO	Acting Chief Electoral Officer
AEC	Australian Election Commission
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CDR	Combined Delivery Report
CEO	Chief Electoral Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
EAD	Electoral Assistance Division
EMB	Electoral Management Body
ESSP	Electoral Systems Strengthening Programme
EU	European Union
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MASI	Media Association of the Solomon Islands
MEHRD	Ministry of Education, Human Resources and Development
MP	Member of Parliament
NAM	Needs Assessment Mission
OSIEC	Office of the Solomon Islands Elections Commission
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPIC	Political Parties Commission
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission for Solomon Islands
RCDF	Rural Constituency Development Fund
RMS	Results Management System
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SECSIP	Strengthening the Electoral Cycle Project in the Solomon Islands
SIEC	Solomon Islands Electoral Commission
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
TA	Technical Assistance
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TSM	Temporary Special Measures
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Trainer of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNV	United Nations Volunteer
USD	US Dollar

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Strengthening the Electoral Cycle Project in the Solomon Islands (SECSIP) was originally designed as a USD 8,948,198 project to strengthen the electoral cycle in the Solomon Islands from 2012 to 2015. This included support for the development of a new voter registry and for the 2014 national elections. The main partner was the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) and its secretariat, the Office of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (OSIEC). The project was amended in 2015 and extended to June 2017. It was funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The overarching goal of the project was to *enhance the electoral inclusiveness of the Solomon Islands*. Its main focus was on building the capacity of the SIEC/OSIEC to fulfil its mandate and support the development of a sustainable and more accurate voter registry. It also intended to strengthen national authority and civil society organization (CSO) capacity for voter education and electoral reform. Gender mainstreaming was added as an additional output in 2015. The project used a direct implementation modality (DIM) and was managed by a Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) under the guidance of the SIEC and a Project Board.

UNDP Solomon Islands commissioned this independent final evaluation of the project. The evaluation took place in May - June 2017. The project will terminate on June 30, 2017 and a follow-on project is expected to start in July 2017. Unexpended donor funding from SECSIP is expected to be transferred to the new project (SECSIP Phase II).

Findings

Voter registration. Support for voter registration was needed and appreciated. The Solomon Island's Government (SIG) adopted a new biometric voter registration (BVR) system and SECSIP supported the OSIEC to implement the new system with registration done in time for the 2014 elections. The BVR was widely seen as one of the most important contributions of the project. The new registry provided more accurate figures for electoral planning and reduced opportunities for electoral fraud. The voter registry has not been updated since and needs to be done or it will disenfranchise all of those who have moved or become 18 since it was done. There are sustainability issues with the BVR that need to be resolved for which the project is currently providing options. There is also a need for stronger advocacy by the SIEC/OSIEC and the Ministry of Home Affairs, which manages the OSIEC, for adequate staff and funding to ensure a sustainable and regularly updated registry system.

Strengthening electoral administration. The project provided training, technical assistance (TA), commodities, international exposure, facilitation of meetings, workshops and some OSIEC office renovations, all of which increased OSIEC capacity. The project is credited with helping to ensure better administrated elections were held in 2014. However, outside of the electoral period, there is a serious issue as to the amount of assistance and capacity building efforts that can be done with an under-resourced institution with only a handful of permanent staff. The issue of capacity replacement by electoral assistance, which includes bilateral Australian technical assistance (Electoral Systems Strengthening Programme or ESSP) and intermittent assistance by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), was a critical issue raised by the project's Midterm Review. It was still an issue at the time of this Final Evaluation. Sustainability is also an issue due to the limited number OSIEC staff, its level of resources and retention factors. For the future, a more strategic approach towards SIEC/OSIEC strengthening needs to be adopted and for the SIG to empower the SIEC and OSIEC as independent institutions as well as to ensure the provision of appropriate levels of human and financial resources.

Voter awareness and engagement. The project provided significant levels of support for the voter awareness activities for the BVR and 2014 election period. A voter survey done in 2015 provides some useful information that can help target and measure efforts for the next electoral cycle, but it was done too late after the 2014 efforts to serve as a means to measure their effectiveness and impact. Media training done in 2017 was needed and useful. SECSIP added in a CSO subgrant component and a pilot student awareness activity in the post-electoral period. These were late in the project, but were good additions for an electoral cycle project, assuming appropriate follow up is provided so they are more than isolated efforts. More synergistic programming would also strengthen their effectiveness.

Electoral reform. The project's facilitation of consultative meetings on reforms and the provision of technical experts for discussions with the Electoral Reform Task Force were valuable and appreciated. The process would not have been as inclusive without this support. Expanding project assistance to the Political Party Commission (PPIC) was a good addition as was the training of political parties. Initial efforts should be followed up with more programmatic support. The project in general has maintained a technical approach to its efforts, however reforms require policy engagement, and this Final Evaluation agrees with the Midterm Review's finding that more efforts are needed at that strategic level to strengthen the electoral processes and institutions.

Mainstreaming gender. This element was missing from the original project and a separate output was added later. Efforts were made with different activities supported and a gender policy developed with the OSIEC. But gender was not substantively mainstreamed through SECSIP or dealt with in a systematic way. Providing subgrants for women's participation and awareness raising is a good addition, but also should not be isolated efforts. Linkages with UN Women and other women's participation programmes that could help strengthen SECSIP's efforts seemed minimal. Efforts likely increased the awareness of OSIEC staff on gender issues and ensured gender issues were noted in some OSIEC documents and voter awareness materials, but results beyond that are not apparent. There is still much that remains to be done on the issue of women's leadership and political participation.

Project design and management. The design provided the framework for an integrated programme to strengthen the 'electoral cycle.' It was implemented narrowly, focused on achieving its activity outputs. The design also appears to be missing a well articulated theory of change that shows how all of the planned activities would result in the higher-level outcomes sought by the project. It did also not adequately take the context into consideration, most notably the state of the OSIEC and the work of the Australian bilateral technical assistance. Clarity of roles between projects beyond SECSIP's funding and procurement roles remains an issue. This will be further complicated if the AEC provides technical assistance in the lead up to the next elections.

The project itself had a late start up and difficulties recruiting CTAs and qualified national staff. This limited the electoral cycle nature of the project until well after 2014 elections, affecting its relevance, effectiveness and potential impact. The project procured large amounts of materials for the elections, but timely procurements and payments, even in the slower times between the elections, remains an issue. The use of DIM was appropriate in the context but more efficient project management and monitoring systems are needed. The project management unit was understaffed, leaving the CTAs to bear most of the administrative burden. This limited their abilities to provide technical assistance and maintain a strategic perspective, and affected how others perceived the project. The staff shortage is recognized and an increase in staff is anticipated for the follow-on project. The SIEC/OSIEC are only nominally engaged in some project activities which are not perceived as their institutional priorities. "Ownership" issues were noted throughout reports and interviews. This needs serious thought for the design of the next phase. Project implementation focused on activities, lowering the strategic value of project. Many of the recommendations of 2015 Midterm Review were not addressed and most of the findings of this Final Evaluation are the same as those raised in the Midterm.

Conclusions

The Strengthening the Electoral Cycle Project in the Solomon Islands was needed and highly relevant within the Solomon Island context and timeframe. The project started when the previous larger multilateral electoral assistance effort was ending and filled a demonstrated need. The areas targeted—voter registration, electoral administration, voter education, electoral reform and gender—were key components of strengthening the country’s democratic processes. These are still areas of need for the 2018/2019 electoral cycle.

SECSIP helped the Solomon Islands to have a more accurate voter registry and better administered elections in 2014. It has also helped to ensure the functioning of the SIEC/OSIEC in the period between elections and to inform and facilitate the current reform dialogue. These are important achievements and support the goals of the country’s National Development Plan (NDP) and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16. Progress towards NDP and SDG 5 goals of strengthened women’s participation and equity were minimal. Results beyond this are difficult to determine. The current reform effort has the potential to raise the level of results if it is completed as envisioned.

SECSIP was strategically positioned within the Solomon Islands context by its cycle nature, purpose, and the convening authority of UNDP and its ability to facilitate dialogue.¹ Its strategic value though was not adequately leveraged to support the achievement of the project’s intended outcomes and was diminished by the narrow nature of project implementation and its activity-level focus, most notably for the efforts needed to “strengthen the inclusiveness and integrity of the electoral cycles” and to achieve a “stronger electoral commission and representational democracy.”²

Support for the SIEC in the period between the elections was out of scale and sync for the needs and nature of the institution. Only so much capacity building can be done directly with an institution with few staff, unfilled vacancies and limited means. The immediate needs in the post-electoral context were to strengthen the policy and institutional framework for the SIEC through supporting overdue reforms (independence and restructuring) and increasing SIG attention on addressing the SIEC’s institutional needs (funding and staffing). The disparity contributed to the issues of limited ownership, capacity replacement and activity-based results.

Electoral assistance to the SIEC/OSIEC needed better planning and coordination at strategic and technical levels. Intermittent information sharing through formal or ad hoc meetings was not sufficient to develop a cohesive, strategically targeted and effective effort among the assistance efforts or with the SIEC and other projects working in related areas. This reduced the effectiveness and potential impact of all efforts. The exception was the initial work done on Temporary Special Measures (TSM) to increase gender equity in elected office which appeared to be a better coordinated effort.

SECSIP efficiency and effectiveness was hampered by its limited staffing and slow administrative processes. These issues affected the project from its late start through to its end. UNDP’s ongoing reorganization and intention to strengthen project staffing for SECSIP II addresses some of these issues, but continuing attention is needed, especially in regard to information sharing and reporting lines within the project and with UNDP, and for timely planning, processing and payments.

Outcome level results are likely the cumulative effect of all assistance given the significant levels of support that have been given to the electoral processes over time. Attribution to SECSIP is difficult in many cases without better data and because many efforts were jointly supported by the ESSP advisers. ***SECSIP’s results may be greater than what was visible during this Final Evaluation*** but are difficult to identify because of the limited performance data available beyond activity outputs.

¹ Such as the efforts done through its peacebuilding project which appears strategically developed and driven and includes engagement at all levels of government, including the Prime Minister’s Office.

² SECSIP Project Document, p 8

Recommendations

Continued support to the institutions and principles of strengthening the electoral processes in the Solomon Islands. Work still needs to be done to improve the quality of the electoral process, electoral administration, competition and representation, electoral management body (EMB) oversight, political party accountability and the fairness of the electoral system among others. The project should also complete the work started on the reform process and help the state institutions implement those reforms.

Clearly articulate the strategic vision for the project in the project documents and ensure that the project maintains that focus during implementation. Ensure that all activities selected directly contribute towards achieving the strategic vision, and that this vision is shared by the partner institutions. Use the project's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan to monitor progress towards achieving the strategic level outcomes as well as the implementation of outputs.

Adopt a strategic and programmatic focus for project delivery by synergizing project activities and building on activities to increase performance and contributions towards the higher-level outcomes. Include synergies with other projects to extend project reach and strengthen effectiveness. Other projects could include: women's empowerment, civic education, transparency/accountability/anti-corruption, watchdog, media, parliament, justice, peacebuilding, public service, and reforms.

Take ESSP and the planned AEC assistance into consideration in the design of SECSIP II and avoid duplication of efforts. Strengthen coordination between technical assistance efforts and undertake joint work planning and strategy development for the duration of the assistance. Ensure design efforts for SECSIP II are inclusive and include the ESSP, OSIEC, PPIC and other actors to improve relevance and the longer term prospects for sustainable outcomes. Maintain the flexibility of the subgrant component but use it strategically to contribute to the higher level outcomes. Increase emphasis on the PPIC and strengthening the political party system. Ensure appropriate scale and scope of assistance to institutions according to the needs of the cycle and nature of the institution.

Maximize UNDP's strategic advantage including its ability to convene and provide a safe space for discussions to advance the policy dialogue and leverage the policy work being done through other projects, such as the peacebuilding project, to strengthen the electoral system and institutions. Link the policy dialogue and advocacy efforts for electoral reforms to the objectives of the SDGs and the national discussions on how to achieve those goals. In particular, for SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) which have the same objectives as SECSIP.

Increase focus on the sustainability elements of assistance. Avoid one-off efforts and supporting activities that create a dependence on external assistance for their continuity, including for large subgrants. Build an exit strategy into the follow on phase.

Strengthen project management and M&E efforts. The addition of a project manager for the follow on project should help relieve some of the immediate pressures. However, ensure timely attention to planning and to the financial and procurement needs of the project, especially for the upcoming elections period. Ensure systematic tracking and monitoring of project performance beyond achievement of activity outputs and develop adequate baselines, targets and indicators early on in the follow-on project.

Provide opportunities for the GSI to reaffirm its commitment to improving the integrity of the electoral process and its administration, and for the measures needed to ensure that integrity (legal reforms, electoral justice and the provision of adequate resources for the EMBs and processes).

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Political and electoral context within the Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands is a chain of almost 1,000 islands and atolls extending 1,800 kilometres across the Pacific Ocean between Vanuatu and New Guinea, with a population of about 550,000 persons. A former British colony, the Solomon Islands became an independent nation in 1978 and established a parliamentary system of government.³

Ethnic tensions, corruption and other problems erupted into conflict from 1998 – 20013, referred to as the “tensions”.⁴ About 20,000 persons on Guadalcanal were displaced, hundreds killed and much of the country’s infrastructure was destroyed. The elected government was overthrown in 2000 leading to a breakdown in governance. Elections were held in 2001, but conflict continued in several areas.⁵ An Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) started in 2003 with a Pacific Island Forum mandate to address the civil unrest and lawlessness, economic decline, corruption, lack of service delivery, and government administrative standards.

RAMSI, which had a contingent of about 400 persons, supported the general elections in 2006 and 2010, both of which were held peacefully and observed by international observers. However, rioting broke out in the capital Honiara after the election of the Prime Minister by parliament in 2006. A Commission of Inquiry found that the 2006 unrest was organized by criminals and caused by a “*failure of government to deliver development to Honiara settlements; bad governance; and inappropriate constitutional setting; and poor policing.*”⁶

In 2013, the RAMSI military component withdrew and its development activities were transferred to development partners. The remaining contingent focused on strengthening the police.⁷ This mission ended during this SECSIP Final Evaluation. The upcoming 2018/2019 election will be the first election since the tensions without any RAMSI presence in the country.

Governance in the Solomon Islands is divided between formal state institutions and influential informal traditional and community institutions. The formal state system is weak and hampered by difficulties in accessing parts of the country, and limited presence across the islands. It is highly centralized with little devolution of power and resources.⁸ Land issues remain a source of conflict at local and national levels with about 87% of the land under customary land tenure outside the formal government/legal systems. It is a lower middle income country, ranking 156 out of 188 countries in UNDP’s 2016 Human Development Index.⁹ It has a gross national income per capita of USD 1,561 (2011) and 45% of the population lives below the poverty line, with almost a 35% unemployment rate. Most of the population is engaged in subsistence agriculture and fishing. It is heavily dependent on foreign assistance which makes up 30% of its economy.¹⁰

Corruption is a systemic issue. The Solomon Islands is ranked at 120 out of 183 countries on Transparency International’s *Corruption Perception Index* and its scores on controlling corruption fell from 57.56 in 2005 to 46.15 in 2015.¹¹

³ Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination, *Solomon Islands Country Report*, pps 5-8

⁴ GIS, *Solomon Islands*, *Visit Solomon Islands website*

⁵ Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination, *Op Cit*, 5-8

⁶ Pacific Island Forum, *PIFA Election Observer Report: Solomon Islands, 2010* pps 3-4

⁷ RAMSI, *Rebuilding a Nation*, pps 6 - 7

⁸ Transparency International, *U4 Expert Answer, Solomon Islands: Overview of corruption and anti-corruption*, p 2

⁹ UNDP, *Human Development Indicators, Solomon Islands*

¹⁰ Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination, *Op Cit*, 5-8

¹¹ Transparency International, *Op Cit*, p 2

The formal government system is headed by Parliament which has its 50 members directly elected through a first past the post system and who serve four year terms. The Prime Minister is elected by Parliament and runs the government with his appointed cabinet. National elections are run by the three member Solomon Islands Electoral Commission. The Chair is the Speaker of Parliament and the two other members are appointed by the Governor-General. They serve on a part-time basis for four years. It has a small permanent secretariat, the OSIEC which is headed by a Chief Electoral Officer with about eight permanent staff. For the elections, the SIEC hires and trains about 3,500 temporary workers (10 election managers/one per provinces, 50 returning officers/one per constituency, and polling staff for the 800+ polling stations). These are usually public officials. The SIEC only manages the national elections. Provincial and local elections are managed by the provincial governments.¹²

The SIEC and the OSIEC are not independent. The Ministry of Home Affairs is responsible for the OSIEC's financial and administrative management and the SIEC Chair belongs to Parliament. According to observer reports the OSIEC suffers from significant human and financial resource challenges which make it difficult to fully execute its mandate.¹³

Several issues were noted in observer reports for the 2014 elections. This included the adoption of the Political Parties Integrity Act in May 2014. This Act provides the legal framework for the political parties and for the creation of the PPIC. The PPIC has four Commissioners appointed by the Governor General on the joint recommendation of the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition who serve three year terms. The Act also provides a financial incentive for Members of Parliament (MPs) who are members of a political party in order to encourage the formation of political parties. The political party system is very weak. Less than half of the almost 450 candidates who ran in 2014 were registered as political party members. Crossing the floor in Parliament is common contributing to instability in the political system.¹⁴ Another issue noted was the Rural Constituency Development Fund (RCDF) which provides MPs with funds for local development initiatives. According to Transparency International, the amount is substantial; USD 47.6 million, or over one-third of the 2015 consolidated development budget; and observers and CSOs raise concerns that the RCDF are used as political slush funds and for vote buying.¹⁵ Politicians also offer favours to politicians to maintain coalitions in parliament. Political corruption is said to be mostly non-ideological and driven by personal ties and clan identities.

The record for women in politics is low. There have only been two women MPs. One in 1997, and a second in 2012, elected through a by-election (and re-elected in 2014).¹⁶ The Political Party Integrity Act requires parties to have women make up at least ten percent of their candidates and provides financial incentives, through a temporary special measures grant, for parties with a female MP. However, Parliament has been reluctant to take any other measures to encourage women's political participation, including the use of TSM quotas.

A new biometric voter registration was done for the 2014 elections. This captured about 85% of the estimated eligible voters. This role of 287,565 voters was a significant reduction from the 448,189 voters registered for the 2010 elections, many of those considered as duplicate or 'ghost' entries.¹⁷

¹² Commonwealth, *Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group, Solomon Islands General Elections*, p 7

¹³ *Ibid*, p 10

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p 3

¹⁵ Transparency International, *Op Cit*, p 3

¹⁶ Commonwealth *Op Cit*, p 5

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p 8

2.2. Assistance to electoral processes

RAMSI provided support to the electoral processes from 2004 - 2013 through three projects: Electoral Assistance Project for € 1.4 million (10/04 – 5/06); Civic Education Project for € 1.6 million (3/05-2/06), and ESSP for € 6.7m (11/08 -6/13).¹⁸ ESSP provided three long term technical advisors focused on the capacity development of the SIEC in election management, voter registration and the review of electoral legislation. According to the SECSIP project document, it was intended for ESSP to merge with the UNDP SECSIP project until it ended in July 2013. However, Australia continued the ESSP bilaterally through a follow-on project, ESSP II, which is still working within the OSIEC with three technical advisors. There is little documentation available regarding its terms of reference, funding levels or areas of assistance. According to the advisors, their job is to support the SIEC and OSIEC to implement their institutional workplans, and their technical focus is on electoral management, organizational development and electoral reform/legal framework. The AEC has also provided bilateral assistance intermittently since 2002 providing expertise and occasional Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) trainings. DFAT is currently in discussion to bring the AEC in again for the 2018/2019 elections. The scope of that assistance was not yet clear during the time of this evaluation but appeared to be focused on providing additional technical advisors.

In addition to funding SECSIP, the EU provides technical assistance directly as needed. It provided expertise to help draft the Political Party Integrity Act (2014), draft instructions for reforms around gender, and currently is helping to draft the amendments to the electoral law and for updating the Political Party Integrity Act. The EU also directly assisted CSOs to observe the electoral process and efforts to introduce TSMs to increase women’s political participation. The EU is also currently undertaking a call for proposals from CSOs for the areas of gender equality, civic education, election observation and anti-corruption.

2.3 Strengthening the Electoral Cycle Project in the Solomon Islands

The Strengthening the Electoral Cycle Project in the Solomon Islands was originally a USD 8,948,196 three year project (October 2012 to December 2015). It was primarily intended to strengthen the institutional capacity of the OIEC to manage the electoral cycle and improve the accuracy of the voter registry.¹⁹ It was based on the findings of an electoral needs assessment mission (NAM) done by the UN Electoral Assistance Department (EAD) and UNDP in 2012 and the work done previously by the RAMSI electoral assistance component.

The project document was amended in 2015 following another NAM. This recommended continued support to the electoral processes into 2019. The no-cost amendment extended the life of the project to 2017, streamlined the output wording and added a fifth output for gender mainstreaming.

The overarching goal of the project is to *enhance electoral inclusiveness of the Solomon Islands*. To accomplish this goal, support was focused on four main areas: voter registration, electoral administration, voter education and electoral reform.

The objectives as listed in the original and

Box 1: Expected Outcomes

UNDAF Outcome:

Regional, national, local and traditional governance systems are strengthened and exercise the principles of good governance, respecting and upholding human rights, especially women’s rights, in line with international standards.

Expected Output:

Electoral reform to ensure fair elections, improve effectiveness of Parliament’s legislative and oversight roles; and strengthen leadership capacity at national, provincial and constituency levels.

¹⁸ Information from EU, *Annex 2, Action Fiche for Solomon Islands*, p 4

¹⁹ UNDP, *SECSIP Project Document*, p 1

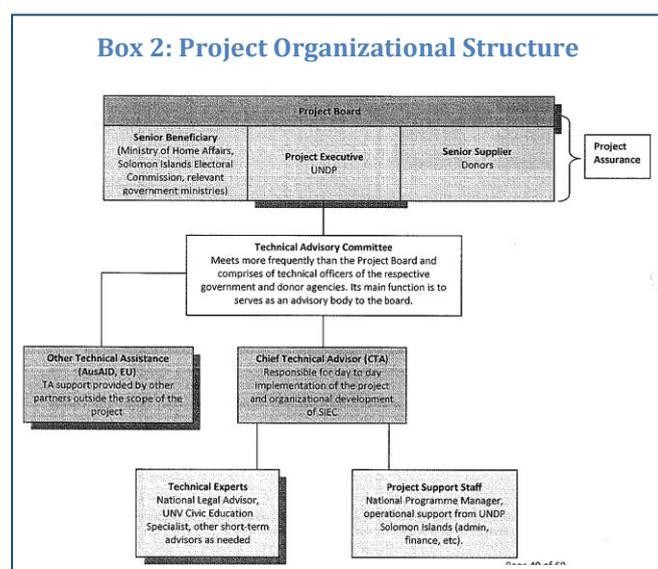
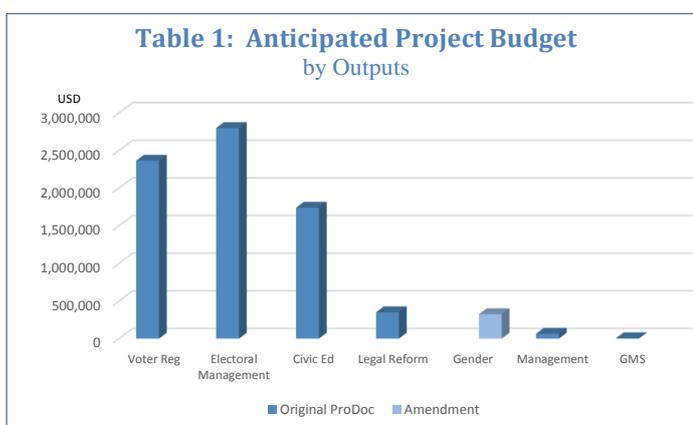
amended project documents are:

1. Sustainable voter registration system created to strengthen the inclusiveness and integrity of the electoral cycle. This was revised to: Sustainable voter registration system created.
2. More efficient and effective administrative procedures designed and implemented for the Solomon Islands Election Commission to fulfill its mandate. This was revised to: Enhanced capacity of the SIEC to manage an electoral cycle.
3. National authorities and civil society organizations have better capacity to train and educate the population on voter awareness and civic engagement.
4. Electoral and legal reform supported to contribute to a stronger electoral commission and representational democracy. This was revised to: Electoral and legal reform supported.
5. Capacity of SIEC to promote gender mainstreaming in its institutional practices and the electoral processes (added in 2015).

The project was also intended to contribute to the outcomes in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the Sub-regional Programme for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (Box 1).

The project used a cost-sharing model with contributions from the EU (USD 4,392,468), Australia (USD 4,056,731) and UNDP (USD 500,000). The project was fully funded. The project under spent its original projections and was extended to June 2017, with a follow-

on project expected to take the project through the next election, using the same anticipated outputs. That project document was in the process of being finalized during this Final Evaluation.



The original illustrative project budget is provided in Table 1.²⁰ These estimates were revised in the annual workplans. Funding was also reallocated for the gender output which was added in the 2015 revisions.

The project is executed through a direct implementation modality. According to the project document, the Project Board is responsible for decision-making and overseeing the implementation of project activities, and UNDP is responsible for quality assurance (Box 2).

A CTA was to be hired to manage project implementation, with support provided by a Project Management Unit headed by an Operations Manager. It intended to have a

²⁰ The estimated budget table is for illustrative purposes only and may differ from the actual project budget as the project evolved. It is based on the project documents and reflects the estimated budget, not actual levels of expenditure.

UN Volunteer (UNV) Voter Education specialist for the duration of the project, and a national legal adviser. Oversight was to be provided by the UNDP Office in the Solomon Islands. Short term international consultants were to be fielded as needed (Box 2). The project was to have a final project evaluation in 2015. However, after it was decided to extend the project, a Midterm Review was done in 2015.

2.4. SECSIP Final Evaluation

The UNDP Office in the Solomon Islands commissioned this final evaluation of the SECSIP. The final evaluation was intended to provide UNDP and its project partners with an independent assessment of the project that is expected to be used to strengthen future programming.

In particular, the evaluation was asked to:

1. Assess the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the project interventions' taking into consideration the project objectives the country context and cross cutting issues such as gender;
2. Assess the contributions of the project in achieving SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions;²¹
3. Review the SECSIP design, management and implementation, and identify lessons learned; and,
4. Make recommendations to improve future electoral assistance programming.

The final evaluation took place in May – June 2017 with the field work done from 15 to 26 May 2017. The evaluation was conducted by Sue Nelson, Evaluation Consultant. It undertook a qualitative assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of SECSIP and the factors that affected project performance. It used a triangulation methodology and mixed methods of analysis to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on stakeholder perceptions and the information available. In particular it:

- Collected information and perceptions of the project through interviews with UNDP, Project staff and consultants, development partners, the ESSP Technical Advisors, the SIEC Commissioners and OSEIC staff, PPIC, CSO grantees and other relevant institutions. The interviews were done in Honiara in person and people in other locations were reached by Skype, phone and email (Annex 1);
- Reviewed SECSIP project documents and other relevant documentation on the project, and on the electoral processes in the Solomon Islands (Annex 2); and,
- Validated information through interviews and document reviews as well as through the use of additional data sources and third party interviews.

The methodology for the evaluation is provided in the Evaluation Inception Report (Annex 3). The final evaluation's Terms of Reference (TOR) are provided in Annex 4. The evaluation was limited by the time available for the review and reporting, and the availability of project documentation and its partners and stakeholders for interviews.

The evaluation findings are organized in the Evaluation Report by the five outputs of the project and include issues of project design, management and implementation. The evaluation report closes with the evaluation's conclusions and recommendations.

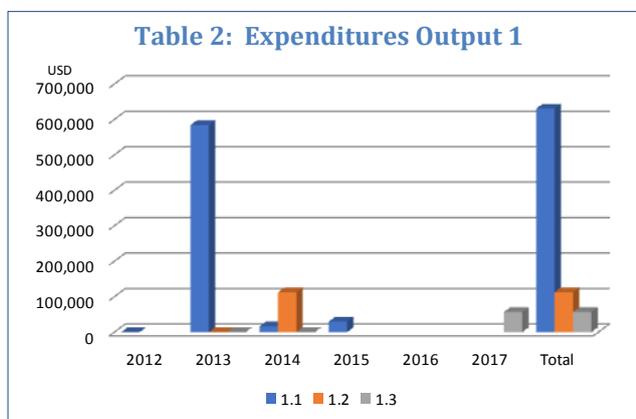
²¹ The SECSIP predates the SDGs which came into effect in January 2016.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1. Sustainable voter registration system created

The original objective of Output 1 was *Sustainable voter registration created to strengthen the inclusiveness and integrity of the electoral cycle*. This was shortened to *Sustainable voter registration system created* in the 2015 project revision. As part of this, SECSIP planned to *complete preparations for voter registration exercise* (Output 1.1); *successfully implement the voter registration exercise* (Output 1.2); and, *enhance the sustainability of and inclusiveness of the registration system* (Output 1.3). This effort was intended to complement the anticipated SIG investment of SID 10 million in 2012.²² The project intended to support SIG efforts to introduce a new voter registration system by supporting its planning (budgeting, procurement, logistics) and implementation (training, implementation, review of data) as well as assisting with its updating, and ensuring its inclusiveness and lessons learned. It also anticipated developing a strategy to create and implement a civil registry based on the voter registry experience. This was to be done through the provision of a long term voter registration consultant, consultants for the BRV's updating and strategy development, training, facilitation for OSIEC's work (travel, meetings, workshops), advertising and monitoring.²³ The main partner for Output 1 was the SIEC, OSIEC and the Provincial Governments.

Output 1 was allocated USD 2,365,000 in the original budget estimates listed in the project document. This included USD 535,000 for preparation, USD 1.53 million for registration and USD 220,000 for subsequent updating.²⁴ The actual expenditures as of May 2017 were USD 800,154 (Table 2), most of these for the actual implementation of the BVR.²⁵



Support for voter registration was extremely relevant and appreciated. The voter registry used for the 2010 elections was seen as highly inflated when compared to the census figures. That registry listed 448,000 voters, out of a population of 520,000 citizens, 40% of which were under the voting age of 18. The 2010 registry also showed an almost 30% increase over the number of voters registered in 2006.²⁶ Observers noted that many of the capital-based voters had registered in two constituencies (capital and at their home locations) as the system did not allow for absentee voting. Voters would also register in different Honiara constituencies so they could vote for a particular candidate. The observers recommended developing a new voter registry for the 2014 election rather than trying to cleanse the existing registry. According to the Pacific Island Forum Observation Report, the SIEC should *"take action to improve the integrity of the register of electors, as a matter of priority in advance of the next election."*²⁷

A new voter registration was done for 2014 based on a SIG decision to undertake a biometric registration. The Government procured the BVR system and 350 BVR kits, opened 951 Voter

²² Roughly USD 1.4 million, *SECSIP Project Document*, p 9

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ *Ibid*

²⁵ Financial data extracted from UNDP CDR reports. Charts are provided for illustrative purposes and may differ from the final actual expenditures incurred by the project.

²⁶ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, *Report of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat's Election Observer Team to the 2010 General Elections for the Solomon Islands*, p 10

²⁷ *Ibid*, pps 10 – 11

Registration Centres and fielded 278 voter registration teams. The project supported this effort through logistical and planning support, training of the almost 800 registrars (in addition to the vendor’s training which was seen as “insufficient”) and the voter awareness efforts for the registration.

This effort was able to register almost 288,000 voters which was a significant drop from the 2010 list (Box 3). It was also able to remove 2% of the registrants with multiple registrations. This was lower than expected, but according to project reporting the BVR was felt to have been a deterrent for people to register more than once. The SIEC also made the decision to allow out of constituency voter registration for people working in Honiara which was also a factor.²⁸

As 11% of the BVR centres were not operational and did not register voters, SECSIP recommended a comprehensive voter’s audit be done of the registry after the elections to ensure its quality.²⁹ A short-term consultant was provided in 2015 who did a data-driven evaluation of the BVR database and who found no major data quality issues.³⁰

According to the observer reports, “the new register of electors for this election represents a significant improvement. The registration of approximately 85% of the eligible electorate is a significant achievement for the Commission.” The new registry allowed for more accurate planning for the OSIEC for election day, reduced the opportunities for voter fraud and the number of complaints related to fraud, and strengthened public confidence in the SIEC and the voter registry.³¹

The observers did raise concerns about the need to registers those who were out of the country during the registration period and for those who turned 18 in the six months between registration and the elections. However, this was not done and the BVR has not been updated since it was created. This needs to be done or it will disenfranchise all of those who have moved or become 18 since April 2014.

A key factor that affected the implementation of Output 1 was the SIG decision, made outside of the project’s purview, to procure a BVR system similar to that used in Fiji, and from the same vendor.

The SIG did its own procurements and the project’s role was to help the OSIEC to implement this system despite reservations about the appropriateness of a biometric system in the Solomon Island context and the terms and conditions of the vendor’s contracts. This included a “vendor-lock” which gives the vendor proprietary control over the systems and its alterations. The vendor also put the ability to check for duplicate names under a separate contract with the work done directly by the vendor, rather than by providing a complete system to the SIEC that the OSIEC could use on its own and do its own data checks and alterations of the database.³² As a result, project reporting and reviews characterized the BVR as a “one-time system” as any subsequent updating and check for

Province	Registered Voters 2010	Registered Voters 2014
CENTRAL PROVINCE	17,760	15,547
CHOISEUL	15,788	13,824
GUADALCANAL	57,873	42,639
ISABEL	16,945	16,326
HONIARA CITY COUNCIL	110,572	29,734
MAKIRA ULAWA	24,072	21,192
MALAITA	131,614	87,225
RENNELL BELLONA	3,386	2,765
TEMOTU	15,062	12,762
WESTERN PROVINCE	55,116	45,548
National Total:	448,188	287,562

²⁸ Table from SECSIP, *Annual Report 2014*, p 23

²⁹ SECSIP *Annual Report 2014*, p 53

³⁰ SECSIP, *Consultants Report, Ronan McDermott*, p 10

³¹ Commonwealth, *Op Cit*, p 10

³² SECSIP, *Consultants Report*, *Op Cit* p 10

duplicate registrations would require additional contracts with the vendor.

These issues need to be resolved to ensure an updated voter roll is done in time for the 2018/2019 election. SECSIP has contracted another short-term expert who has been looking at the system and who is expected to provide information on the available options. Whatever decision is taken, it should ensure that it looks at the cost-benefit of doing an entirely new registration from scratch and/or keeping the existing one, in terms of time, needed infrastructure and human resources as well as for cost, sustainability and protection of data perspectives. There is also a need for a stronger advocacy role by the SIEC/OSIEC and the Ministry of Home Affairs with the SIG to ensure the timely and adequate provision of funding and staffing for the registry, its updating and maintenance. The registry is a significant resource and needs protection.

3.1.2. Enhanced capacity of the SIEC to manage an electoral cycle

The objective for Output 2 was *enhanced capacity of the SIEC to manage an electoral cycle*. This was revised from the original objective of *more efficient and effective administrative procedures designed and implemented for the SIEC to fulfil its mandate*. According to the project revision, the rewording was done to *“better reflect institutional change.”*³³ SECSIP intended to strengthen SIEC capacity through the *design and implementation of more efficient and effective administrative procedures* (Output 2.1) and *improved infrastructures for more efficient electoral management* (Output 2.2). Output 3.1, *Coordination, communication and planning ability of the SIEC strengthened*, was eliminated in the revised project document with coordination activities merged into Outputs 3 and 4. However, coordination-related activities were planned and reported under this output until then.

The project intended to strengthen the knowledge and skills of the electoral commissioners and staff through undertaking: a capacity needs assessment; developing training and work plans; supporting training; updating job descriptions; team building; strengthening IT skills; creating a basic SIEC website that could display results; and developing a results management system that could coordinate and match data with the voter registration system. It also looked to purchase GPS units and support the mapping of polling stations and constituency boundaries, upgrade OSIEC office facilities and create storage facilities. Coordination was to be supported through the creation of various task forces with different stakeholders such as the political parties, CSOs, police, donors and Ministry of Education, Human Resources and Development (MEHRD).

The 2015 project revision reiterated SECSIP's intended capacity development focus. It noted that the responsibilities within this area were to be shared between the SECSIP and ESSP, with each programme *“working cooperatively with the OSIEC but taking responsibility for particular outputs.”* This was appropriate since the two assistance efforts worked side-by-side in the same small institution and as project reporting and the Midterm Review had noted serious coordination concerns. SECSIP's responsibilities included continued capacity building through mentoring, advice and training. SECSIP also looked to develop customized personnel and staff development training programmes based on individual capacity assessments. Output 3.1 was to be continued to support infrastructure upgrades to the OSIEC facilities so that staff had a *“more appropriate professional work environment and could implement proper storage of electoral materials.”*³⁴ The main partners for Output 2 were the SIEC, OSIEC and Ministry of Home Affairs.

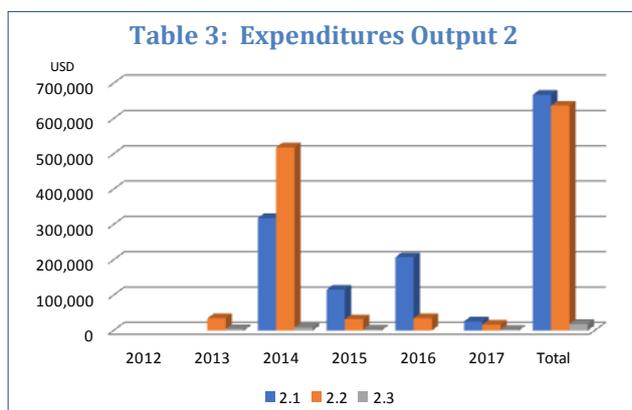
The original anticipated budget for this Output was USD 2,799,000.³⁵ Actual expenditures were USD 1,322,669 (Table 3).

³³ SECSI, *Project Amendment*, p 4

³⁴ *Ibid*, p 7

³⁵ *SECSIP Project Document*, p 26

The implementation of Output 2 has been problematic. The project design assumes a functional, resourced institution as a counterpart for the capacity building elements, and SECSIP had a long list

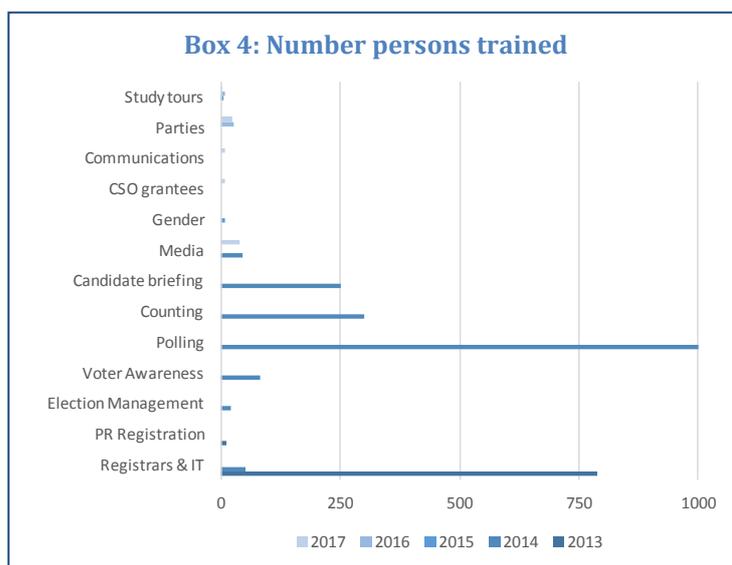


of activities that it had planned to do with the institution. This included 21 activities for the pre-electoral period, 15 for the electoral period and seven in the post-electoral phase. However, the SIEC and OSIEC are not large institutions nor are they well resourced. The OSIEC's facilities are small and need attention, and it only had around eight permanent staff to work with throughout the project. Several of these, including the CEO, have since left the institution, highlighting the challenge of retaining trained staff. The Commissioners are also only part time and

two out of the three have full time jobs in other institutions. This resulted in the project, and reportedly the ESSP advisors as well, two of whom are very senior former electoral officials, filling in for the institutional gaps and replacing capacity. In certain contexts, this is understandable, but the actual state of the institution needed to be better reflected in the project's design and in the assistance strategies adopted. As noted by the Midterm Review, in this context, capacity building needed to have been at a more strategic level, one that looked at the state of the institution as a whole and the priority given to it by the government, and one that addressed those issues as well as the training needs of its limited staff.³⁶

Another issue that affected implementation for this output as well as for Output 1 was the late start up for the project. This pushed most of the pre-electoral activities into the electoral period where many were overcome by events and the need to help deliver the BVR and elections. One of these was the capacity assessment which had been intended to inform the training for Outputs 1 and 2. This was not done until 2016. Nevertheless, the project did provide significant amounts of support to the SIEC/OSIEC for the 2014 elections. The Midterm Review felt this was "another success of SECSIP" (the other was the BVR) and that it had made an important contribution in terms of "supporting capacity development, [but] in some cases supplementing OSIEC capacity." It noted this support was most notable in the areas of procurement, training of electoral officials and manual updating.³⁷

SECSIP did procure a large number of critical items for the elections including the ballot boxes, voting booths, indelible ink, polling station



³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

kits, and some of the computers for the results management, as well as printing for the training manuals and procuring helicopter support for the transport of ballot boxes.³⁸ Procurement costs for these items was almost USD 523,000.

SECSIP also supported the training of a large number of persons hired for the BVR and elections (Box 4).³⁹ The project provided a short term human resources and training expert who had retired from the AEC. This was a good choice as he knew the OSIEC and ESSP from having worked with them while he was at the AEC. He worked directly with the OSIEC training coordinator, providing on-the-job mentoring, as well as supporting the development of the curriculum and training materials. According to reporting *“this approach has definitely enabled SIEC Training officer to take ownership of the approach and the content and has given her a deeper understanding of the curriculum development methodology and the subject matter of each workshop.”*⁴⁰ The caveat is that the training officer has since left the OSIEC for other professional opportunities and the position was vacant during the Final Evaluation. This raises the issue of the institution retaining the trained staff and the longer term sustainability of the capacity building efforts. The material however generated for the training is still available for the OSIEC as well as a database created of the trained election workers.⁴¹

The project supported the development of an electronic results management system (RMS) for the elections. Although it was not intended to replace the paper based system, it was intended to be a trial for the future that could add transparency, accuracy and efficiency to the electoral process.⁴² According to project reporting, it was developed and implemented in a very short period of time and the feedback from the provinces was that it was useful and *“achieved its primary objective”*. However, it also noted that the RMS needed to be included in elections training and that it required minimum internet infrastructure in all of the provinces, which also raises sustainability and reliability issues in the current context.

SECSIP also supported the development of the SIEC’s website. In the lead up to the elections, it received 21,636 visits, 13,014 of these in November 2014. The most visited elements were the list of candidates and nominations, the election results, voting locations and omissions and objections pages. This provided parties, candidates, CSOs, voters and others with timely information that could not be found elsewhere, such as the list of candidates and voting locations. It also supported the Facebook page, which had up to 1,000 interactions during the election time.⁴³ Use is down significantly since, with about 148 unique views of the home page between 21 March 2017 – 20 April 2017. Information is dated, with most of the site developed in 2014 and two articles added in 2016 (EMB visit to Nepal and the Regional Conference on Political Stability). Each of these received roughly 4,000 and 2,500 visits respectively.⁴⁴ Currently the project is working with a national IT expert to rejuvenate the webpage. The SIEC website was hacked in 2016 through the interactive feature that allowed voters to check their registration and polling sites and the feature was turned off. According to interviews, the review is progressing slowly as the interaction and feedback needed by the expert with the OSIEC has been sporadic and late. This consultancy also includes training for OSIEC staff to help the institution maintain and update its website in the future assuming this staff remains with the institution.

³⁸ For a total of almost USD 530,000, SECSIP, *Annual Report 2014*, pps 49 - 50

³⁹ Ibid, p 31

⁴⁰ Ibid, p 33. The chart also includes persons trained in subsequent years with information provided in the annual reports.

⁴¹ Ibid, p 6

⁴² Ibid, p 54

⁴³ Ibid, p 53

⁴⁴ Website statistics from *Piwik Export, March 21 – April 20 2017* provided by SECSIP website consultant.

The project undertook the long overdue capacity assessment of the electoral institutions in 2016, done by a very experienced electoral expert. It included the identification of different scenarios and measures needed to strengthen EMB capacity, including reforms. These findings and recommendations were presented to the Prime Minister and likely fed into the efforts undertaken by the Electoral Reform Task Force that is discussed in Section 3.1.4.

The project also supported a number of study tours (Table 4). There is limited data available on the substance of the actual trips or their results once returned. An intended one was a five country visit in the region to examine their electoral legal frameworks and voting systems (Papua New Guinea-PNG, Australia, New Zealand, Samoa and Fiji) for the Electoral Task Force that was working on reform issues. However according to project reporting, despite its willingness to organize and fund the tour, and various attempts to organize it, it was postponed and eventually left aside due to “agenda, logistics and funding issues” which were not explained.⁴⁵ The timing for this would have been opportune given the state of the reform process at the time. However, members of the Task Force did undertake a short visit to Fiji and a more substantial one to Samoa. The visit to Washington to attend the Global Electoral Conference (GEO) was reportedly a good experience for the SIEC commissioner and Media Officer who attended. The GEO is a valuable networking event where EMBS share experience and develop professional peer relationships. Two of the study trips were for a one week certificated course for the top two OSIEC staff. This is an investment in building the capacity and professionalism of the institution. However, this also assumes that the institution is able to retain these trained staff.

Date	Location	Participants	Purpose
9 Dec 2015	Fiji	A/CEO, Chief Logistics Officer	Visit electoral system of Fiji
10 – 15 Dec 2015	Samoa	A/CEO, Chief Logistics Officer, PPIC Registrar, PM Adviser	Study electoral system of Samoa
4 March 2016	Samoa	IT Officer, Training Office/Gender Focal Point	Observe the 2016 Samoa general elections & discussions with EMB. Held workshop on return on lessons learned from Samoa with PPIC, including TSM
1 – 10 June 2016	Nepal	Chief Logistics Officer, IT Officer	Discussions on GIS mapping and BVR & electoral information centres
May 2016	London	A/CEO	ICPS professional Certificate on Management of Electoral Processes
November 2016	London	Principal Administrative Officer	ICPS professional certificate in Strategic Reform of Electoral Processes
November 2016	Washington, DC	SIEC Commissioner Saga, OSIEC Media Officer	Attendance at Global Electoral Conference

The project did provide some infrastructure support for the OSIEC. This included upgrading its internet connection, providing containers for temporary storage of non-sensitive materials, and upgrading its electoral system to make it safer and able to handle the institutional electoral load. It also developed terms of reference to develop renovation plans for the OSIEC building. This was put on hold pending the Government’s decision on the premises. This was appropriate given the plans to merge the PPIC with the OSIEC which will likely change the needs considerably from those identified in 2016.

It is difficult to assess output results without better performance data. However, for the 2014 elections, the observer reports were generally positive. The Commonwealth stated: *We commend the professionalism and diligence demonstrated by the SIEC, despite some operational challenges. ... The SIEC’s efforts to facilitate accuracy of information and transparency in its management and conduct of the polls were commendable. The competent management of election day activities*

⁴⁵ SECIP, *Annual Report 2013*, p 17

*represents further progress for the country in strengthening its democratic practices.*⁴⁶ It did recommend enhanced training of election officials to ensure greater consistency in the application of procedures and for the SIEC to undertake a lessons learned to strengthen its management of the elections. This lessons learned exercise was supported by the project in 2015.

There were a number of issues identified in the different reports that affected the quality of the trainings. This included: late OSIEC decisions on policies and procedures which were made after the training manuals were completed; not completing the recruitment for the Returning Officers before their training, which SECSIP felt had almost derailed the training as the trainees were angry that they did not yet know their terms of reference or rates of pay; and the low rate of female participation. For instance, there were only four women among the 50 Returning Officers.⁴⁷

Outside of the electoral period, there remains the serious issue of the amount of assistance and capacity building efforts that can be done with an institution of less than ten people. The project's Midterm Review noted the issue of capacity replacement rather than capacity building by electoral assistance. It noted the tendency for assistance to step in and do the actual work as they wanted the process to succeed, especially given the security and broader political risks associated with elections in the context. However, it felt the project needed a more strategic approach to capacity building and to look beyond trainings, BRIDGE and exchanges.⁴⁸

The situation was similar during this Final Evaluation. The basic foundations needed to make capacity building effective were missing for the period between the elections. The OSIEC only had about five people present during this Final Evaluation and throughout the reporting appears to never have had more than 10 persons except during the electoral period. It is under-resourced financially and its facilities and staff need attention. Among others, the OSIEC lacks a permanent CEO to lead the institution. There is more assistance present at the OSIEC than EMB staff with the project, its consultants, the ESSP advisors and the occasional Australian bilateral advisors, which is not a healthy balance.

The midterm review noted that the capacity assessment for the SIEC needed to include *“structural issues of scale, resourcing and institutional independence, and broader issues related to capacity development versus capacity supplementation and/or substitution within the context of the SIEC.”* *The former means that effective capacity development will require a broad-fronted strategic approach that engages with broader issues of public sector and institutional reform, and leadership. The latter will place a premium on donor coordination and the establishment of agreed engagement protocols.*⁴⁹ At the time of the final assessment, both areas were still needed and required priority attention for the design of the follow on SECSIP project. How to build national ownership within the context is a difficult question that will also take renewed leadership and attention from the SIG side to resolve.

3.1.3. Voter awareness and engagement

The objective for this output was *for national authorities and local networks to have better capacity to train and educate the population on voter awareness and civic engagement.* SECSIP intended to do this through *enhancing the strategic ability of the SIEC to conduct and coordinate a public awareness campaign* (Output 3.1) and by *increasing implementation of civic and voter education strategies* (Output 3.2). Coordination was added to this output in the 2015 revision of the project document.

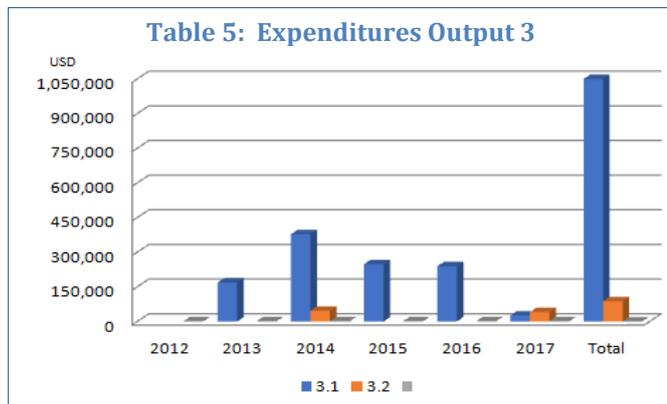
⁴⁶ SECSIP, *Annual Report 2014*, p 47 and Commonwealth, Op Cit, p 23

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ SECSIP, *Midterm Review*, p 13

⁴⁹ Ibid, p 13

The project intended to hire an international civic education advisor for two years to mentor and work with SIEC on this output.⁵⁰ Intended activities included support for civic education planning and strategy development, communications planning, developing educational materials, and supporting the voter education efforts of Returning Officers and polling officials through the provision of resources and training. Increasing women’s and youth political participation were to be key themes as well as creating awareness on introducing TSMs. SECSIP also intended to support the Ministry of Education to introduce democracy and national identity information in the school curriculum, and to support CSOs in developing voter education materials and strategies. The provision of subgrants to implement a national public awareness strategy was added in 2015.



The anticipated budget for Output 3 was USD 1,740,000. Actual expenditures were USD 1,797,559 (Table 5).

Electoral period. SECSIP supported a substantial voter awareness effort for the BVR and 2014 elections. SECSIP hired an experienced UNV who was followed up later by a former Australian volunteer (and journalist) to work with the OSIEC on developing the institution’s communications plan, messaging development, materials and training. They worked with a project-funded graphic designer for the development of the posters, pamphlets and other materials. The project also procured a large amount of voter information materials which it disseminated in different ways.

SECSIP also helped to train the Returning Officers who were responsible for the face-to-face voter awareness efforts within their areas for the BVR and elections. The Returning Officers recruited 155 volunteers as Civic/Voter Educators. They used project provided allowances to go to different communities and to show and explain the project-developed DVDs on the BVR and voting processes in the local languages.⁵¹ One of the experts estimated that they reached about 50,000 to 60,000 people through these community meetings.

The actual efficacy of these voter education efforts is hard to determine. There were a low number of spoiled ballots (0.67%) and a high turnout of voters (89.3%).⁵² However, there are many factors that can contribute to, or affect, these results. The project commissioned a representational voter awareness survey about a year after the elections. This provided some interesting information that will be useful to target and

Box 5: 2015 Survey Results

Sample of survey finding:

- Almost 90% knew to check their name on the provisional voter list, but less than half knew they could do something to fix it if there were errors.
- 30% felt fearful during the electoral period because of conflicts in their community around the elections. This was higher in rural areas (34%) than urban areas (26%).
- Personal benefit was the most common reason for voting. This was highest among women (40%) and urban residents (44%).
- Access to media was more restricted in rural areas than in urban ones: mobile phones (43% compared to 79%) radio (33% vs. 50%), newspapers (30% vs. 60%) and the internet (5% compared to 19%)

Source: Voter Awareness Survey

⁵⁰ The project document was inconsistent about staff for this output. It mentioned a UNV expert for the life of the project in one place, and in another an international expert for two years.

⁵¹ UNV, *UNVs in the Pacific, Gender equality in voters registration campaigns in the Solomon Islands*, p 11

⁵² Commonwealth, *Op Cit*, p 21

measure future efforts (Box 5). However, there was no pre-election baseline data available to serve as a comparison, and as the survey was done so late after the elections, its usefulness as an evaluation tool for the 2013-2014 efforts is limited.⁵³

Nevertheless, the survey did find that the most remembered voter education efforts were the posters and the SIEC awareness groups in both urban and rural contexts (73%), and that the face-to-face method was the most trusted way (70%) to pass election information. Text messages and SMS were not well recalled in the survey, with only 10% of the respondents able to recall a voter message.⁵⁴ The project spent half of the funds captured in Table 6⁵⁵ on SMS for the BVR awareness efforts. In the electoral period it increased its funding emphasis on posters, from 7% during the BVR to 72% for the elections, which might account for the better recall of the posters a year later. Radio had a 50% recall among respondents, although the higher percentages were from urban areas where the population has better access to media. The project had decreased its emphasis on radio messages from 18% of the expenditures captured in Table 6 for the BVR to 12% for the elections.⁵⁶ The amount spent on face-to-face efforts was not available to compare with the other methods used (Table 6).

Post electoral period. The project continued to provide technical assistance to the OSIEC for voter awareness and communications through intermittent consultative contracts for an international media adviser and short-term national media and national voter awareness consultants. Most of the activities focused on reaching out to other actors, specifically CSOs, the schools and the media for general awareness efforts. These activities were late in the project but relevant for the needs and are an appropriate focus for the post electoral period. It also commissioned the 2015 voter survey, using the data to support the OSIEC to develop a National Voter Awareness Strategy (2016) and a baseline and targets for future voter awareness efforts. This sets the follow-on project, SECSIP II, in a good position to support more strategic voter education efforts for the next elections and provides the baseline needed to be able to measure their results, assuming a timely follow up survey is done. Given the range of activities supported and lack of follow up for most, there is a need to ensure SECSIP II uses a more synergistic and programmatic approach for its various voter awareness activities.

Subgrants: Eight CSOs were provided sub-grants through a competitive process in 2016. Four of these were for general voter awareness, and the other four to promote women's political participation (Table 7). Although the voter survey found that only 9% of the respondents could recall messages provided through CSOs,⁵⁷ it was still a good addition for the project, at least for a pilot exercise to see how useful and effective subgrants could be. In general, facilitating relevant CSO activities helps to build the constructive engagement of civil society in the electoral process and increases their interest in its quality and results. Several of the subgrantees seemed to be well-known organizations that have done other similar efforts, while others were generally unknown and worked further from the capital, which was one of the intentions for this effort. A manual for voter awareness was prepared and UNDP provided compliance training on reporting and other grantee requirements which seemed to be needed by most of them. The project also undertook monitoring

⁵³ The SECSIP 2014 annual report references a pre-election KAP survey (knowledge, attitude and practices) used to target the voter campaign. The survey and its data were not available by the time of this evaluation. If it was done, its results were not provided in the reporting.

⁵⁴ Sustineo, *UNDP: Solomon Islands Electoral Commission, Voter Awareness Survey/Voter Awareness Program Evaluation*, p 13

⁵⁵ For the items listed in Table 6. More complete cost information for voter education was not available to know the percentages spent compared to the actual total expended for those efforts.

⁵⁶ Sustineo, *Op Cit*, p 13

⁵⁷ *Ibid*

missions with the responsible OSIEC officer to check on the implementation of the subgrants and to gather feedback from the participants.

The efforts and focus seemed rather disparate, however according to the project, the subgrants were issued pursuant to the OSIEC voter education strategy. Two other larger grants were in the process of being issued to Transparency Solomon Islands and the Media Association of the Solomon Islands (MASI) during the Final Evaluation. Care needs to be taken to ensure that all of the subgrants issued in the future also directly contribute to the higher level outcomes sought by the project. Scattering funds across different activities or needs can be helpful to the recipients, but if the activity does not directly contribute towards achieving the project's objectives, it limits the project's relevance, effectiveness and its potential impact. SECSIP should also ensure that it adequately addresses the sustainability elements inherent in the funding of any core institutional staff of grantees, and that these subgrants include an exit strategy for the project.

Media workshops. The project undertook very limited efforts with the media until 2017 when it hired a national media consultant who had been trained in a media workshop in 2014 through Australian bilateral assistance. He updated those materials and delivered an eight week course held on Saturday mornings. This was ongoing during the Final Evaluation. More than 40 journalists and students from the School of Journalism at the Solomon Islands National University attended. This was done in association with MASI which identified the participants. Journalists found the workshops

useful especially as the consultations for electoral reforms were ongoing during the training period. The certificates to be provided at the end of the course served as a practical incentive to stay with the course as the certificates were seen as useful for their professional advancement.

The Australian volunteer with MASI thought the training was of critical importance given the frequent turnover of journalists and the inexperience of their replacements. Most of the journalists who had been trained in 2014 had already moved on to more lucrative jobs which raises the sustainability question for these types of trainings in the sector. MASI saw the partnership with UNDP and OSIEC as a good opportunity as it did not have the capacity itself to organize the workshops or manage the funding. There was limited evaluation data on the course (no pre or post tests) but from the interviews it appeared that it helped increase the general knowledge and

Date	CSO	Purpose	Amount USD⁵⁸
6 March – 31 August 2017	Tefila Marketing & Enterprise Development	Voter education in North Malaita (train 50 women leaders to conduct 1 community level awareness talk each, 4 school visits)	12,803
1 Dec 2016 – 31 May 2017	Destiny Global Development Agency	Voter awareness for 250 people (train 5 staff and 2 leaders per community)	12,803
5 April – 31 Sept 2017	Solomon Island Association of Community Learning Centres (CLS)	Voter awareness in Noian & Tarekumbo CLS (train 60 TOT, 10 replicate this for 150 persons)	11,550
1 Dec 2016 – 31 May 2017	Hearts of Hope	Voter information for 30 communities in Central Kwara'ae, Aoke/Langa Langa (reach 6,000 persons)	12,803
21 Nov 2016 – 31 May 2017	Vois Blong Mere Solomons	Women's leadership (60 radio spots, 24 weekly radio programmes, 2 30-women trainings on transformational leadership, mentor 10 women as candidates)	32,389
21 Nov 2016 – 31 May 2017	Village Technology Trust	Women's leadership (production of video in Bellona, available through interactive app)	22,787
21 Nov 2016 – 31 May 2017	Guadalcanal Council of Women	Women's leadership (Forums to raise awareness & motivate females to run for office in 2018)	7,643
5 April – 31 Sept 2017	Solomon National Council of Women	Women's leadership	37,885

⁵⁸ USD conversion is approximate

understanding of the participants on the processes which is essential for accurate and constructive coverage of the political and electoral processes.

School projects. The project implemented two pilot projects in mid to late 2016 with the Ministry of Education. One was an essay contest on women’s political leadership that is discussed in Section 3.1.5. The other was a School Election Project which provided practical experience on the voting process for students in five schools, three in the capital and one each in Malaita and Waimapuru provinces. SECSIP, OSIEC and the Curriculum Division of MEHRD developed the training materials for Year 8 teachers and students along with supplemental material on election penalties and the BVR process which were areas identified as needs in a 2015 review of the national voter education curriculum. OSIEC and SECSIP conducted the two-day awareness effort which included mock elections for student leaders. The activity was well received by the teachers, schools and the Ministry according to reports and interviews. It seems to have reached about 300 students for the first day, and about 220 – 286 students the second day according to the number of student evaluations collected. These asked students to state their level of confidence in understanding the information provided. Overall, 81% of the students said they were confident that they understood the topics, while 16% thought they understood but were not certain. Three percent said they did not understand it. The topics with the most confidence shown were on the voting process (94%), vote counting (93%) and importance of voting (90%). The least confidence was expressed for understanding the role of the MPs (60%). The participatory aspects of the mock voting likely accounted for the high confidence rate for the actions related to polling.

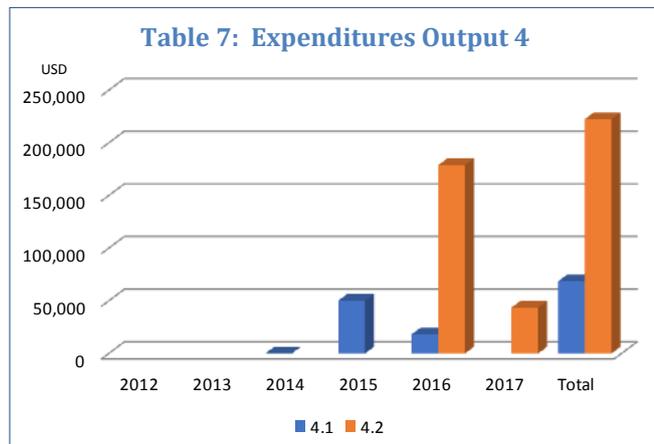
Despite the good reviews and intentions to expand the effort, and the pool of trained teachers and interested schools, there appeared to be little initiative within the MEHRD to replicate the effort. They appeared to be waiting for the project to contact them for any continuations. It is likely that at the school level, some of the participating principals and teachers might have felt more ownership for the effort. SECSIP should follow up with these schools to see if any were intending to do the workshops themselves this year. This would be important, both in terms of identifying lessons learned as well as to determine the institutional impact for these types of trainings. It would also encourage the schools to continue the efforts. Results beyond the students reporting their level of confidence in understanding the information were not collected, and without follow up with the schools or students, its effectiveness is likely limited. The participating students and schools should be targeted for the 2017 student essay competition that the project intends to organize to ensure they have the information on the contest and also to see if there is any difference in their participation and substance of their essays as compared to the students who did not have this pilot training.

3.1.4 Electoral reform

The original intention for this output was to *support electoral and legal reform to contribute to a stronger electoral commission and representative democracy*. This was shorted for “*simplicity and clarity*” in the 2015 revision to *support electoral and legal reform*. The project originally intended to do this through *strengthening the legal capacity of the SIEC* (Output 4.1) with the provision of a national legal adviser for the duration of the project. The adviser would review SIEC procedures, relevant legislation, provide options for the legal and electoral reforms and for the adoption of TSMs for the representation of women in Parliament. The legal adviser was also to “*create a dialogue on democracy and representation in the Solomon Islands through workshops*.”⁵⁹

⁵⁹ SECSIP, *Project Document*, p 29

This output was amended in the project revision to *improving the SIEC’s legal reform coordination capacity*. It expected to continue work “with the ESSP” to support the SIEC to help “interpret the legal framework within its operational procedures.” It also intended to provide comparative models of electoral administration, primarily to the SIEC Commissioners and the CEO’s Office, which included a focus on “universal principles, international standards and best practices for democratic elections.” It also expected to provide support to the Electoral Reform Taskforce created in 2015, and continue assistance to the SIEC for its regulation development.⁶⁰ The 2015 revision also added a second output to *enhance the reform initiatives of the PPIC* (Output 4.2) in



order to expand SECSIP’s work with the PPIC as another important EMB body. This was to include institutional capacity support as well as assistance with the PPIC’s electoral reform efforts.⁶¹

The estimated budget for Output 4 was USD 351,000. Actual expenditures were USD 291,260 (Table 8).⁶²

Reform. Legal reform efforts related to the political and electoral processes in the Solomon’s have been extremely slow. So have SECSIP’s efforts to support this process. Most of this assistance has been activity-based and intermittent. However, the pace of support has increased recently in line with Government efforts to amend the electoral law before the 2018/2019 elections.

The Midterm Review found that there was little time or scope for SECSIP to support electoral reform before the 2014 elections because of the late implementation in the project and the lack of political will for pre-electoral reforms.⁶³ The Project Board in 2014 also decided that the project would not work on Output 4 in 2014.⁶⁴ As a result, the legal adviser was not hired and no activities were supported. The Midterm Review noted that this left the project without a say in the debate about TSM that was floated before the elections. However, it also noted that RAMSI had put a lot of effort into the issue of reform over its decade of assistance, but that this remained one of the key challenges that needed more UNDP and project policy-guided engagement with political leadership.⁶⁵

In the post electoral period, SECSIP provided senior-level expertise on the options for electoral reform through workshops and papers (Table 8). It provided support to the Electoral Reform Taskforce that was led by the Prime Minister’s Office and included the SIEC/OSIEC and PPIC. Most recently it facilitated the provincial consultations of the Electoral Reform Taskforce on the proposed reforms. This support helped to focus the OSEIC, PPIC and SIG attention on some of the most critical reforms needed, to explain their proposals to electoral stakeholders, and which helped to ensure a more inclusive process than would have been the case without their assistance.

SECSIP did contract some well-known senior experts for this output and their expertise and insight was appreciated by the Government and other participants. In particular, the workshop in 2015,

⁶⁰ SECSIP, *Project Document Revision*, p 9

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² UNDP, SECSIP CDRs for 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017

⁶³ SECSIP, *Midterm Review*, p 15

⁶⁴ SECSIP *Annual Report 2014*, p 8

⁶⁵ Ibid, p 15

which included other non-SECSIP experts and ESSP, was said to have set the foundations for the current reform efforts. A recent options paper was seen as ‘brilliant,’ but so brilliant that most asked for it to be put into simpler terms and tied closer to the SI context to make it more understandable and useful for them. One of the SIEC Commissioners suggested that the modified version then be translated and disseminated. However, care needs to be taken first to be sure that the paper has not already been overcome by events and is still relevant and needed given the state of the reform process since it was done. The EU now also has a bilateral expert working on drafting the amended electoral act and a revised version of the Political Party Integrity Act which the Government expected to present to Cabinet in July as of the time of this Evaluation.

The current reforms, according to the Prime Minister’s Office, will merge the PPIC and SIEC commissions and offices, taking the OIEC from 8 to 31 persons, and the commissions from 3 to 5 commissioners. They also expect to remove the Speaker of Parliament as the SIEC Chairman to increase its independence and fill the vacant OSIEC CEO position. They are also discussing the OSIEC taking over a building next door to its current office to accommodate a larger staff. The new offices will likely need rehabilitation to be able to hold the combined commission and for them to be able to work together effectively. There are also proposed changes to the electoral system, from first past the post to a limited preferential system. This is not expected to come into effect until after the upcoming election, meaning there will be a need for a post-election voter information campaign on these changes. The Prime Minister’s Office expects this reform to make a more profound change in the nature of their representative system and sees the challenge as making these reforms work. For instance, after the laws are passed, the regulations and other amendments will need to be done, some of which require constitutional amendments. This includes finding a mechanism to stop MPs from crossing the floor. The TSM issue for women is off the table for all intents and purposes, with the push back from the Cabinet and Parliament on the TSM ideas floated in the Government’s 2016 white paper.

Despite this recent progress, the Midterm Review’s findings and recommendations on UNDP’s role for Output 4 remain largely pertinent. It found that the UNDP Country Office and project management team needed to be more engaged at the higher policy levels on issues related to SECSIP outcomes. The project and UNDP management teams have changed since the Midterm Review and are more actively engaged. In particular, UNDP has developed a strong strategy and policy engagement on the peacebuilding side, which includes issues of constitutional reform. Issues related to elections and strengthening women’s political participation are brought up within that context.⁶⁶ However, SECSIP still has a technical and activity-based approach to achieving its outputs, and most electoral policy issues are raised only intermittently or at opportune moments.⁶⁷ It also supported the current effort to support dialogue on

Date	Action
May 26-28 2015	Electoral Systems Seminar with the Electoral Task Force and Experts
May 2016	<i>Electoral Task Force submits 1st White Paper to parliament on a new election system</i>
27-28 June 2016	Funded attendance of PPIC, MPs, Deputy PM, A/CEO and PP leaders at UNDP regional conference in Fiji on SDG 16 in Melanesia (Creating Political and Parliamentary Stability to Catalyze Development)
August 2016	<i>Electoral Task Force submits 2nd White Paper</i>
23-26 August 2016	SECSIP senior expert follows up on White Paper with comparative analysis of different systems
16 Nov 2016	EMB capacity assessment with options done by another SECSIP senior expert, debriefing with Prime Minister
Feb - April 2017	5 provincial consultations facilitated for Electoral Reform Task Force on proposed reforms
May 2017	Final consultation facilitated in Honiara for Electoral Reform Task Force for proposed reforms

⁶⁶ For instance, a January 2017 UNDP and UN Peacebuilding Fund meeting with the Prime Minister raised issues of anti-corruption, election preparations, TSM, women and youth participation and peacebuilding.

⁶⁷ For example, a SECSIP senior expert presented the findings of the SIEC capacity assessment to the Prime Minister (Table 8), but timely follow up on the recommended options could have increased its efficacy and perhaps generated some momentum for needed changes.

electoral reform, but its role was largely administrative. These efforts could be strengthened considerably by having SECSIP and the ESSP work with the SIEC to develop a strategic vision for strengthening the electoral processes and the integrity of the system at the policy levels, identify the policy changes that need to be done to achieve that vision and to come up with a common action plan for the advocacy and actions needed to achieve those changes. This should factor in the current reform effort and its anticipated outcomes, and leverage the comparative and strategic advantages of UNDP and SECSIP's development partners. The intention to strengthen SECSIP II's management staff should relieve the CTA from much of her current day-to-day administrative work which will leave more time for strategy development and policy engagement.

Another issue that affected the relevance and efficacy of project performance is the parallel technical support provided by the ESSP. One of the ESSP senior advisers has played the role of legal adviser to the SIEC and other stakeholders for a long time, and his relationships predates the UNDP project. The project design did not adequately take this factor, or the political context, into account. Although the current CTA is a lawyer, the space for two legal advisers within the OSIEC is limited and she remains a largely untapped resource in this regard.⁶⁸ Although coordination between ESSP and SECSIP has been a systemic issue noted throughout the project, coordination for the implementation of the recent consultations seemed to be good. Participants saw the conference as one cohesive effort which is much more effective than each project working in parallel.⁶⁹

PPIC. The addition of the PPIC was relevant and constructive for an electoral cycle project and the context. The PPIC's role, limited institutional capacity and reportedly more dynamic leadership in the post-election period provided opportunities for SECSIP to make a substantial contribution to strengthening the electoral processes through the PPIC and its key stakeholders, the political parties.

The extent of this contribution however was limited by the sporadic nature of the assistance and the depth of the needs. The project supported the PPIC's engagement in the reform process, and co-organization of certain events such as a regional women's leadership conference (discussed in Section 3.1.5). These efforts were useful to raise the PPIC's profile and to help build its relationships and engagements with the parties, OSIEC, and other electoral stakeholders such as CSOs. However, as with the OSIEC capacity building efforts, much of the information and knowledge gained by the commission is within the individuals and the institution itself would have a severe setback if these persons left. At the time of this Final Evaluation, it had reportedly had about three staff left and there was uncertainty if the Director planned to continue. Its Commissioners however, still seemed active and engaged in much of the PPIC's work and direction. The PPIC is also a member of the Constitutional Reform Task Force which was meeting during this Final Evaluation, so it still plays an important role and continued institutional strengthening should be a priority for future efforts.⁷⁰

SECSIP provided some basic training for political parties through the PPIC. Strengthening parties to fill their intended roles in a democratic system should also be a priority for electoral and parliamentary assistance programmes. The political party system is extremely weak, with most political actors acting as individuals rather than as members of a party with a defined ideology that represent its constituent base. There are also systemic issues with the party system that need to be part of the reform efforts. For instance, floor crossing is frequent, contributing to political instability. Political parties in parliament get subventions that other parties do not. MPs also have access to

⁶⁸ She also has a considerable degree of experience from other countries, and recently supported the NAM in Vanuatu by looking at their legal issues. This expertise could be better utilized by the SIEC to foster regional knowledge exchange as there are similarities in the challenges faced by the two Melanesian countries.

⁶⁹ From information provided in interviews and project reporting.

⁷⁰ Assuming the institution is given the human resources and financial capacity needed for it to fulfill its role by the SIG regardless of whether it merges with the OSIEC.

their RCDF funds, which reportedly feeds vote-buying and other corrupt practices. This leads to the 70% return rate for incumbent MPs and an unlevel playing field.⁷¹

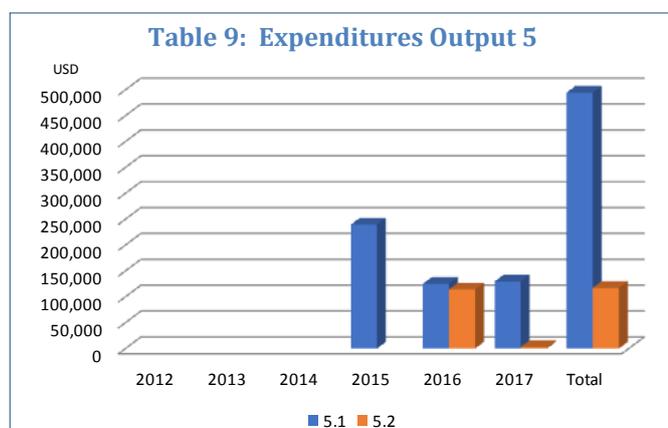
The training of parties in 2016 and 2017 was a useful first step. The timing was appropriate as parties are consumed by election preparations closer to the electoral periods. The project funded two experienced political consultants to provide two multiparty trainings. These were based on a 2015 scoping mission they had undertaken directly for the PPIC. That mission identified two major areas for assistance: party capacity building and mentoring. The first training focused on the practical aspects of how to run a political party, campaign, organize, develop a manifesto and comply with regulations. The underlying premise was that if parties were stronger, governments would be stronger, last longer and could focus more on development issues. The target was for three to five of the 13 registered parties to absorb the lessons and develop stronger, more issues based campaigns.

The parties thought this was an extremely useful event and it got universally good reviews in interviews. However, the second training intended for party trainer of trainers (TOT) was pushed back for several months because of a political crisis. This delay broke the momentum for the effort. Fewer parties and representative attended the second training, and the PPIC Director was absent. Instead of doing the intended training for party members in two provincial capitals, they did a TOT in Honiara for the seven parties that showed up, and gave each, plus an eighth party, individual mentoring. They also discovered during the training that a simultaneous BRIDGE training was being done by the AEC for parties on a political party code of conduct, and that some of the participants from the first training did not even know that their second training was taking place. This unfortunately illustrates the recurrent implementation issues of coordination and national ownership that affected the efficacy, potential impact and sustainability of project efforts.

3.1.5. Mainstreaming gender

The project originally intended to mainstream gender throughout its activities, including its voter awareness programmes and in the SIEC capacity building. A gender-specific output was added in the 2015 project revision to ensure enough emphasis on enhancing the *capacity of the SIEC to promote gender mainstreaming in its institutional practices and the electoral process*.

SECSIP intended to do this through *increasing gender mainstreaming in the SIEC institutional practices* (Output 5.1) and *increasing gender mainstreaming in the electoral processes* (Output 5.2). SECSIP planned to provide technical advice to the SIEC on the design and implementation of a gender policy and by reviewing the SIEC’s corporate plan to ensure it mainstreamed gender equality and the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWD). SECSIP also intended to: hold a regional conference on women’s leadership and political participation in the electoral cycle in collaboration with the PPIC; develop strategic partnerships with other key institutions and actors towards developing a TSM policy; and, by providing sub-grants for advocacy to increase women’s electoral participation.⁷² Four sub-grants were issued in late 2016 and early 2017 through a competitive bid process (Table 7).



⁷¹ Transparency International, Op Cit, p 4 and Commonwealth, OpCit, p 13

⁷² SECSIP, *Project Document Revision*, p 11

The estimated expenditures for gender were not separated out for 2012 - 2015, but the estimated budget for this output listed in the 2015 revision was USD 325,000. Total output expenditures to date have been USD 611,882. Most of these expenditures were allocated against Output 5.1 (Table 9).

The SECSIP fielded an intermittent series of gender advisers to provide technical assistance and manage related activities: a 45 day international gender expert starting in September 2014, and who returned for eight months in 2015; short term in-country support from the UNDP NY Policy Analyst on Gender and Elections in 2016; a longer term national expert who started in April 2016; and, an intermittent international expert, who also mentored the national expert who did not have elections-specific experience.

Electoral period. Most of the gender work in the electoral period was ad hoc, taking advantage of windows of opportunity as they arose during the process. The initial gender adviser arrived so late in 2014 that most of the training materials had already been developed leaving little room for modifications. Election personnel had also been recruited, done with *“little or no regard”* for gender. Less than 30% of the electoral staff recruited in 2014 were women, most of these at polling assistant level. This was down 5.4% from the number hired in 2010.⁷³ However, the project report states that it was still able to ensure that some voter awareness materials targeted marginalized voters (PWD, battered women and first time voters) and that some showed women in powerful positions, such as polling officers. This was a visible way to highlight women’s in leadership roles in

the process.⁷⁴ SECSIP also supported a short session with all of the female candidates to provide a *“safe space for the candidates to express their concerns and to feel more confident to contest the*

*election in an extremely patriarchal context.”*⁷⁵ Results beyond holding the activity and providing an opportunity for the women to discuss issues among themselves and with the OSIEC are unknown but likely limited. It was a one-time effort without any follow up visible at this point in time that could have determined its results or provided further support for women’s political participation in the electoral period. The same is likely the case for the half day session held with the

media on gender-sensitive reporting. There is no data available to know if this resulted in better reporting or more coverage of women’s participation issues. The Midterm Review, done in March 2015 found that the project still had not engaged in gender issues in a substantive way.⁷⁶

Post-Electoral. SECSIP undertook a number of gender-related activities in the post-electoral period (Table 10) with its efforts becoming more systemic in 2016. Several of the initial post-election efforts were regional conferences organized with the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji. The first was a 2015 regional conference on Women’s Leadership and Political Participation done with the PPIC in association with the EU, OSIEC, UN Women and the Young Women’s Parliamentary Group. It

Date	Action
June 2 – 4 2015	Regional Seminar on Women’s Leadership for Pacific Islands organized by the PPIC
15-16 Sept 2015	Gender equality training for all OSIEC staff and advisers
Oct - Nov 2015	OSIEC/SECSIP consultations with local groups in 5 provinces on developing an action plan including TOR for grants
23-24 Nov 2015	7 participants from SI funded to attend TSM Pacific Regional Conference in PNG
Sept - Oct 2016	School essay competition
Nov 2016	Lessons learned with MEHRD & schools
Nov 2016	Regional Empowering Women and Strengthening of Political Parties Workshop with UNDP Pacific Office in Honiara
Mar 28-30 2017	Regional workshop of the Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness Initiative (UNDP Pacific Office) with PPIC. One module presented on Women & Elections in Solomon Islands
22 Mar 2017	Lessons learned on school essay competition with MEHRD & schools

⁷³ SECSIP *Annual Report 2014*, p 69

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p 70

⁷⁵ *Ibid* p 72

⁷⁶ SECSIP, *Midterm Review*, p 21

included political party and other participants from seven Pacific Island countries. The conference recommendations included the establishment of TSMs to increase women's participation and representation. SECSIP followed this up with two-day gender training for all OSIEC staff. It also funded the participation of seven participants (PPIC, OEC, PM Office and political parties) at another regional conference on TSM held in PNG four months later. SECSIP also sponsored a study tour for the OSIEC Gender Focal Point (who was also the Training Officer) to Samoa during their 2016 elections to look at their TSM model.

The technical advisers in mid-to-late 2016 helped the OSIEC to develop a draft gender policy and reviewed all of the institutional procedures with a gender perspective. The policy was formally adopted in the SIEC commission meeting held in May 2017. With the OSIEC, SECSIP also organized a student essay competition on Women's Leadership and Political Participation in partnership with the MEHRD. Although the participation rate by the schools was disappointing, with only 41 essays received for the four age groups, the award ceremony was a high profile event. The Prime Minister was the key note speaker and winners were brought to Honiara and given computers. The project ensured the effort was covered by the national media and broadcast on television. This visibility and the tangible nature of the award are likely to increase school and student interest in the next competition. SECSIP also supported a lessons learned on the exercise which should help to increase its efficacy for 2017. Sustainability for the contest in the near term is doubtful without SECSIP driving the effort. Officials in MEHRD liked the contest but were waiting for SECSIP/OSIEC to initiate the next moves. Impact of the competition on the schools and participating students is unknown as follow up data has not been collected.

In 2015, OSIEC/SECSIP met with women's organizations and leaders in five provinces to discuss the development of an action plan targeting women's leadership and gender awareness raising. This ultimately resulted in the issuance of the sub-grants for women's participation (Table 7). Some of the grantees were well-known CSOs that have run similar programmes for other projects and donors, while others were less known. In this, some of the grantees had been trained as TOT by UN Women in 2013 on transformational leadership, and they used those trainers and materials to help implement their micro-grant activities.

The CSOs used different mediums to send the messages. These included face-to-face community meetings with the expectation that some participants would repeat the information in other communities, a national radio programme and radio spots, forums and school visits. One was a pilot Communications For Development (C4D) project that uses communication for social change that links the voices of marginalized persons with upstream policy dialogue. The objectives for the SECSIP funded microproject were more modest, but it still expected to change people's behavior through the videotaping of stories of women's leadership and uploading them onto an interactive app. It will be interesting to see if this effort is able to make that type of a change.

Not all of the activities were completed as of the time of this Final Evaluation so their results are yet unknown. In interviews, some felt the activities in the capital were done with persons who had already attended many forums and workshops, while others thought the reach out to isolated communities were one-off efforts that would have limited effectiveness.

The subgrants seemed to be a good addition, however, care needs to be taken to ensure that they contribute directly to the objectives of the project and are incorporated into the larger programmatic effort to strengthen the electoral process and women's participation and leadership in those processes. There also needs to be sufficient follow up with the participants, and synergies with other efforts that can increase their reach and effectiveness. As an example, Vois Blo Mere targeted 20 teachers in Honiara for one of their transformational leadership trainings, seeing teachers as agent of change. If information on the school awareness pilot and essay contest were included in their workshop, it could help raise awareness among the participants of these school initiatives and expanded their reach and effectiveness for the 2017 efforts.

Box 7: Best Practices

- *Using an electoral cycle approach to help the electoral processes in the Solomon Islands*
- *Embedding SECSIP staff within the institution they are assisting so that they are able to work with the EMB's staff and interact on a daily basis.*
- *Using a team building approach for training, such as the 2014 training for ROs which was done in the capital for the first time. This gave them the opportunity to meet and develop relationships with OSIEC management and other ROs.*
- *Collaborating with other efforts to strengthen and monitor project efforts, such as collaborating with the Australian Civilian Corps officers in each province to monitor and mentor RO training among other things.*
- *Commissioning a comprehensive voter awareness survey that provided representative, disaggregated data similar to a KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) for use as a baseline, to set targets and to be able to strategically target efforts.*
- *Fielding of highly qualified and experienced consultants for potentially sensitive and divisive topics such as electoral reform and political party development*
- *Maintaining warm and constructive relationships with the institutions assisted, other electoral assistance efforts, SIG, development partners and civil society.*

Linkages with UN Women and other efforts to support women's leadership and equality seemed limited to some information sharing and joint participation in some of the workshops and election-era efforts. Increasing programmatic synergies and planning with UN Women, especially for the efforts to support women candidates and reforms in the lead up to the 2018/2019 elections, could help strengthen the efforts of both SECSIP and UN Women.

The M&E aspects for gender activities supported by the project were not well developed and most



information is anecdotal. From the interviews, efforts likely increased the awareness of OSIEC staff on gender issues and ensured gender issues were incorporated into post 2015 OSIEC documents. Results beyond that are not apparent, especially at the outcome level. This is due in part to the activity-based nature of output implementation, the intermittent nature of the gender advisors' contracts and the fact that gender was not consistently mainstreamed throughout the project or dealt with in a programmatic and systematic way. However, it is also due to the cultural norms and the general lack of knowledge on equal rights and the rights of women and other disadvantaged groups. Although surveys show that the large majority of persons think women can be as good politicians as men (ranging from a low of 75% in the Western Province to a high of 91% in Makira-Ulawa)⁷⁷ this has not translated into equal opportunities or representation by women.

Project efforts could result in the recruitment of more women electoral workers for the 2018/2019 elections and perhaps at higher levels. It could

⁷⁷ Sustieno, Op Cit, p 27

also result in more women candidates running for office. Time will tell as this will not be known until the next electoral period approaches. However, in the context, the more consistently engaged the project can remain with the issue, the greater the likelihood for higher level results.

As with the other outputs, sustainability of the activities and capacity building efforts with the OSIEC is an issue. The experienced OSIEC Gender Focal Point has left the institution and the efforts are being continued by the national consultant and the OSIEC Media Officer, who is likely also covering all of the areas handled by the former training/gender focal point since that post is still vacant. Nevertheless, the remaining staff were part of the 2015 staff training and the OSIEC now has a gender policy in place that can be used as a reference by staff for the future. It also has improved internal procedures that address gender equity issues, including for the recruiting of election staff. It seems unlikely that the essay competition or school voter education components would continue without the project driving and financing the efforts due to the limited levels of ownership shown by the MEHRD and the limited capacity of the OSIEC.

3.2. SECSIP design and management

3.2.1 Project design

The project design provided the framework for an integrated programme of assistance focused on strengthening the ‘electoral cycle.’ It was based on a 2011 request from the SIEC Chairman for UN assistance to implement its 2011-2015 operational plan.⁷⁸ This was the first time that the SIG had requested UN assistance for the elections. Previously UNDP had coordinated international observers (2010) and the UN had fielded an Election Expert Monitoring Team (2001). SECSIP’s design was based on the findings of the NAM subsequently done by the EAD and UNDP which approved the provision of UN elections assistance to the Solomon Islands. SECSIP also intended to contribute to the *National Development Plan of the Solomon Islands* (Box 8).⁷⁹

The use of an electoral cycle approach for an elections assistance project is a best practice. This allows for the project to work on sensitive issues, such as electoral law reform, and development issues, such as capacity building for electoral staff, in the quieter times between elections. The design’s framework for assistance was holistic and covers the essential tasks needed for a strengthened EMB, electoral system and voter participation. However, the design seemed to rely on the ‘cycle approach’ for its theory of change, while a cycle approach only means that the assistance is targeted at the process over time rather than provided punctually for a topical event such as an election.

Box 8: SECSIP Relevance to the NDP Goals

The project design was directly relevant to supporting the Solomon Islands achieve its electoral goals as stated in its *National Development Plan 2011 to 2020 Vision: A United and Vibrant Solomon Islands*. This vision looked to increase the effectiveness, reliability and efficiency of the electoral processes. It looked to do this through enhancing the structure and capacity of the Electoral Commission to maintain accurate electoral registers and manage credible elections; strengthen representative democracy, including the participation of women. It also planned to increase voter awareness, facilitate participation by political parties and candidates in elections through relevant laws and regulations, revise the integrity bill/political bill and where appropriate, incorporate the provincial government system within its coverage.

The SECSIP design remained relevant as well to the subsequent National Development Plan 2016 – 2035 which finds reforms as the “key to successful implementation of the National Development Strategy which underlies the importance of good governance and public sector reforms.” Intended for review are the Political Party Integrity Act and Electoral Act. It also calls for the “full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making” for women.

⁷⁸ UN, *Electoral Needs Assessment Mission, Solomon Islands*, p 3

⁷⁹ SIG, *National Development Plan 2011 to 2020 Vision: A United and Vibrant Solomon Islands* and the *National Development Plan 2016 – 2035*, pps 2, 48 and 71

The project document provides a description of some of the problems found in the broader electoral and political environment, but does not clearly provide the rationale for the choice of areas to assist or how the intended activities would lead to the expected changes (outcomes). The original document is missing a complete results and resources framework with the expected progress indicators and targets. A more complete results and resources framework was provided in the 2015 project revision, as well as the programmatic additions of the PPIC and gender mainstreaming outputs. But the amendment also does not articulate a theory of change to anchor the changes or the original framework.

The original project document states that it did not intend to address the root causes of the problems it outlined, but instead intended to contribute towards strengthening the broader enabling environment through linkages with other projects dealing on those issues. If this happened, it was not evident at the time of this final evaluation. The actual outcome for the project, *enhanced electoral inclusiveness of the Solomon Islands*, is only articulated once in the project document and once in the revisions.⁸⁰ The ultimate purpose for the project is also listed once as to “*help the Solomon Islands and SIEC strengthen their democratic processes in accordance with their own needs.*”⁸¹ Missing in this are references to the expected standards. It is also notable that the project revision eliminated the overarching purposes for Outputs 1 and 4. These were “*to strengthen the inclusiveness and integrity of the electoral cycle*” (Output 1) and to “*contribute to a stronger electoral commission and representative democracy*” (Output 4). Although this was done for ‘simplicity and clarity’, articulating standards in a project document and results framework is important. As noted in UNDP’s guide for electoral assistance, “*UN electoral assistance has two primary goals: to assist Member States in their efforts to hold credible and legitimate elections in accordance with internationally recognized standards; and to contribute to building, in the recipient country, a sustainable institutional capacity to organize democratic elections that are genuine and periodic and have the full confidence of the contending parties and the electorate.*”⁸²

It was also evident in the findings of the Midterm Review and this Final Evaluation that the design did not adequately factor in the Solomon Island context and the limited nature of the partner EMB institutions outside of the electoral period. Providing a comprehensive capacity building effort for an institution with limited means and a handful of persons, in addition to the bilateral technical assistance provided through ESSP and intermittent support by the AEC, was unrealistic and out of scale. This likely built (or continued) a dependence on assistance rather than having assistance work themselves out of a job which is what is intended. The design also duplicated areas that were already being assisted by ESSP. Clarity of roles between projects, beyond SECSIP’s funding and procurement roles, is still an issue. This will be further complicated if the AEC provides additional technical assistance.

The design was supply side and in implementation lacked the linkages with the advocacy and demand side that could have strengthened the overall efforts for reforms, such as independence of the commission, adequate resourcing for the OSIEC, a career path for staff, electoral reform and increased women’s participation.

The original project budget was over-estimated, in part because the Government provided additional funding for training in the elections. The positive result is that this funding has carried the project far beyond its original anticipated end date of 2015. This has been beneficial, especially in supporting the electoral reform process which only gained momentum after the original end date of the project.

⁸⁰ SECSIP, *Project Document*, p 8, *Revision* p 2

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p 12

⁸² UNDP, *UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide*, p 4

3.3.2 Programme implementation and management

The project had a late start up, funding, and difficulties filling positions. It was not signed until almost a year after the NAM and the CTA did not start until little more than a year before the 2014 elections date. Donor funding also arrived late, and the project was started up with funds advanced by UNDP.⁸³ The initial CTA was also out of the country for periods of time, and the gaps were filled with a series of short term electoral management experts. All were experienced and knowledgeable, however this affected the continuity of the project and its programmatic coherence as the CTA was the primary advisor and manager for the project.

The outputs selected provided a broad framework to support an electoral process, and adding in the PPIC and political party system provided entry points for more strategically focused assistance. There was some programmatic logic behind the choices for most activities, both in the design and during implementation despite the project's lack of a theory of change. However, the programmatic aspects were largely undeveloped, and implementation remained mainly at the activity level which is where most of the results are found. The project was also implemented narrowly, focused on the activities and technical assistance. This is insufficient when the problems are larger than technical. The Midterm Review consistently raised the need for more attention to the broader contextual issues and to electoral reform by the project and UNDP senior management in order to increase the project's relevance and effectiveness.⁸⁴ Current UNDP and project management are more active in this area, and especially UNDP in its peacebuilding activities which could provide a model and lessons learned for more strategic engagement for SECSIP II.

A focus on electoral integrity is important for an elections assistance project. The elimination of the strategic purpose for Outputs 1 and 4 in the project's revisions is of concern as well as the narrow nature of project implementation. Electoral integrity was only marginally mentioned in project reporting and efforts. Yet, electoral and political corruption is a major issue according to observer reporting and interviews. There were several issues noted during this evaluation. One was the media allegations of EMB officials selling politicians the names of persons who had voted from them. These were allegedly obtained from the ballots stored in the warehouses. It is possible to connect voters to their votes because the counterfoil serial numbers from the ballots are marked in the voter registry against the voter who received that ballot. Observers have repeatedly recommended that this practice be stopped as it can compromise the secrecy of the vote which is a fundamental principle for a free and fair election. UNDP and its development partners raised this issue at a recent Board meeting and the Government said it would investigate. As of the time of this evaluation there was no information on if an investigation had been launched. SECSIP does intend to have a senior electoral consultant assess the SIEC procedures in relation to the secrecy of the vote and to make recommendations to strengthen the secrecy of the vote and present this to the SIEC and the Electoral Task Force. Another issue noted was the theft of the project-funded television from inside the OSIEC (since returned) and the rifling of some of the project staff's desks, allegedly by an EMB staff member. These female project members felt intimidated and uneasy at work. This was reported and the locks changed but as of the time of the Evaluation field work, nothing else had been done. These types of issues require immediate attention and resolution, whether it vindicates the persons or results in prosecution. International assistance cannot make a difference if there is no accountability for actions in the institutions and processes assisted.

The issue of project ownership was noted throughout project reports and the Midterm Review. The Review discussed the "non-participation" of the SIG and SIEC in project board and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings and the fact that the CEO had not attended any project board meetings

⁸³ SECSIP, *Midterm Review*, p 9. One of the reasons for the late start for the CTA was that the original person selected did not accept UNDP's offer and the post had to be re-advertised.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p 1

in 2014.⁸⁵ This was a significant indicator that needed to have been more aggressively addressed at the policy level at the time by the SIG, UNDP and development partners as recommended by the Review. Not only was the OSIEC the main partner for the project, it was an election year when the project was actively engaged in helping that institution to deliver the elections. Although the CEO has since left, remaining OSIEC staff are only nominally engaged in the project in areas that are not perceived as their institutional priorities⁸⁶ or for issues that are “*not in line with the readiness of the commission.*”⁸⁷

A contributing factor to the ownership issue is the limited number of OSIEC staff and the larger number of experts.⁸⁸ Even with the best of intentions, this is an unhealthy balance where the OSIEC has withdrawn in some areas (lack of ownership) and the experts have stepped in to ensure the work is done (capacity replacement). Although the reasons for this are evident, and justified in some cases by the context, there needs to be a better balance between the level of assistance and the scale of the institution supported in the years between the elections. As noted by one, “*I learned a lot from (one) advisor, but there are too many of them, I can’t work with that many people at the same time. What are their terms of reference? It seems like they are duplicating our work. Local staff feel like we are losing ownership of the office itself.*” This is also a call for the Government to step up and provide the institution with the human and financial resources required for it to effectively function and fulfill its role as an important state institution and indispensable element of a representational system of governance.

This also raises the issue of coordination which was also noted consistently in project reporting, the Midterm Review, the 2015 NAM and in the Final Evaluation interviews. It is best summed up by the Midterm Review: the “*lack of coordinated strategic direction to international assistance to the OSIEC meant the total sum of international assistance was not as effective as it could be.... There was a series of activities and ad hoc advice supplied by all advisors, though technically sound, was fragmented and un-strategic.*”⁸⁹ This situation was largely unchanged at the time of this Final Evaluation. The ESSP and SECSIP were more used to working together which masked somewhat the actual depth of the coordination issues. However, a more regular working-level coordination mechanism and joint planning process needs to be put in place that links the two assistance projects, and the AEC, especially if it scales up its assistance to the SIEC. A similar mechanism also needs to be put into place with the two projects and the OSIEC that meets routinely and more frequently than the larger TAC group to undertake joint planning, strategizing and consensus building.

At the time of the Final Evaluation field work, everyone seemed to be waiting for the electoral reforms to be enacted so that the OSIEC as an institution could be strengthened through a merger with the PPIC. This seemed to be near and may help with the issues of the scale and provide for a more substantial institution as a counterpart, especially with the gearing up expected in the next year for the 2018/2019 elections. But for a project that goes beyond the next election, a more balanced approach is needed for the time in between the election events, one that is more in line with the scale of the institution.

The choice of a direct execution modality for the project was appropriate in the context but more efficient project management and monitoring systems are needed. The project document had a long list of planned activities and a very small management and advisory team (Box 2). The initial

⁸⁵ Ibid, p 16

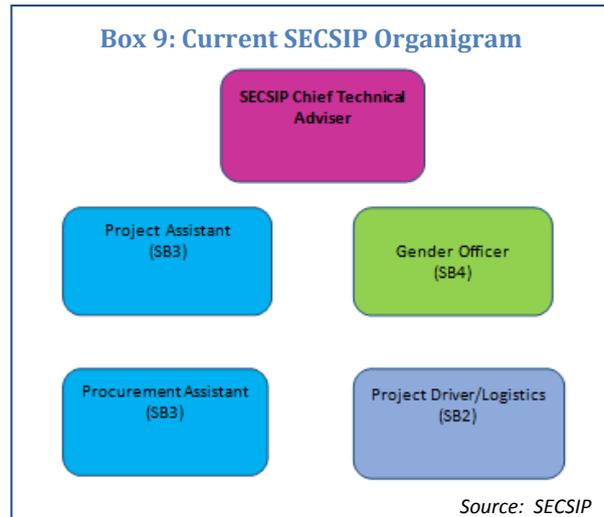
⁸⁶ Institutional priorities were expressed as electoral reforms, support for OSIEC operations (vehicles, operating funds), updating the BVR and raising the professional grades and remuneration level for staff. CSO grants were not perceived as a priority or as a cost-effective way to reach voters. The rationale was that the reforms needed to be done first, then the education.

⁸⁷ Staff interviews.

⁸⁸ The term expert is used to mean SECSIP/ESSP/AEC staff, experts, consultants and contractors.

⁸⁹ SECSIP, *Midterm Review*, p 22

CTA had a compressed timeframe in which to work and deliver support for the 2014 elections, and the current CTA has been consumed by the administrative efforts for the activities undertaken. UNDP has stringent quality controls and administrative requirements, all of which take a considerable level of effort. Before changes made in 2016, administration was also complicated by the fact that the UNDP office in the Solomon Islands was part of the UNDP Pacific Regional Office which operates out of Fiji. This added another layer of administrative approvals, and processing times although UNDP Solomon Islands always had the authority to directly recruit consultants and issue contracts.



The CTA appears to have the proper levels of delegation of authority that are needed for efficient management of the project which includes an electoral basket fund that is used to finance workshops, procure materials and hire expertise. In the BVR and electoral period, the project procured a large amount of materials. Interview of the project staff from that time noted late payments and deliveries, all of which affected the efficiency of the project as well as its effectiveness and relevance. Timely payments and procurements are a necessity for a time bound project such as electoral assistance. UNDP had a fast track mechanism for electoral projects that it could authorize before this was mainstreamed in 2017 for all procurements. It is unclear at this point in time if this was requested and used before then.

The situation at the UNDP county office has improved according to interviews with the change of UNDP management and the reorganization and strengthening of the office. This is still ongoing. In the interim, most of those interviewed said the processes were still slow for the payment of venues, materials, participant travel and other costs. UNDP attributed some of this to late planning and decision making by the project and/or the national counterparts which did not leave enough time for the administrative processes. Consultants felt their invoices were submitted in a timely manner, but were paid late. The CTA has been advancing her own funds, at her own risk, in some cases to cover some of the local costs to avoid having activities cancelled or delayed. The project does not have its own finance person and the project's procurement assistant also has other UNDP assigned responsibilities. However, UNDP states that other UNDP procurement staff also chip in to support the project as needed. SECSIP staff are also split between the UNDP office and the OSIEC which contributes to fragmentation and blurred reporting lines.

The new project currently being discussed anticipates strengthening the project management unit. This is expected to include a P3 international project manager which should help to alleviate much of the administrative burden for the CTA and increase project efficiency. There is already a new programme assistance recruited and a short-term administrative assistant (Box 9). The CTA has started a weekly meeting to share information, however with a larger staff, coordination within the project should be strengthened and the weekly meeting expanded to include the relevant UNDP programmatic and administrative offices so that they are aware of upcoming activities and can help develop programmatic synergies (for the programme side) and plan accordingly (for the administrative side). This can help to ensure more cohesive planning and information sharing within the SECSIP team and facilitate project management and monitoring. The project should also ensure the UNDP governance office and country management are informed of critical issues and activities and advised on areas where UNDP can be supportive at the policy level.

SECSIP relations with its development partners appeared to be good. Project materials were appropriately branded. Partners requested however more advance notice for project activities and events so that they could arrange to attend.

Overall, the project has been able to hire good technical experts to help it implement the project. Some of these are well known, senior-level advisors with extensive experience supporting electoral and political process in complex contexts. In the Solomon's context, they are valuable assets that could be used strategically by Government partners and the project to advance the policy dialogue and to help develop mechanisms to strengthen the electoral and political processes.

The CSO subgrant process has been slow, mainly due to the limited capacity of some of the grantees to provide adequate reporting and receipts for their first tranche of funding. This is needed for the release of their second tranche. UNDP and the project tried to mitigate this by providing two days of training on administrative issues and reporting, but some grantees obviously need more consistent mentoring and monitoring which is difficult with the current level of project staffing. Slow feedback and/or approvals on the SIG side have also affected project efficiency as well as its effectiveness. A current example is the contract to revamp the SIEC website. It was behind schedule because the expert had difficulty meeting with the OSIEC to get approvals for his plans.

3.3.3. Programme monitoring and reporting

Project reporting was generally timely and regular. There are annual reports for every year since 2013, as well as some quarterly and monthly reports. These provide a good overview of the project's activities, organized by outputs. Current reports provide text boxes with project progress and follow-up actions needed which is a useful summary of activity results. The reports also provide information on project management. The 2014 report, which includes information on the BVR and elections, is the most comprehensive. It provided some disaggregated data about training participants, lists of items procured for the BVR and elections, and the type and number of voter education materials produced. It also provided expenditure data by outputs and for some components within them, such as voter education materials. Providing expenditure data is an important element of performance reporting and for understanding how the project funding was used and if the efforts were cost-effective for the results reported. That report was also very frank about the constraints encountered and lessons learned.

Subsequent reports are not as comprehensive and could be significantly strengthened by including: the expenditures by output for that year and previous years; reporting on progress made against targets from the results and resource framework (in this case from 2015 since this element was

Box 10: Lessons learned

- *Lack of joint programming and information sharing* with other assistance efforts for the same institution *leads to confusion and disjointed efforts*, adversely affecting potential performance of both projects.
- Electoral assistance is provided within a time bound process. *Recruitment of staff, procurement and payments require timely processing* for a project to be able to maintain its relevance.
- *Technical solutions alone will not resolve problems that are political in nature and require policy engagement. Projects should provide electoral political analysis to facilitate such engagement and inform programming.*
- *The scope of assistance needs to be in scale with the size and capacity of the institutions being assisted or it crowds out local capacity and marginalizes local ownership.*
- *Gender equality and women's political participation is a larger issue than elections management and needs relationships and synergies with relevant institutions and partners.*
- *Supply side reform assistance needs programmatic synergies with advocacy efforts to complement and supplement the effort and to help push the processes forward.*
- *Reliance on a single person (CTA) as the main advisor, project manager and monitor is unrealistic and affects the quality of work for all of those tasks. It also heightens the risk for the project if something happens to that person or s/he takes leave.*

incomplete in the original project document); providing disaggregated data by gender/location/organization for participants/trainees etc; and by aggregating the data to show the total amount of persons reached by the output and project. All of this information is important and needed to assess project reach, performance and results.

Project archives are incomplete and/or earlier SECSIP documents are difficult to find at this point in time. This was attributed to the changes in project personnel and the quality of the previous administrative staff. There may have been more done on project management, monitoring and reporting than what was visible during this evaluation. However, with the information available, the project's M&E aspects need significant strengthening

The project did monitor the implementation of its activities with its staff and consultants. It also made efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of some of the activities undertaken. However, this has not been easy. For instance, during the lead up to the 2014 elections, SECSIP/OSIEC arranged with the Australian civilian officers assigned to each provincial office to report back on the quality of the trainings done by the Returning Officers. This was a good idea from an elections management perspective as well as from a project evaluation perspective. However, the annual report noted the significant amount of effort that had gone into developing the evaluation protocols which apparently were completed and returned. However, it goes on to state that this qualitative and quantitative data was not collated or analyzed which negated the entire effort.⁹⁰

The current CSO grants include a reporting table for their efforts and the project undertook a monitoring effort with the OSEIC Media Officer to visit the activities, some of which took place outside of the capital. The reports are largely anecdotal but provide an overview of what they found during their visits. A questionnaire was also included in the school pilot effort for students to mark if they thought they had understood the material presented. These are useful first steps and generate lessons learned that can strengthen the activities. However, they should also look to capture the effectiveness of the efforts. This could be with the addition of a few questions to test knowledge and attitudes before and after a training or workshop. This would allow for comparisons between the two that could show changes in the levels of knowledge as well as in confidence.

SECSIP does not appear to have systematically monitored progress towards achieving its project outcomes beyond completion of the planned output activities. This needs to be significantly strengthened in the next project. Each of its efforts also appears to have been done largely by the person working on that activity. The project could benefit from having one of its team members made responsible to ensure that the M&E data is collected and aggregated, that progress against targets is analyzed, and that the information is disseminated and archived.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

1. *The Strengthening the Electoral Cycle Project in the Solomon Islands was needed and highly relevant within the Solomon Island context and timeframe.* The project started when the previous larger multilateral electoral assistance effort was ending and filled a demonstrated need. The areas targeted—voter registration, electoral administration, voter education, electoral reform and gender—were key components of strengthening the country's democratic processes. These are still areas of need for the 2018/2019 electoral cycle.
2. *SECSIP helped the Solomon Islands to have a more accurate voter registry and better administered elections in 2014. It has also helped to ensure the functioning of the SIEC/OSIEC in the period between elections and to inform and facilitate the current reform*

⁹⁰ SECSIP, *Annual Report 2014*, p 48

dialogue. These are important achievements and support the goals of the country's National Development Plan and SDG 16. Progress towards the NDP and SDG 5 goals of strengthened women's participation and equity were minimal. Results beyond this are difficult to determine. The current reform effort has the potential to raise the level of results if it is completed as envisioned.

3. *SECSIP was strategically positioned within the Solomon Islands context by its cycle nature, purpose, and the convening authority of UNDP and its ability to facilitate dialogue.⁹¹ Its strategic value though was not adequately leveraged to support the achievement of the project's intended outcomes and was diminished by the narrow nature of project implementation and its activity-level focus, most notably for the efforts needed to "strengthen the inclusiveness and integrity of the electoral cycles" and to achieve a "stronger electoral commission and representational democracy."⁹²*
4. *Support for the SIEC in the period between the elections was out of scale and sync for the needs and nature of the institution. Only so much capacity building can be done directly with an institution with few staff, unfilled vacancies and limited means. The immediate needs in the post-electoral context were to strengthen the policy and institutional framework for the SIEC through the promotion of overdue reforms (independence and restructuring) and increasing SIG attention to addressing the SIEC's institutional needs (funding, staffing). This disparity contributed to the issues of limited ownership, capacity replacement and activity-based results.*
5. *Electoral assistance to the SIEC/OSIEC needed better planning and coordination at strategic or technical levels. Intermittent information sharing through formal or ad hoc meetings was not sufficient to develop a cohesive, strategically targeted and effective effort among the assistance efforts or with the SIEC and other projects working in related areas. This reduced the effectiveness and potential impact of all efforts. The exception was the initial work done on TSMs to increase gender equity in elected office, which appeared to be a better coordinated effort.*
6. *SECSIP efficiency and effectiveness was hampered by its limited staffing and slow administrative processes. These issues affected the project from its late start through to its end. UNDP's ongoing reorganization and intention to strengthen project staffing for SECSIP II addresses some of these issues, but continuing attention is needed, especially in regard to information sharing and reporting lines within the project and with UNDP, and for timely planning, processing and payments.*
7. *Outcome level results are likely the cumulative effect of all assistance given the significant levels of support that have been given to the electoral processes over time. Attribution to SECSIP is difficult in many cases without better data and because many efforts were jointly supported by the ESSP advisers. SECSIP's results may be greater than what was visible during this Final Evaluation but are difficult to identify because of the limited performance data available beyond activity outputs.*

4.2. Recommendations

1. *Continued support to the institutions and principles of strengthening the electoral processes in the Solomon Islands. Work still needs to be done to improve the quality of the electoral process, electoral administration, competition and representation, EMB oversight, political*

⁹¹ Such as the efforts done through its peacebuilding project which appears strategically developed and driven and includes engagement at all levels of government, including the Prime Minister's Office.

⁹² *SECSIP Project Document*, p 8

party accountability and the fairness of the electoral system among others. The project should also complete the work started on the reform process and help the state institutions implement those reforms.

2. *Clearly articulate the strategic vision for the project in the project documents and ensure that the project maintains that focus during implementation.* Ensure that all activities selected directly contribute towards achieving the strategic vision, and that this vision is shared by the partner institutions. Use the project's M&E plan to monitor progress towards achieving the strategic level outcomes as well as the implementation of outputs.
3. *Adopt a strategic and programmatic focus for project delivery* by synergizing project activities and building on activities to increase performance and contributions towards the higher level outcomes. Include synergies to other projects to extent project reach and strengthen effectiveness. Other projects could include: women's empowerment, civic education, transparency/accountability/anti-corruption, watchdog, media, parliament, justice, peacebuilding, public service, and reforms.
4. *Take ESSP and the planned AEC assistance into consideration in the design of SECSIP II and avoid duplication of efforts.* Strengthen coordination between technical assistance efforts and undertake joint work planning and strategy development for the duration of the assistance. Ensure design efforts for SECSIP II are inclusive and include the ESSP, OSIEC, PPIC and other actors to improve relevance and the longer term prospects for sustainable outcomes. Maintain the flexibility of the subgrant component but use it strategically to contribute to the higher level outcomes. Increase emphasis on the PPIC and strengthening the political party system. Ensure appropriate scale and scope of assistance to institutions according to the needs of the cycle and nature of the institution.
5. *Maximize UNDP's strategic advantage* including its ability to convene and provide a safe space for discussions to advance the policy dialogue and leverage the policy work being done through other projects, such as the peacebuilding project, to strengthen the electoral system and institutions. Link the policy dialogue and advocacy efforts for electoral reforms to the objectives of the SDGs and the national discussions on how to achieve those goals. In particular, for SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) which have the same objectives as SECSIP.
6. *Increase focus on the sustainability elements of assistance.* Avoid one-off efforts and supporting activities that create a dependence on external assistance for their continuity, including for large subgrants. Build an exit strategy into the follow on phase.
7. *Strengthen project management and M&E efforts.* The addition of a project manager for the follow on project should help relieve some of the immediate pressures. However, ensure timely attention to planning and to the financial and procurement needs of the project, especially for the upcoming elections period. Ensure systematic tracking and monitoring of project performance beyond achievement of activity outputs and develop adequate baselines, targets and indicators early on in the follow-on project.
8. *Provide opportunities for the GSI to reaffirm its commitment to improving the integrity of the electoral process and its administration,* and for the measures needed to ensure that integrity (legal reforms, electoral justice and the provision of adequate resources for the EMBs and processes).

Annex 1: Persons met

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Hearts of Hope

Ronnie, Director

Guadalcanal Council of Women

Alice, Board Member

Selena, Board Member

LTV Active

Jatogeva. Garu. News Editor. Media training participant

MASI

Levett, Bruce

Solomon Islands Association of Community Learning Centres

Tora, Lovelyn, Trainer for Project-funded sub-grant

Vois Blo Mere

Taekeni, Josephine, Director

GOVERNMENT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS

Ministry of Education

Lilio, Julie, Director for Community-based ECE and School Services

Paia, Rose, Curriculum Manager

Hoahora, Edwin, Chief Curriculum Officer, Senior Secondary

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade

Kenilorea, Peter Jr. Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Home Affairs

Palua, George Selwyn, Permanent Secretary

Royal Solomon Islands Police Force

Matanga, Juanita, Deputy Commissioner of Police, National Security and Operations Support

Solomon Islands Electoral Commission

Pero, Alphonsus, Acting Chief Electoral Officer

Bossoboe, Fredrick, Operations Officer and Acting Deputy Chief Electoral Officer

Paul, Philotea, Senior Media Officer

Asa, Danny, Policy and Research Officer

Dominique, Assistant Administrative Officer

Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Saitala, Mose, Chief Technical Adviser, Anti-corruption Programme

Futaiasi, Derek Gwali, Deputy Secretary to the Prime Minister

Office of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission

Hon Nasiu, Ajilon, Chairman, and Speaker of Parliament

Deve, Jeffrey Sade, Commissioner, also Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification

Sanga, Taeasi, Commissioner, former Clerk, Parliament

Political Parties Integrity Commission

Sir Paul Tovua, Chairman
Liloqula, Ruth, Commissioner
Barnaby, Consultant

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Australian Evaluation Team

Lanella, Therese, Evaluator of DFAT electoral assistance in the Pacific Region

Australian High Commission

Little, Alexandra, Second Secretary

Delegation of the European Union

Erangelidis, Iaonnis-Pavlos, Head of Department

Wara, Brenda Joy, Civil Society

Electoral Systems Strengthening Programme

Rigamoto, Walter, Legal Adviser

Morris, Stephen, Organizational Development Adviser

Whelan, Phil, Electoral Management Adviser

Strengthening the Electoral Cycle Project in Solomon Islands

Rabade, Olga, Chief Technical Adviser

Chahine Hamila, BVR Expert (by Skype)

Dennis, George Baemoana, Website Consultant

Kole, Deborah, Gender Adviser

Palmer, Ednal, Media Consultant

Raymond, John, Driver and Logistician

Saelea, Crystal, Procurement

Valenzuela, Carlos, Electoral Systems Consultant (by Skype)

Yeo, Hyemin, Project Assistant

Earlier staff and consultants:

Ali, Muhammad Rizwan, BVR and IT expert (by Email)

Attrill, Ross, Training Expert (by Skype)

Barty, Millicent, Graphic Designer Consultant (by Email)

Bhattacharya, Navanita, Gender Expert (by Email)

Checkana, Lily, Voter Awareness Consultant

Deveaux, Kevin, Political Party Training (by Skype)

Elbling, Rudolf, Former Chief Technical Adviser (by telephone)

Ellis, Michael, Senior Expert on Election systems (by email)

Fritz, Deryck, Programme Management Expert (Acting CTA) (by Skype)

Galarce, Pablo, Programme Management Expert (Acting CTA) (by Skype)

McDermott, Ronan, Senior Voter Registration Advisor (by Skype)

McNair, Ben, Civic, Voter Education and Media Advisor (by Skype)

Robertson, Lawrence, Gender Consultant (by telephone)

Tora, Lovelyn, Former Project Assistant

United Nations Development Programme

Kubota, Azusa, Country Manager, UNDP, Solomon Islands

Waetara, Jane, Governance Team Leader, UNDP Solomon Islands

Zoric, Lea, Gender Advisor, Policy Analyst, Electoral Support, Inclusive Political Processes, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP NY (by Skype)

Finley, Simon, Regional Electoral Advisor, Bangkok (by Skype)

POLITICAL PARTIES

People's First Party

Taekeni, Josephine, Member

Democratic Alliance Party

Honimae, Leban Trevor, General Secretary

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Australian Government

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- *National Dialogue on Sustaining Peace and Stability in Solomon Islands, Presentation by Ms. Osnat Lubrani, Resident Coordinator, UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji*
- *National Women's Summit, Women Peace and Security – 10 – 12 October, Presentation*
- *Opening Remarks Guadalcanal's Dialogue , Notes for Speech by Azusa Kubota, UNDP Country Manager, UN Joint Presence Office Manager*
- *UN Coordination and Briefing Meeting, Prime Minister & UNDP APRP, Note to File, 27 January 2017*
- *UNDP Remarks deliver by Ms. Azusa Kubota, UNDP Country Manager and Head of UN Joint Presence Office, Solomon Islands, at the opening of the Western Province Dialogue, 23 – 24 May, 2017*

Village Technology Trust, *Promoting Women in Elected Leadership with Participatory Media*, <http://villagetechnology.sb/vtt-project/promoting-women-in-elected-leadership-with-participatory-media-bellona/>

World Bank, *Worldwide Governance Indicators, Country Data Report for Solomon Islands, 1996 – 2014*

Annex 4: Evaluation methodology

Final Evaluation, Strengthening the Electoral Cycle Project in the Solomon Islands Inception Report

11 May 2017

1. Introduction

This Evaluation Inception Report was developed based on: the Terms of Reference (TOR) prepared by UNDP Solomon Islands for this independent final evaluation of the Project “Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands” (SECSIP); information provided by UNDP Solomon Islands; UNDP evaluation guidelines; and, an initial review of the project documents and reporting.

1.1. Purpose for the Final Evaluation

The purpose for this final evaluation is to provide an independent evaluation of the SECSIP which is expected to be used to improve future electoral assistance. The SECSIP was a four year (2013-2017) USD 8.4 million project intended to strengthen electoral inclusiveness through improved voter registration, more effective electoral administration, strengthened capacity for voter education and electoral reform. Specifically this evaluation will:

1. Assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the SECSIP interventions taking into consideration the project objectives, country context and cross-cutting issues such as gender;
2. Assess project contributions towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions;⁹³
3. Review the SECSIP’s design, management and implementation, and identify lessons learned; and,
4. Make recommendations to improve future electoral assistance programming.

1.1 Background and context

SECSIP was developed in 2012 and was intended to address problems identified in the 2010 general elections. It was amended in 2015 to extend the project’s end date, refine the outputs and add in a gender mainstreaming output. Financial support for the programme was provided by the Australian Government (USD 4,391,468) and the European Union (EU, EUR 3.5 million) and UNDP (USD 500,000).

The original project outcome was “Enhanced Electoral Inclusiveness of the Solomon Islands.”⁹⁴ This was amended in the project’s 2015 revision to reflect UNDP’s Country Programme Outcome 5.1 “Regional, national, local and traditional government systems are strengthened and exercise the principles of good governance, respecting and upholding human rights, especially women’s rights, in line with international standards.”⁹⁵ To accomplish these goals, SECSIP focused on support to four original and one added outputs. These objectives were:

1. Sustainable voter registration system created to strengthen the inclusiveness and integrity of the electoral cycle. Revised to: Sustainable voter registration system created.

⁹³ The SECSIP predates the SDGs which came into effect in January 2016. Nevertheless, if a contribution is found during the assessment to the relevant SDGs, it will be noted in the Evaluation Report.

⁹⁴ SECSIP Project Document, p 8

⁹⁵ SECSIP Project Revision, p 16

2. More efficient and effective administrative procedures designed and implemented for the Solomon Islands Election Commission (SIEC)⁹⁶ to fulfill its mandate. Revised to: Enhanced capacity of the SIEC to manage an electoral cycle.
3. National authorities and civil society organizations have better capacity to train and educate the population on voter awareness and civic engagement.
4. Electoral and legal reform supported to contribute to a stronger electoral commission and representative democracy. Revised to: Electoral and legal reform supported.
5. Capacity of SIEC to promote gender mainstreaming in its institutional practices and the electoral process (added in revision).

The project is executed through a direct implementation modality (DIM) under the guidance of the SIEC and Project Board, with technical advice through a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA). Implementation was supported by a Project Management Unit (PMU) headed by an Operations Manager. The project was funded through a cost-sharing election basket fund. A midterm project review was done in 2015.

1.2 Scope of the final evaluation

This independent evaluation will:

- Undertake a review of relevant documents, including the Project Documents, Midterm Review Report, progress reports, project products and electoral observation mission reports.
- Undertake discussions with project partners, Government and non-government agencies, project stakeholders and others working in the sector on the project design, implementation, performance, challenges, lessons learned, best practices and results.
- Assess the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and contribution of the project interventions taking into consideration the project objectives, country context and UNDP's comparative advantages.
- Assess the efficiency of project implementation and management and the factors that contributed to effectiveness (or ineffectiveness).
- Assess qualitative and quantitative data available on the results achieved and progress made, especially in terms of its contribution to the development of SIEC, other participating actors and the electoral cycle in the Solomon Islands.
- Identify the factors that facilitated or hindered the achievement of results and the lessons learned during implementation.
- Validate preliminary evaluation findings through interviews and discussions with key informants.
- Provide lessons learned and recommendations for future programming.

2 Methodology

2.1 Evaluation criteria and questions

With the evaluations scope detailed in Section 1.2 in mind, the evaluator will seek to answer the following questions:

⁹⁶ The term of SIEC is used in this Inception Report to mean the entire EMB (commissioners and secretariat) for ease of reference purposes.

Outcome	Main Questions	Sub- Questions
Sustainable voter registration system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the quality of the voter registry at the start of the project and now? Were the changes a result of the project? • Did the changes to the registry increase voter/party confidence in the electoral process? • Does the SIEC have the capacity to manage and update a biometric voter registration system? Is it sustainable? • What are the remaining needs for voter registration? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was there a reduction in the number of complaints on the voter registry? • What is the status of the voter registry today? What are the remaining issues? Is the system appropriate to the context? • Is disaggregated data available for the registry? • How is the integrity of the registry maintained? • Which staff were trained by the project for voter registration and maintenance of the registry and how relevant was the training to their needs and those of the SIEC?
Capacity of the SIEC to manage an electoral cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the capacity of the SIEC increased since the start of the project? In what ways? Why? Was this a result of the project assistance? • What are the remaining needs? • How independent is the SIEC? Does this affect its ability to deliver credible elections? • What was the level of ownership of the SIEC in the efforts supported by UNDP? • What infrastructure was improved under the project? Was this relevant to the needs and priorities of electoral administration and the electoral process? • How effective was the Elections Taskforce? Why or why not? Did it include all necessary actors? • Has the SIEC coordination, communications and planning abilities improved? In what ways? Was this a result of the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the strategic/operational plans supported by the project and did this help to improve the administrative capacity of the SIEC and quality of election administration? • Which staff were trained by the project? Did they think it was useful, relevant and increased their capacity? • How were study tours used and were they appropriate, effective and generated results afterwards? • Was capacity replacement an issue? • How sustainable are the gains made by the SIEC in terms of increased administrative capacity? • How coordinated was the effort with the work of other technical assistance in the SIEC? • What was the level of electoral conflict and was this adequately factored into the project design and implementation?
Capacity of national authorities and CSOs for voter awareness and civic engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the project able to increase the capacity of the SIEC, other national authorities and CSOs to train and educate the population on voter awareness and civic engagement? In what ways? What were the factors that contributed to the success/hindrane of this objective? • Was there an increased in voter/civic education activities in the Solomon Islands since the start of the project? Was this a result of the project? • Has there been an increase in voter understanding and awareness of the electoral process and what it entails? Has there been a reduction in the number of spoilt ballots, increase in turnout? • Have any changes been noted in the political behaviour of voters from the situation noted in the 2012 project document (traditional patronage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the most relevant and effective voter education efforts used? • What was the reach of the voter education activities? • Did voter education efforts show results for different groups, such as women, youth, others? • How effective was the subgrant programme for CSOs? Did this result in appropriate and effective voter education programmes? Did it help increase the institutional capacity and reach of the CSOs? • Did the project provide any training to CSOs to manage their grants and/or voter education activities? Was this needed? If provided, was it effective? • How effective was work with the media? Was it sufficient? • What is the status of the school education

Outcome	Main Questions	Sub- Questions
	relationships and lack of deep national identity). What are the factors for the change or lack of change?	efforts? Will the Ministry of Education adopt this?
Electoral and legal reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What electoral reforms were supported by the project? Did this help improve the processes and electoral administration? • Have the electoral process and citizen trust in the processes improved since 2012? Which changes can be attributed to the project? • What reforms still need to be made? • Did the project contribute to an improved enabling environment for the electoral cycle and more inclusive and democratic process? • Who was on the Electoral Reform Task Force, how did it work and what was the role of the project in this effort? Was it an effective body? • What were the results of the project's work with political parties and to develop a database for the Political Party Register? Was there any work with parties beyond this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the factors that affected the project's ability to support electoral reforms? • What approach did UNDP take towards electoral reform? Did it follow the recommendations of the mid-term review for a more strategic approach? • How did the project interact with political parties and CSOs in terms of improving the electoral framework? What were the factors contributing to or hindering change in this field? • Were the parties interested in project support and did the trainings meet their anticipations/needs? Why or why not? • What are the biggest constraints to electoral reforms?
SIEC capacity to promote gender mainstreaming in institutional practices and electoral processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the SIEC develop a gender policy and was this implemented? • Did the SIEC mainstream gender in its own institution and operations, including recruitment, promotions and voter education efforts? Was this a result of the project's efforts? • Did the project support SIEC coordination and work with women's groups on increasing women's political participation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was gender mainstreamed in the electoral process? What role did the project have in this? • What was the project's relationship with the Ministry of Women and other actors working on women's political empowerment such as UN Women? • What is the biggest constraint to women's equal participation? • Did the project work to mainstream gender before the 5th output was added in 2015?
Design, Implementation and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were there design issues and if so, how did this affect the project? • How relevant and appropriate was the project and its implementation? • How effective was project management in delivering an efficient, responsive and effective project? • What were the lessons learned? Any lost opportunities? • Were project resources used effectively and were they adequate for the needs? • What was the level of national ownership? • What was the quality of coordination and level of programmatic synergies with other electoral assistance providers and actors? • How visible was the project/donors and was this level of visibility appropriate? • Was there adequate monitoring of project implementation and tracking of results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well was context factored into the project design and implementation? • How was the issue of electoral conflict addressed in the design? Was this adequate? • Was there a coherent and well articulated theory of change? • Was the project relevant to the needs of the SIEC, other key actors, electoral cycle, SDGs, national development strategy, and UNDAF goals? • Were cross-cutting needs addressed? • Did the project adequately deal with risks? How? • What were the factors affecting national ownership? • Was there duplication of effort and/or best use of UNDP's comparative advantage for electoral assistance given the other

Outcome	Main Questions	Sub- Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did this project maintain its electoral cycle nature during implementation? • What were the main constraints to project implementation? • Did the project and UNDP adopt the recommendations of the Midterm Review towards staffing and a more strategic approach? 	<p>assistance efforts and context?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the project develop synergistic programming with other relevant projects working on CSO and media development, public administration strengthening and enhancing women’s political participation (including other UNDP projects)? • Was the technical assistance provided needed in the areas supported and used effectively by the SIEC and other actors? Did the experts have the level of expertise needed for the job? Was the timing for assistance appropriate?

2.2. Approach

In answering the evaluation questions, the evaluator will use mixed methods for analysis, synthesis and drawing conclusions. These include: trend analysis of key outcomes, analysis of associations between observed outcome and project-funded efforts, assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, results and sustainability of the project’s assistance and validation through triangulation (validation discussions with UNDP, SIEC, other government agencies, SECSIP donors, staff and other partners/beneficiaries; by information provided in the documents reviewed; and, by the quality of the electoral processes reported by impartial national/international observers). As a result, based on the information available and stakeholder perceptions, the evaluator will make judgments on their value and the extent that these outputs contributed towards the achievement of the SECSIP’s intended outcomes.

The questions outlined in Section 1.2 are specific yet general enough to allow for flexibility in questioning as well as to allow for flexibility in responses. This will enable the responders to voice their own issues and concerns. The evaluator will start by asking brief general questions before going into the specific evaluation questions. Sensitive questions will be asked at the end of the interview after a rapport has developed between the interviewer and person(s) being interviewed. Issues identified in discussions will be followed up with additional questions to that individual/group, as well as by questions to other informants to corroborate the information as needed.

The evaluator will interview available project partners, stakeholders and staff. This is expected to include:

- SIEC Commission, Chief Electoral Officer and Office of the SIEC staff;
- Members of the Project Board, Technical Committee, Electoral Reform Task Force and other inter-governmental committees related to the electoral processes;
- Political Parties Commission and representatives of political parties;
- Representatives of the Ministry of Education, Human Resources and Development (MEHRD) and other engaged government agencies;
- CSO grantees, representatives from the Voter Awareness Working Group, Media Association, and NGOs focusing on women’s political participation;
- UNDP Senior Staff;
- CTA and project staff;
 - Technical specialists, experts and consultants hired under the project;

- Trainers and resource persons;
- Development partners (EU and Australia), other electoral assistance projects (ESSP), and other relevant government agencies, NGOs, think tanks and individual experts.

Evaluation questions will be tailored to the different institutions, their mandate and role in the project and/or sector and type of assistance provided.

2.3 Measuring results

The evaluator will use her professional judgment to assess the information collected and to answer the evaluation questions. Results will be measured in terms of the expected results outlined in the Project Documents and the Results and Resources Frameworks, as well as by the participants' perceptions of the project and the evaluator's assessment of the results found during the field work. Attribution of results directly to the project may not be possible in some cases due to the time available for the evaluation, and the amount of work done in the sector before the project and by other organizations, that are likely to have contributed to the same outcomes. However, where a direct correlation seems evident, this will be noted in the Evaluation Report. It is also likely to be difficult to assess cost-effectiveness of specific interventions or value for money within the timeframe. However, efficiency of project implementation and management will be noted.

2.4 Data sources and processing

The evaluation will use both primary and secondary data and a variety of data collection methods to gather the information needed to conduct the work. This is expected to include: desk review and analysis of the project and secondary data; in person interviews in Honiara; and Skype and/or e-mail interviews for any key actors who may be in other locations. The evaluator will review available documents before, during and after the field work as needed. The work in-country is expected to be done during regular UNDP working hours except for the weekend which the evaluator will use to analyze information gathered during the first week and to continue the review of documents.

The persons interviewed will be the main project partners, staff and beneficiaries. Statistical data, public opinion surveys and analytical reports will be used where available to gain supplemental information on electoral and political attitudes, practices and knowledge.

The evaluator will review the most pertinent documents related to the electoral processes in the Solomon Islands, which is expected to include the observer reports from the 2010 and 2014 elections; political analyses; public opinion polling data on electoral processes and civic participation; Government development plan, UNDP Country Programme Action Plan, and available project evaluation and progress reports. The data collected through interviews, observation and review of documents will be processed analytically, and the main findings extrapolated and listed against the intended output areas of the project. The evaluator will synthesize those findings into the main points that will be discussed in the Evaluation Report. The evaluator will maintain an impartial and professional view towards developing the evaluation findings, and will base them on the evidence found and against the anticipated outcomes according to the Project Document.

The evaluator will treat all information gathered as confidential and the Evaluation Report will not identify individual responses unless it has consent from that individual to use the information publically. The Evaluation Report will follow UNDP's standards for independent evaluation reporting.

2.5 Debrief meeting

The evaluator will provide a debriefing for the Project Board and Technical Advisory Committee at the end of the field work. At the debriefing, the evaluator will provide preliminary findings, conclusions and initial recommendations of the evaluation for discussion and validation.

3. Programme of Work

3.1 Phases and calendar of work

Time Frame	Tasks
Phase 1: Review background documents and draft Inception Report: 4 – 12 May 2017 (home based)	
4 – 11 May	▪ Desk review of relevant program documents provided by UNDP
12 May	▪ Submission of Inception Report
Phase 2: Data Collection and Analysis: 15 – 26 May 2017 (in-country)	
15 – 24 May	▪ Conduct in-country consultations
Throughout	▪ Asses findings, continue review of documentation
24 May	▪ Develop Preliminary Findings
25 -26 May	▪ Debriefing on preliminary findings, main recommendations
Phase 3: Report Writing: May 29 – June 15 2017 (home based)	
29 May – 5 June	▪ Draft report and annexes
5 June	▪ Submit draft report to UNDP
o/a 9 June	▪ Receive UNDP feedback and incorporate feedback into report
12 – 15 June	▪ Finalize report and include Executive Summary
15 June	▪ Submit Final Evaluation Report

3.2. Evaluation deliverables

The main outputs of the Final Evaluation of the SECSIP are:

- This Inception Report which describes the overall approach to the evaluation, including methodology, work plan and proposed structure of the Evaluation Report. The Inception Report will be submitted electronically.
- Preliminary Findings to be presented during a debriefing meeting at the end of the field work. The overview of preliminary findings will be submitted electronically.
- Draft Evaluation Report of not more than 35 pages excluding annexes that present the Evaluation’s main findings on the project, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations. This report will follow UNDP’s standard guidelines for independent evaluation reports. It will include a stand-alone Executive Summary of not more than 5 pages. A draft table of contents is provided in Annex 1 to this Inception Report. This draft Evaluation Report will be submitted electronically.
- Final Evaluation Report of not more than 35 pages, excluding annexes. The final report will be submitted electronically.

Annex 5: Terms of reference

I. BACKGROUND

The “Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project” (SECSIP) is jointly implemented by the Solomon Islands Government through the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). SECSIP is also implemented in partnership with the Office of the Registrar of the Political Parties (ORPP) with respect to activities involving political actors.

SECSIP commenced its operations in 2013 and the initial duration of this phase was expected to end in December 2015. Under the Project Document, an evaluation was to be carried out at the end of this period. The Project’s total budget was USD \$ 8.4 million. SECSIP project document was reviewed in 2015 and its duration was extended for a transitional period up to June 2017 and a new Project Document is expected to be finalized during the first quarter of 2017.

UNDP electoral assistance is provided throughout the entire electoral cycle (pre-election; elections/polling and post-election) and designed to support SIEC in its core mandate, conducting inclusive and credible electoral processes. SECSIP, funded by the European Union and the Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), focuses on the five components capacity development, voter registration, electoral reform, civic engagement/voter awareness and women’s political participation/gender mainstreaming. SECSIP aims to develop synergies and strategic partnerships with a range of national stakeholders from government and civil society to ensure that an enabling environment for credible and inclusive elections is created. The overarching objective is to strengthen the link between the electoral cycle and other key governance processes and institutions, and contribute to social cohesion and the development of a pluralistic society.

2. OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the Evaluation

- 1) Assess the relevance and appropriateness of the Project in terms of: achieving the outputs as per the Project Document; meeting the needs of the SIEC and its contribution to the support of outcome of democratic governance and community engagement and addresses cross-cutting issues like gender mainstreaming in the Solomon Islands;
- 2) Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Project in terms of the implementation of activities that achieve outputs and outcomes and responding to electoral and political development.
- 3) Establish the impact of the Project and its contributions to the SDG, in particular SDG 16 and 5
- 4) Establish the extent to which the approach and implementation of the Project contributes to sustainable electoral management
- 5) Review the Project Design and Management structures, in terms of achieving clear objectives and strategies, the use of monitoring and evaluation, the level of coherence and complementarity with electoral assistance strategies, and the appropriateness of management structures
- 6) Make clear and focused recommendations that may be required for enhancing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of a future electoral assistance programme in the Solomon Islands. – As stated in the background, the Project is in a transition period. The lessons learned from this evaluation exercise will provide valuable information for the formulation of the new project document. Therefore, the recommendations should be pragmatic and forward looking.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

In assessing the Project and its alignment to the broader Project Document, the evaluation will take into consideration the following criteria:

Relevance and appropriateness

1. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to SIEC goals and challenges?
2. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to the mandate, strategy, functions, roles, and responsibility of the SIEC as an institution and to the key actors within that institution?
3. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to the UN electoral assistance mandate and UN SDG, in particular SDG 16?
4. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic with respect to the national development strategy?
5. Was the project relevant in view of SRPD and UNDAF goals?

Effectiveness

1. Were the outputs achieved?
2. Were the actions to achieve the outputs and outcomes effective?

Efficiency

3. Were the actions to achieve the outputs efficient?
4. Were the actions to achieve the outputs conducted in a timely manner?
5. Were there any lessons learned, failures/lost opportunities? What might have been done better or differently?
6. How did the project deal with issues and risks?
7. Were the resources utilized in the best way possible?
8. Were the resources (time, funding, human resources) sufficient?

Impact

1. Did the Project address cross cutting issues including gender?
2. Were the actions and results owned by the local partners and stakeholders?
3. Was the capacity (individuals, institution, and system) built through the actions of the project?
4. What is the level of contribution of the project management arrangements to national ownership of the set objectives, result and outputs?
5. Sustainability
6. Were the modes of deliveries of the outputs appropriate to promote national ownership and sustainability of the result achieved? Was there an explicit sustainability strategy built in the design of the project?
7. Did the Project contribute to sustainable electoral management in Solomon Islands?
8. Will the outputs/outcomes lead to benefits beyond the life of the existing project?

Project design

9. To what extent did the design of the project help in achieving its own goals?
10. Was the context, problem, needs and priorities well analyzed while designing the project?
11. Were there clear objectives and strategy?
12. Were there clear baselines indicators and/or benchmark for performance?
13. Was the process of project design sufficiently participatory? Was there any impact of the process?
14. Was there coherence and complementarity by the project to other electoral assistance providers?

15. Was there coherence, coordination and complementarity by the project with other donor funded activities in the field of electoral support (including that by EU and EU member states)?

Project management

16. Are the project management arrangements appropriate at the team level and project board level?
17. Was there appropriate visibility and acknowledgement of the project and donors?
18. Were appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the project?
19. This work will include reference to an electoral cycle approach at the core of the project design, and 2012 Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Strengthening Electoral Systems and Processes recommendations) and more specifically at the project level (against SECSIP project document and SIEC needs). The Evaluation should be aligned with the principles established in UNDP's Evaluation Policy and the UN Evaluation Group's Norms and Standards for Evaluation.

4. METHODOLOGY

Based on UNDP guidelines for evaluations (provide a link to the Yellow Handbook) and UNEG evaluation norms and standards, and in consultations with UNDP Country Office in Solomon Islands, the evaluation will be inclusive and participatory, involving principal stakeholders into the analysis. During the evaluation, the consultant is expected to apply the following approaches for data collection and analysis.

- Desk review of relevant documents including progress reports and any records of the various opinion surveys conducted during the life of the Project;
- Key informative interviews with the SIEC, other electoral assistance providers, and UNDP Senior Management and Project Staff;
- Interviews with partners and stakeholders, government officials, service providers including CSO partners and donor partners, etc.
- Briefing and debriefing sessions with the Project Board and the Technical Advisory Committee

During the implementation of the contract, the consultant will be under the general guidance of UNDP Country Manager to ensure satisfactory completion of Midterm Review deliverables. There will be close coordination with the SECSIP Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) and project team who will assist in connecting the consultant with senior management, development partners, beneficiaries and key stakeholders. In addition, the CTA will provide key project documentation prior to fieldwork, and SECSIP project staff will assist in developing a programme to facilitate consultations as necessary. UNDP will provide office space and access to standard office services as needed.

5. EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES

The consultant is expected to deliver the following outputs:

- Inception report on proposed evaluation methodology, work plan and proposed structure of the report
- A draft preliminary evaluation report and presentation, to be presented at a debriefing meeting with the SIEC and partners
- Final report, including a 2 – 3 page executive summary, including issues raised during presentation of draft