

**INDEPENDENT END EVALUATION**  
**STRENGTHENING THE ELECTORAL CYCLE IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS PROJECT PHASE II (SECSIP II)**

**Project Period: July 2017 - June 2021**

**Atlas Project Number 00103473**

**Project Budget USD 6,173,549**

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

AEC	Australian Election Commission
AHC	Australian High Commission
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CE	civic education
CEO	Chief Electoral Officer
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
DME	Data Management Expert
EAD	Electoral Assistance Division
EC	Electoral Commission
EM	Election Manager
EMB	Electoral Management Body
EO	Electoral Office
ERTF	Electoral Reform Task Force
ESI	Electoral Services International Inc.
ESSP	Electoral Systems Strengthening Programme
EU	European Union
FtF	face-to-face
GEWE	gender equality and women's empowerment
KAP	knowledge, attitudes and practices
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MASI	Media Association of the Solomon Islands
MP	Member of Parliament
NAM	Needs Assessment Mission
NGE	national general election
OW	Outstanding Women
PAE	Provincial Assembly Election
PNG	Papua New Guinea
POPP	Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures
PPC	Political Parties Commission
PS	Polling Station
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RMS	Results Management System
RO	Returning Officer
SBD	Solomon Islands Dollar
SECSIP	Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project
SIACLC	Solomon Islands Association of Community Learning Centres
SIEC	Solomon Islands Electoral Commission

SIEO	Solomon Islands Electoral Office
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
VA	voter awareness

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Objective and Context of the Evaluation**

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) commissioned an independent, end-evaluation of the Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP) Phase II in November 2020. The three-year USD 6,173,549 project followed on the previous SECSIP electoral cycle project that operated from October 2012 through June 2017. SECSIP II began July 2017; the original end date of June 2020 has been extended until June 2021.

An independent evaluation consultant conducted the evaluation in November and December 2020. The objective of the evaluation is to assess the impact and relevance of project implementation and to provide information to support the design of the next electoral assistance project by identifying achievements and lessons learned. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the impact and relevance of the project implementation; and to provide a tool for the design of the next electoral assistance project by identifying achievements and lessons learned.

The Solomon Islands is one of the poorest, most dispersed small states in the Pacific. The country is also youthful and fast growing. This geography and limited infrastructure make trade, travel and communications across the country difficult and expensive. Most Solomon Islanders are Melanesian; Traditional Melanesian societies were small-scale, relatively egalitarian communities that lacked centralized institutions. Leadership was maintained by strategically distributing and exchanging resources. European colonization came late compared to other parts of the world and was limited. The Second World War brought armed conflict as the Japanese took over, to be displaced by the Americans. The Solomons reverted to British rule after the war until becoming independent in 1978. Government presence outside of Honiara has gradually eroded, reducing its impact on the lives of people.

After 20 years of independence, governance collapsed with armed conflict in the Tensions (1998-2003). Peace was restored and governance rebuilt with the support of international peacekeeping, which only ended in 2017. The political system in the Solomon Islands is based on the British model, with Members of Parliament (MPs) chosen in contested elections within the 50 constituencies of the country through a first-past-the post system. With political parties weak, most elected members have historically been independent. This has contributed to difficulties in forming and holding together governing coalitions. MPs have access to funding such as the Rural Constituency Development Funds (RCDF) which increases their influence in their constituencies.

### **Purpose, Objective and Scope of the Project**

The purpose of SECSIP II is to support the capacity building of the national electoral authorities and the credibility of electoral processes enhancing their sustainability. The ProDoc for Phase II was developed in May 2017 based on consultations with stakeholders and donors and the experience of SECSIP since 2013, including the 2017 final evaluation. The Project Document (ProDoc) developed the overall Project Outcome of “Enhanced Electoral Inclusiveness of the Solomon Islands” through five outputs:

- Output 1: Sustainable voter registration system created to strengthen the inclusiveness and integrity of the election cycle (referred to in brief as voter registration)
- Output 2: More efficient and effective administrative procedures designed and implemented for the Solomon Islands Election Commission (SIEC) to fulfil its mandate (capacity development)
- Output 3: National authorities and local networks have better capacity to train and educate the population on voter awareness and civic engagement (civic engagement/voter awareness)
- Output 4: Electoral, legal and administrative reform supported to contribute to a stronger electoral commission and representative democracy (electoral reform)
- Output 5: Increased capacity of communities to promote women’s political participation (women’s political participation/gender mainstreaming).

SECSIP II, led by its Chief Technical Advisor, was executed through direct implementation (DIM) under the guidance of the Electoral Commission (EC) and Electoral Office (EO) through a Project Board.

### **Evaluation Methodology**

The evaluation was homebased due to COVID-19, with document review and interviews conducted remotely. The evaluator reviewed documents and produced a draft and final inception report that developed plans and methods, which were implemented. Data analysis was through comparison and triangulation, which has been used to organize findings, reach conclusions, draw lessons learned, and make recommendations. Nineteen people were interviewed (12 female).

Remote methodologies made conventional evaluation limitations of assessing attribution, limited time, limited knowledge of the project by non-project staff, and building rapport with interviewees more challenging. Nevertheless, these limitations were managed by assessing contributions of the project to with a focus on the outputs, using a limited number of key questions in interviews on where informants are reasonably expected to provide the most value, asking specific questions relevant to their experience with the project and focusing the review of documents on key evaluation questions, and using shared knowledge and experience to build rapport with interviewees.

Data analysis has especially focused on triangulating more controversial information with data from other sources and other interviews. Key informant interviews have been complemented by the in-depth document review. Findings have also been validated through discussions with UNDP, SECSIP staff, Electoral Commissioners, EO staff, donors and partners

### **Findings and Conclusions**

#### **Relevance**

EO and EC interviews noted that SECSIP II support was relevant and appropriate in terms of meeting SIEC’s goals, addressing the challenges the Commission faced, and providing support towards making progress in implementing the EO’s strategic plan.

SECSIP support was critical to the EO meeting its mandate, implementing its strategy, and performing its responsibilities overall and for the key staff of the small office. Project materials also aligned SECSIP activities with EO mandates, strategies, and roles and responsibilities.

SECSIP II was developed within the framework of the previous UNDAF for the Solomon Islands, and fits with the United Nations Pacific Strategy 2018-2022.

The project was relevant, appropriate, and strategic for development in the Solomons, because of the key roles the elected government has in determining this strategy and the extensive spending of MPs.

### **Effectiveness**

SECSIP activities over the period worked towards and largely attained planned outputs. However these outputs were not developed in a results-based management framework that connected activities to outcomes. The project developed a revised IRRF to report on activities and outputs for annual reports.

Achievements were limited in creating a sustainable voter registration system (Output 1), as the EO changed its plans without consultation to use government funds to continue to access the existing BVR service provider rather than to progressively reduce the dependency from a foreign vendor by developing their own BVR system with SECSIP II assistance.

Substantial SECSIP support was critical to developing and using more efficient and effective administrative procedures at the EO (Output 2), especially for the 2019 National General Election (NGE), in the challenging context of the Solomons. SECSIP staff supported key roles, including new products in the Solomons such as lessons' learned reporting on the elections.

SECSIP II provided extensive support to the EO to support voter awareness and civic engagement (Output 3), as well as supported CSO projects in these areas that promoted EO messaging through a range of face-to-face (FtF) methods.

The project provided important support for electoral, legal and administrative reform to contribute to a stronger electoral commission and representative democracy (Output 4) through assistance to the EO, the Electoral Reform Task Force, and the Political Parties Commission. This support was key in the development of the 2018 Electoral Act and important changes that addressed key problems with limits on the secrecy of the ballot in the 2014 NGE.

Project support for Output 5, Increased capacity of communities to promote women's political participation, contributed to an increasing number of women participating in electoral administration and contesting elections; by the end of 2020, four women were elected MPs – up from one in the prior parliament.

SECSIP engagement was seen as efficient in the context of the Solomon Islands; the project supported practices that encouraged learning lessons and knowledge management for the EO.

Project support was conscious of and focused on reaching marginalized groups, in particular women and people living with disabilities.

## **Efficiency**

SECSIP II had to be flexible and adaptive to be effective in supporting activities towards project outputs, in ways that sometimes came a cost to efficient operations. The priority placed on effectiveness was seen as appropriate by interviews with SECSIP and EO staff

SECSIP developed and updated a risk log to deal with issues and risks, and conducted an independent risk assessment in 2018 to raise awareness and understanding of risks, as well as how to address them.

Uncertainties in the processes of electoral reform and limitations of project partners made it sometimes difficult to conduct actions in a timely manner. SECSIP had its own challenges on using UNDP's administrative, financial, and procurement systems.

Interviewees suggested stronger planning and earlier action, clear communication and coordination, reaching and using validated, agreed partnership agreements with partners, and increasing programmatic synergies and planning with other UN projects for the future.

## **Impact and Sustainability**

The main impact of the project was seen in legal reform and the new Electoral Act in 2018, widespread and varied voter awareness and civic engagement campaigns, the successful BVR update, the 2019 NGE and subsequent by-elections in November 2020, and supporting the Solomons to made headway in the election of women as MPs and strengthening women's leadership.

SECSIP II support has had a lasting impact on elections in the Solomons through project support for legal and regulatory changes and capacity building at the EO; however, this support is not enough for the Solomons to go forward to the next elections without additional support.

National ownership of SECSIP support was assured through the project board and the participation of EO partners; the EO was less involved in activities expanding women's leadership (Output 5) as it was not seen a part of the mandate of the organisation (SIEC/EO).

UNDP direct implementation modality was a necessity for accountability reasons – although this has some limits to ownership and sustainability. The project has contributed to meeting the longer-term needs in the Solomons while helping with urgent timely requirements for the NGE that are less sustainable. Support for organisations and individuals in the Solomons to lead in women's political participation and realizing the rights of PWD help meet these long-term needs.

## **Project design and management**

The project's design was conducive to achieving the goals of SECSIP through partnership with the EO as key to achieving most outputs; this was supplemented with grants to civil society. The evaluation of SECSIP I was used in the design of the follow on. The ProDoc also provided an analysis of the main problems and briefly assessed the capacity of partners. The objectives and strategy of the project were clear. The design was seen as sufficiently participatory. Coherence and complementarity of electoral assistance providers the Solomon Islands was challenging. The structure and continuity of management

of the project and with the board was appropriate. Donors appreciated the clear visibility and acknowledgement provided by SECSIP II. Monitoring delivered the required information for reports.

### **Lessons Learned**

Project implementation is challenging in timebound, politically sensitive areas of assistance such as electoral processes in the Solomon Islands. The interaction of key political questions and issues with questions and challenges of electoral administration are close and present many uncertainties for UNDP electoral assistance in the Solomon Islands. Technical assistance design and delivery in such an evolving context is difficult. Clear communications and commitments have proven difficult to make and sustain in areas of electoral administration, particularly BVR. Sustainability has proven difficult in BVR and electoral administration since the EMB and country have limited capacity in IT and so few staff. Tensions between capacity support and capacity substitution are difficult with the limited capacity of the EO and the pressing needs to deliver on electoral events.

### **Recommendations**

1. SECSIP should focus on what can be accomplished in final six months period of the extended project (through June 2021) under COVID-19 conditions and the preparation of a follow-on project.
2. UNDP/Solomon Islands should decide whether to develop either a broad democratic governance project or a more focused project supporting electoral administration.
3. If focusing on democratic governance, UNDP should consider:
  - 3a. Developing a broader political economy analysis of governance in the Solomon Islands to underpin its projects overall;
  - 3b. Providing project support to increase transparency and accountability;
  - 3c. Supporting analyses of the benefits and costs to the development of the country of channeling so much of SIG government development funding through MPs; and
  - 3d. Continuing to support programming to enhance women's political participation and leadership.
4. In addition, and if focusing more narrowly on electoral administration, UNDP and SECSIP II:
  - 4a. Should prioritize conducting an inclusive, comprehensive technical capacity assessment of the EO in the remaining six months of phase II;
  - 4b. Work closely with the new leadership of the EO and the staff to facilitate agreement and consensus on how to implement the strategic plan and realistic goals; and
  - 4c. Consider using the same objectives of SECSIP phases I and II in a follow-on project because international support appears to still be needed to achieve the outputs.
5. Any successor project should be developed through results-based methodologies that articulate clear outcomes that the project will contribute to – with clear outputs that can lead to these outcomes.
6. UNDP should consider establishing more frequent meetings of the Technical Advisory Committee. This could include the AHC, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and potentially the EU or other interested international parties (for example IFES) to form a regular, small donor coordination group on electoral assistance or democratic governance and electoral administration to strengthen cooperation

and collaboration. At present, a meeting is being organized by the AEC with AHC and IFES on monthly basis.

7. UNDP should consider using the same staff or IC(s) to produce the suggested linked processes and products for analysis, validation, and project development through a common, shared lens.

8. UNDP should increase its efforts to collaborate across UNDP projects and with other UN agencies, particularly UN Women and UNFPA to strengthen efforts to achieve similar goals and objectives.

9. UNDP should develop and sustain a dedicated website that organizes and makes widely available both information on projects, including SECSIP, and the products they produce for people across the Pacific.

# 1. Objective and Context of the Evaluation

## ***Objective***

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Solomon Islands commissioned an independent, end-evaluation of the Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP) Phase II in November 2020. The three-year project followed on the previous SECSIP electoral cycle project that operated from October 2012 through June 2017. SECSIP II began July 2017; the original end date of June 2020 has been extended until 30 June 2021. The objective of the evaluation is to assess the impact and relevance of project implementation and to provide information to support the design of the next electoral assistance project by identifying achievements and lessons learned.

An independent evaluation consultant Lawrence Robertson was recruited to conduct the assignment and prepare the independent Evaluation Report based on the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the evaluation, provided as Annex 1, in November and December 2020.

The purpose of the evaluation, as stated in the TOR, is two-fold:

1. To assess the impact and relevance of the project implementation; and
2. To provide a tool for the design of the next electoral assistance project by identifying achievements and lessons learned.

The TOR reported that the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) has requested continuity of the UN electoral assistance throughout the next electoral cycle with general elections anticipated for 2023. In 2019, a UN Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) was conducted by the Electoral Affairs Division (EAD). The NAM recommended continuity of assistance. The evaluation thus focuses on making a contribution to the design of a subsequent electoral assistance project based on learning from the experience of SECSIP II from July 2017 to the present.

## ***Context of the Solomon Islands***

The Solomon Islands is one of the poorest, most dispersed small states in the Pacific, with a 2018 GDP per capita estimated at by the International Monetary Fund of under 3,000 USD a year. The country is also youthful and fast growing; the provisional totals from the 2019 census found the population was 721 thousand, up from 551 thousand a decade before. The population has been growing at a rate of 2.7 a year. The country is made up of 992 islands, of which six are much larger and more populous; the modest land area of 11,147 square miles is spread out over 613,701 square miles. Economic development has been limited and halting. Some 80% of the population live in isolated village communities and engage in subsistence farming and fishing with little access to the cash economy. Most of the population does not have improved sanitation and has limited electricity; communications are poor, although mobile phone access and range has been increasing. Many communities have no road access, even on larger islands such as Guadalcanal where the capital is located. This geography and limited infrastructure make trade, travel and communications across the country difficult and extremely expensive.

Most Solomon Islanders are Melanesian, although there are also some islands and communities that are Polynesian. A significant number of citizens in towns have Asian backgrounds and there are also more recent immigrants, particularly from China. Traditional Melanesian societies were small-scale, relatively

egalitarian (at least, among men) communities that lacked centralized institutions. Leadership status was ascribed in some places, inherited in others, and often acquired through a combination of both. The strategic manipulation of social relations through acts of distribution and exchange were key to sustaining leadership standing, maintaining social equilibrium, and managing conflicts. European colonization came late compared to other parts of the world and was limited; colonial powers focused on maintaining order while Christian missionaries converted communities. The Second World War brought armed conflict as the Japanese first took over, then to be displaced by the Americans with fierce fighting in some areas on land and sea. The Solomons reverted to British rule after the war and became independent in 1978. With independence, the government presence outside of Honiara has gradually eroded, resulting in a decline in influence of government and reducing its impact on the lives of people in communities, especially those far from Honiara. Limited schooling and medical services have been provided by churches, and limited community government and order provided through traditional authorities.

The Solomons broke down into social conflict after 20 years of independence in a period known as the Tensions (1998-2003). Conflict began in 1998 as militant movements of people from Guadalcanal initiated a violent campaign of harassment leading to the displacement of around 35,000 settlers, mainly from Malaita, from Guadalcanal and areas surrounding the capital of Honiara. The police force fragmented and Malaitans formed militias to fight displacement, which led to a coup and replacement of the government. While negotiations reached several peace agreements, implementation failed and lawlessness characterized the period. Eventually a peacekeeping mission, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was deployed in 2003. The predominately Australian RAMSI demonstrated an increase in Australia's active, security-focused engagement in the region. RAMSI ended its role in 2017 – although substantial Australian assistance has continued, including in security.

The political system in the Solomon Islands is based on the British model, with Members of Parliament (MPs) chosen in contested elections within the 50 constituencies of the country through a first-past-the-post system. With political parties weak in the Solomons, most elected members have historically been independent. This has contributed to difficulties in forming and holding together governing coalitions, with Prime Minister candidates challenged to form the required majority to support them in Parliament. Consistent with views of this part of the political economy as an issue, while the 2018 national voter registration update and electoral period in 2019 were peaceful, contested coalition building afterwards led to protest, riots and looting in Honiara that targeted the Asian-dominated retail sector after the previous Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare assembled a majority of the newly elected MPs in a coalition and was again declared Solomon Islands' Prime Minister in April 2019. These manifestations of discontent are seen by researchers as dissatisfaction among some residents of the Honiara area, particularly male youth, with the lack of change in the political system and economy that they recognize does not deliver for them and leaves them with few prospects for the future.<sup>1</sup> Another sign of the challenge were the complaints of vote buying from losing MP candidates; 27 of the 50 seat winners had petitions against their victories filed in court by May 2019. Three of the elected candidates were ultimately disqualified due to vote buying by the courts – leading to by-elections held in November 2020

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<sup>1</sup> Terence Wood, "The 2019 Honiara riots: what went wrong, and what does it mean for aid?" June 21, 2019, at <https://devpolicy.org/the-2019-honiara-riots-what-went-wrong-and-what-does-it-mean-for-aid-20190621/>

in the constituencies of North East Guadalcanal & Central Honiara), with the constituency of South Choiseul to have a by-election in the first quarter of 2021.

With this geographic and economic context, social system, and political institutions, the political system is clientelist.<sup>2</sup> Solomon Islanders tend to “vote for candidates that will help them directly. It’s sensible, but it selects and incentivizes candidates to concentrate on distributing material goods to their supporters rather than governing the country.”<sup>3</sup>

These tendencies have been compounded by other consequences of FPTP, weak political parties, and the many distinct and remote communities across the islands of the Solomons that are combined to make a constituency. This has made MPs are elected with a small number of votes – and the margin of victory between candidates can be a handful of voters. This makes having a reliable block of voters extremely valuable in politics. And political leaders have government resources to directly reward their voters. In line with the British model, MPs are allocated some resources to use to benefit their constituency. Successive Solomon Islands Governments (SIG) have chosen to allocate increasingly large sums of money through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) program and other discretionary grant programs to MPs – allocations that are controlled by the members and can be spent largely as they see fit. Reports note that contestation around constituency funds “in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands - illustrates how conflict can occur when ‘traditional’ notions of social obligations and entitlement mutate with the politics of fragile state institutions.”<sup>4</sup>

Solomon Islanders recognize the consequences of not voting for the winner in their constituency. 2019 research shows that “some communities believed they did not receive constituency development funds (CDF) benefits because they failed to vote as a collective for the MP at the previous election.”<sup>5</sup>

In addition, the cash economy is dominated by logging. Communities control most of the land in the Solomons and community leaders are the ones that make and approve logging deals, largely with foreign logging companies. This system grants additional authority to leaders, including at the ward level (which elects representatives to provincial assemblies) and especially in constituencies. MPs have extensive influence and access to government, both political leaders and in the civil service in Honiara, where logging agreements are formalized and taxes paid. Communities have limited means to hold their representatives accountable, including for commercial deals that they have an interest in, when they are conducted so far from most communities – and when most communities have limited experience with

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<sup>2</sup> Terence Wood, “How politics keeps Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea poor and poorly governed.” August 17, 2018, at <https://devpolicy.org/politics-keeps-solomon-islands-png-poor-poorly-governed-20180817/>

<sup>3</sup> Terence Wood, “Development and the 2019 elections in Solomon Islands.” April 23, 2019, at <https://devpolicy.org/development-and-2019-elections-solomon-islands-20190423/>

<sup>4</sup> Sinclair Dinnen, Doug Porter and Caroline Sage. 2011. “Conflict in Melanesia: Themes and Lessons.” World Development Report 2011 Background paper. Washington: World Bank., p. 16, at <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/970751468144280744/pdf/620250WP0ConfI0BOX0361475B00PUBLIC0.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Colin Wiltshire, James Batley, Joanne Ridolfi and Athena Rogers, “Constituency Development Funds and Electoral Politics Solomon Islands: Part Two. In Brief 2020/19” (ANU Department of Pacific Affairs: 2020), p. 2, at [http://dpa.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/2020-05/ib2020-19\\_wiltshire-et-al.pdf](http://dpa.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/2020-05/ib2020-19_wiltshire-et-al.pdf).

and exposure to large-scale commercial agreements and little information. Now in addition the logging industry is declining, as the forests of the country have been depleted at unsustainable rates for the past decade or more.

Government roles in the economy are also large as the SIG controls access to the off-shore fishery resources, mining of underground resources, and foreign assistance. MPs are also influential in these areas.

## **2. Purpose, Objective and Scope of the Project**

### ***Purpose***

The focus of SECSIP II is to support the capacity building of the national electoral authorities and the credibility of electoral processes in the Solomon Islands enhancing their sustainability. The United Nations has provided electoral assistance to the Solomons since 2006. The first phase of the SECSIP project began in 2013; the project was implemented through June 2017. SECSIP II followed on immediately on the first phase from July 2017.

The ProDoc for Phase II was developed in May 2017 while the on-going processes of political and electoral reform were continuing. It was not clear what the legislation – the 2018 Electoral Act - that would be used for the 2019 general elections would look like. The ProDoc was thus based on consultations with stakeholders and donors and the experience of SECSIP since 2013, including the 2017 final evaluation of the project. The signed July 2017 ProDoc was for a USD \$5,860,986 three-year project, of which USD\$ 3.3 million was at the time of its roll-out unfunded. Initial allocated funding was USD \$500,000 from UNDP TRAC resources, USD \$1.6 million from the European Union (EU), and USD \$400,000 from Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The financing was managed through a multi-donor basket mechanism. Additional resources were mobilized and the total contribution from the Government of Australia was USD \$3.2 million (AUD \$ 4.5 million) throughout the implementation period. The project was extended for a year in 2020 and is now due to end 30 June 2021.

The ProDoc's problem analysis briefly identified the main challenges with the country's electoral system and administration, and how these issues are connected with key social, political, and geographic features of the Solomon Islands. The development challenge section then targeted three main areas for deeper analysis: voter registration, electoral administration, and development and democracy. The project was designed with an electoral cycle approach that provides a broader framework to support capacity strengthening and democratic development before and after specific electoral events. The specific electoral event that determined the timing of the project and activities within it was the anticipated 2019 national general elections, which were expected in Spring 2019.

The development challenge section reviewed the political and electoral system, noting key problems of MPs being elected with small shares of the vote due to the FPTP electoral system, the dominance of individuals rather than political parties in MP selection which makes for unstable coalition governments and actions by MPs to support individuals and personal political interest rather than party or national interest. This focus on the personal also cascades to individual community members; due to minimal

reach of government into most people's lives and the substantial direct effects of MP spending through the CDF and other discretionary funds, informed observers have noted that voters appear to choose to vote for a candidate who will help them personally or their community directly. Local and kinship factors still have an important weight on the voting choices made by Solomon Islanders. Broader issues of government accountability and performance have only a weak impact on voting decisions. MPs compete for votes through an increasingly moneyed approach to politics, including a growing reliance on constituency funding in election campaigns

Solomon Islands Government (SIG) institutions are recognized as weak, under-resourced and with serious capacity challenges; this is also the case for the Electoral Office (EO), which the ProDoc noted had only eight permanent staff (with seven in place in May 2017). The long ad-interim situation without having a formally appointed CEO, which lasted from September 2015 until the Acting CEO died unexpectedly in November 2017, had an impact on the pre-election phase and the preparation of the national general election (NGE). Additionally, at that time, the Electoral Office depended on budget allocations from the general budget though the Ministry of Home Affairs – supplemented by donor support.

And the challenges and costs of delivering elections in the Solomon Islands, including voter registration, are very high given the weak capacity of the SIG, the great geographic dispersal of the population, the limited transportation and communications infrastructure and challenges of reaching them, and the limited education and governance experience of the population.

### **Objective**

The Project Document (ProDoc), approved in June 2017, developed the overall Project Outcome of “Enhanced Electoral Inclusiveness of the Solomon Islands” through five outputs that focused on providing assistance to the electoral management body (EMB), the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC), to implement its five-year operational plan. The five outputs are:

- Output 1: Sustainable voter registration system created to strengthen the inclusiveness and integrity of the election cycle (referred to in brief as voter registration)
- Output 2: More efficient and effective administrative procedures designed and implemented for the Solomon Islands Election Commission (SIEC) to fulfil its mandate (capacity development)
- Output 3: National authorities and local networks have better capacity to train and educate the population on voter awareness and civic engagement (civic engagement/voter awareness)
- Output 4: Electoral, legal and administrative reform supported to contribute to a stronger electoral commission and representative democracy (electoral reform)
- Output 5: Increased capacity of communities to promote women's political participation (women's political participation/gender mainstreaming).

The ProDoc developed a brief results framework with a single output indicator for each output, and set targets and milestones. A more substantial multi-year workplan for the three-year project provided anticipated areas of activities to support each output and a planned budget, which divided the costs of project staffing and implementation into sub-outputs under each of the 5 outputs.

The ProDoc explained the rationale for developing each of these five outputs and then developed illustrative activities that the project could use to support reaching these outputs categorizing them in electoral focus and longer-term focus. The ProDoc did not develop outcomes or use outcome language.

SECSIP II, like the first phase, was executed through direct implementation modalities (DIM) under the guidance of the Electoral Commission (EC) and EO through a Project Board. Technical advice has been provided by the CTA, with implementation supported by a SECSIP staff Project Management Unit (PMU) headed most of the time by an Operations Manager. The total amount of resources mobilized/total project donor contributions is USD \$6,173,549.42 from funding from the EU, government of Australia, and UNDP. EU funds were expended by the end of 2019. The 2020 Budget (Annual Work Plan Budget) is USD \$982,322.

### **3. Evaluation Methodology**

The TOR provided 25 working days for the evaluation, with all work homebased due to COVID-19 conditions. The evaluator reviewed documents and produced a draft and final inception report to develop the plans and methods for the evaluation. The TOR, and thus the evaluation, used evaluation criteria of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability to organize the evaluation of SECSIP II. In addition, the evaluation answers specific questions from the TOR on the design and management of the project.

A draft and then final Inception Report were developed based on the TOR and initial conversations with the SECSIP II Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), the review of a previous inception report developed by another independent consultant originally contracted to conduct the evaluation who was unable to complete the assignment, and initial review of relevant documents and project reporting. The inception report developed an evaluation matrix that used the OECD-DAC criteria and the evaluation questions from the TOR to develop specific questions that the evaluator has used for a structured review of documents and to interview key informants. After approval, the evaluator implemented the plans of the inception report.

#### ***Data collection***

Due to COVID-19 health emergencies has made in-country fieldwork impossible. Thus evaluation fieldwork has been remote. Remote interviews have been used to complement the in-depth review of documents. These two methods have been used to gather the data to analyzed to answer all of the evaluation questions. Data analysis have been through comparison and triangulation, which has been used to organize findings, reach conclusions, draw lessons learned, and make recommendations.

#### ***Document review***

The evaluator reviewed the documents produced by the project (ProDoc, work plans, budgets, quarterly reports, biannual reports, annual reports, other studies) and other relevant materials from the EO and international observer reports to gather relevant data and other project related information to answer the evaluation questions. The list of documents reviewed is attached as Annex 2. In interviews, the evaluator has enquired whether additional references documents are available to ensure a complete

picture of the project to date. The evaluator has reviewed these materials using the questions from the evaluation matrix as a framework to organize these data towards answering the evaluation questions. This review of documents has been complemented by key informant interviews.

### *Key Informant Interviews*

The extensive set of questions outlined in the TOR were used to develop interview questions in the evaluation matrix in the inception report. Interviews were conducted remotely due to COVID-19 pandemic conditions. The evaluator briefly explained the purposes and processes of the evaluation at the beginning of interview. Each conversation began by obtaining the clear assent of the informant to participate in the evaluation's fieldwork. Explicit informed consent was received from each interviewee after the evaluation's rules of non-attribution and anonymity were explained and assured. Interviews were conducted over Skype, WhatsApp, and/or Zoom. As there were more evaluation and interview questions that could be asked in a sixty-to-ninety-minute interview, for particular interviews, the evaluator selected more relevant specific questions from the interview protocol and generated more sub-questions on an as-needed basis. Issues identified in discussions were followed up on with additional questions and discussion. All KIIs concluded by asking whether there were additional documents that the evaluator should make sure to analyze, additional key informants that they suggest for interviews, and finally whether there is anything else about the SECSIP Phase II programme that we have not yet discussed but should cover now for the evaluation.

A total of 19 people were interviewed (Annex 3), of which 12 were female.

### **Limitations**

All evaluation methods have some limitations; the evaluator identified specific limitations as well as developed methods to mitigate their effects on the collection and analysis of valid and reliable data to use to answer the evaluation's questions.

COVID-19 conditions preclude in-person fieldwork in the Solomons; thus the entire evaluation has been completed remotely. This reality makes conventional evaluation limitations of assessing contributions rather than attribution, limited time, limited engagement, and building rapport more difficult.

Contribution rather than attribution— SECSIP was flexible in implementation adjusting to the support priorities of the EO to continue building institutional capacities which makes the assessment of contributions difficult. Limited baseline data and limited ability to gather data and examine other potential factors that may have influenced and contributed to the changes in the electoral commission, office, and system – including the existence of other electoral assistance providers from ESSP and AEC - also limit the ability of the evaluation to attribute any changes identified to SECSIP Phase II activities.

Limited time-The evaluator has only 25 days for the evaluation. This limits the number of days that can be used for data collection, analysis, and writing. A limited amount of information can be gained from any one interview with a key informant. The TOR provided many guiding evaluation questions (which led to even more interview questions), but only a limited number of questions could feasibly be asked and followed-up upon in any interview.

Limited engagement - Most staff, partners, stakeholders, and beneficiaries also have limited engagement with the project; their perspectives are invaluable, but often only relevant to

parts of the project and/or some of the evaluation questions. The limited number of key project staff, partners, and stakeholders also limits the extent of relevant data gathering. Building rapport - Finally, it is more challenging to build connections between the evaluator and interviewees that provide for more thoughtful, expansive answers to interview questions through remote methods.

To manage these limitations and minimize the impact of these challenges on data collection and the quality of the evaluation, the evaluator has focused on assessing the contributions of the project to find out intended/unintended changes (with a focus on the outputs), used a limited number of key questions in interviews on areas where informants are reasonably expected to provide the most value, asked specific questions relevant to their experience with the project and focused the review of documents on the key evaluation questions, and used shared knowledge of the Solomon's electoral experience and the evaluator's previous experience in working in the country to build rapport with interviewees.

### ***Data analysis and report writing***

The evaluator has used a mixed method approach to collect independent data and analyze these data and project documentation to document findings, draw conclusions, determine lessons learned, and make actionable recommendations. Analytic methods used have been trend analysis of change over time, qualitative assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the project's assistance, use of the assessment of the quality of the electoral processes reported by international observers in reports, and the triangulation of data from different sources and methods (across different informants, across different documents, and between informants and documents). Questions have been asked of other informants to corroborate information when possible to address inconsistencies and develop greater clarity. Data analysis has especially focused on triangulating more controversial information with data from other sources and other interviews. Key informant interviews have been complemented by the in-depth document review. Findings have also been validated through discussions with UNDP, SECSIP staff, Electoral Commissioners, EO staff, donors and partners.

Based on the information available and stakeholder perceptions, the evaluator has made and supported judgments on the value and extent to which processes and activities have contributed to the achievement of intended outputs. The evaluator produced a Draft Evaluation Report with main findings on the project, conclusions, lessons learnt, and actionable recommendations. Comments on the draft have been revised to produce this Final Evaluation Report.

## **4. Findings and Conclusions**

### ***Relevance***

Relevance is defined in the revised 2019 OECD DAC guidance as "The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use, OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation (Paris: OECD 2019), at <https://search.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf>.

*1. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to SIEC goals and challenges?*

SECSIP I was developed in 2012 and began implementation in July 2013 towards supporting the 2014 NGE through an electoral cycle approach. Consultations for the design of SECSIP II commenced in late 2016 and intensified through the first half of 2017. A number of multilateral and bilateral discussions were held through this period. SECSIP II project document was endorsed in June 2017 and the project was rolled out in July 2017.

EO and EC interviews noted that SECSIP II support was relevant and appropriate in terms of meeting SIEC's goals, addressing the challenges the Commission faced, and providing support towards making progress in implementing the EO's strategic plan over its period of implementation, July 2017 to the present (end 2020). UNDP consulted with partners and stakeholders to ensure relevance, appropriateness, and that the project would provide strategic support to the EO in the design and development of the original SECSIP I; the project was launched in July 2013. SECSIP II was developed based on the lessons learned from the experience of SECSIP working with the EC and EO since 2013, including lessons and recommendations from a final independent evaluation of SECSIP I in 2017, and consultations around the new ProDoc in 2016 and 2017. Extensive dialogue with the electoral commission and the government; as well as with donor partners, was used to assure alignment. The ProDoc was endorsed by the Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) 22 June 2017. Endorsement by all LPAC members, donors and stakeholders validated that SECSIP II responded to national needs, was appropriate for UNDP and the EC and EO, and strategically targeted key aspects of UNDP and EC/EO mandates. Relevance and appropriateness were validated by the government, EC, and donor partners signing the SECSIP II ProDoc in June 2017.

*2. To what extent 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?*

As noted above, EO and project staff interviewed felt that SECSIP support was critical to the EO meeting its mandate, implementing its strategy, and performing its responsibilities overall and for the key staff of the small EMB. Project materials also aligned SECSIP activities with EO mandates, strategies, and roles and responsibilities, including for particular staff positions. Development partners, other partners and key stakeholders shared this assessment of the relevance of the project for the EO and EC.

The design and implementation of SECSIP II prioritized key areas of responsibility of the small staff of the EMB, with outputs to support voter registration operations and BVR (Project Output 1), electoral operations (Project Output 2), to support training and voter awareness (two EO staff) with Output 3, and to support legal reform – an area critical to SIEC and the operations of the EO – through Output 4.

Promoting women's political participation (Output 5) is in some ways consistent with the mandate, functions, roles and responsibilities of the EO in BVR and electoral operations, in training and voter awareness, and in legal reform. SECSIP II activities that worked in gender-sensitive ways to empower women in the BVR update process and results, in electoral operations, and in training and voter

awareness, plus in legal reform as part of supporting both the EO as an institution and key staff. SECSIP II worked as well under this objective towards key national gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) commitments and UN goals, particularly SDG 5 on GEWE – going beyond the work of the EO. No interviewee expressed that this initiative outside of the EMB was a problem – but several noted that strictly speaking, it fell outside of the work of the institution administering elections. The Electoral Office has been cautious with respect to women's leadership programming support to avoid the perception of favouring women; SECSIP's actions have been implemented with the involvement of EO staff with the support of the EO senior management.

*3. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to the UNDAF, UN electoral assistance mandate and UN SDGs, in particular SDG 16?*

SECSIP II was developed within the framework of the previous UNDAF for the Solomon Islands, and fits with the United Nations Pacific Strategy 2018-2022, both the regional Outcome 5 on Governance and Community Engagement and for the Solomons under National Development Strategy Objective 5: Unified, reconciled nation with stable and effective governance and public order - which notes the importance of civic education, political awareness, and women's political empowerment. The UN has had a clear mandate in supporting elections since its creation and UNDP has a well-developed mandate and specialization within the UN in electoral cycle support programming, which has been incorporated into SDG 16 as a core area of working in democratic governance. SECSIP II is thus relevant, appropriate and strategic in these areas.

*4. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic with respect to the national development strategy?*

In the Solomon Islands, national development strategy is driven by the strategy of the elected government. The government is formed when an MP is able to assemble a majority of Members of Parliament in support of their candidacy for Prime Minister. This makes elections critical for the national development strategy – both for its development and implementation. With weak political parties and a Parliament comprised largely of independent MPs, coalition-building is challenging. Elections and MPs are critical to development in the Solomons in another way, as so much of government development spending is driven through the CDF and other discretionary funds allocated to individual MPs. Elections are also critical to stability, which is vital for development. The project is thus relevant, appropriate, and strategic for development.

***Effectiveness***

Effectiveness is “The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.” UNDP reported on achievements in quarterly and annual reports to donors and through a final report to the EU on the results of EU-funded assistance 2013-2019.

*1. To what extent did the project achieve its outputs?*

Results are reviewed output by output by reporting on what the project did and their results. Based on these results, the evaluator has made an estimate of progress; this estimate is rough as the ProDoc

outputs are phrased in imprecise process language and the indicators developed in the ProDoc either do not really measure the output (for output 1, “Proportion of eligible voters who are registered to vote, disaggregated by sex, age, and excluded groups including PLWD”) or have not been tracked and measures (for the ratings and scale for outputs 2-5). Since the outputs were not developed to be precisely measured, they cannot be precisely measured here. The language of all of the outputs focuses instead on improvements, which are identifiable and assessed generally rather than precisely (whether strengthening, improvements, and enhancement is notable). Rather than using these indicators, SECSIP’s M&E staff developed a set of different indicators that more precisely measured the activities of the project towards the five outputs for the 2018 and 2019 Annual Reports. However it remains difficult to extrapolate from these detailed indicators that measure activity completion comprehensively – or measure the components needed for the EO to meet its needs - to overall achievement of the outputs.

**Output 1: Sustainable voter registration system created to strengthen the inclusiveness and integrity of the election cycle (referred to in brief as voter registration)**

SECSIP I also supported this objective, including through a contract in November 2016 at the request of EC to the firm that developed the BVR system in 2013, Electoral Services International Inc. (ESI). This contract following upon their services as the software and hardware developers of the BVR system; ESI were the only ones with the authority and capability to access the BVR database for the Solomon Islands; this was recognized to be a problem for the country and EO. Under SECSIP I, in April and June 2017, a BVR Systems consultant was engaged to conduct an assessment of the system including priority needs, and to develop an Options Paper with recommendations that would enable SIEC to manage the BVR database themselves to increase sustainability. Based on the acceptance of the results of this consultancy by the EC and the acting CEO, SECSIP and UNDP understood that the EC and acting CEO had endorsed this course of action as the plan for the country going forward.

SECSIP II, based on the CEO approving the plan for SECSIP to support BVR software development and training, including identifying equipment needs, hired four BVR consultants in late 2017 to support the start of BVR update in December by supporting data collection in the field and its consolidation in the EO and developed plans to build a data centre to house the BVR equipment at SIEC. Consultants supported this effort through August 2018. In line with ProDoc with respect to BVR, a plan was developed by the SECSIP Senior BVR expert to enhance to produce an assessment and provide alternatives to strengthen the BVR system. The focus was to enhance equipment, software and resources to gain ownership and control by national authorities and progressively reduce dependency from foreign vendors. Upon endorsement by CEO in April 2018, SECSIP engaged a BVR software developer to work with the Senior BVR expert and the consultant for the data centre. However, as the time to prepare for and implement the BVR update approached, to the surprise of SECSIP, the CEO instead contracted the same foreign vendor for BVR using SIG funds. There was no consultation with UNDP on the scope of work of the vendor. This was seen by UNDP as superseding the previously endorsed plan to develop a more sustainable BVR system at the EO through SECSIP consultants. To avoid duplication of efforts and taking into account best utilization of resources by the project, the contracts of the consultants hired to provide advice on BVR software system development were ended as the project was informed that the BVR had been engaged and was to provide these services. Less support was delivered under Output 1 than anticipated in project planning. The way this decision was

made without consultations and the way it did not build towards sustainability impeded progress towards the project’s outputs.

SECSIP II thus did not achieve the objective of sustainable voter registration system created. Project reporting and staff continue to recognize that EO needs support towards national ownership of a sustainable voter registration system; at present the EO remains dependent on ESI, with SIG funding needed to use ESI’s services.

More recently, as the 2018 Electoral Act (EA) opened up the possibility of continuous voter registration, the project and EO have initiated the analysis of the EO’s needs for successfully introducing continuous voter registration as envisioned in SIEC’s Corporate plan 2019-2023 and the Electoral Reform Strategy Framework (2019-2023). The EO, with its new CEO who does not have a background in electoral administration, notes continued needs for international support in this area.

Output	Assessment of Achievements
<b>Output 1: Sustainable voter registration system created to strengthen the inclusiveness and integrity of the electoral cycle</b>	
<b>Output 1.1 Sustainability of and inclusiveness of registration system enhanced</b>	<b>Some improvement</b>

**Output 2: More efficient and effective administrative procedures designed and implemented for the Solomon Islands Election Commission (SIEC) to fulfil its mandate (capacity development)**

The EO has an operations director, who has basically been the only staff person dedicated permanently to electoral operations – until a deputy has been brought on after working on electoral operations under SECSIP’s graduate programme. And the dispersed geography, poor communications, and extensive tasks to manage VR and the elections themselves task EO and its temporary staff. Thus substantial SECSIP support was provided under this output. SECSIP II deployed an experienced electoral operations consultant to support the EO plan and execute critical operations for BVR and the NGE. SECSIP’s graduate programme provided two field operations assistants to support operations in the lead up to the NGE (from July 2018). SECSIP extended the contract of one graduate until a position for a Deputy Operations Manager was established by the EO in February 2020, which then hired this experienced former SECSIP graduate.

In 2017, SECSIP supported web development for SIEC through a consultant, who also trained three staff of the office. The project brought in an IC to assess the EO’s existing electoral procedures manuals and training, and then designed a foundation course of 8 modules for electoral managers to increase the capacity of the EO to deliver elections. SECSIP also supported the physical rehabilitation of the electoral infrastructure by renovating and extending the space used by SECSIP at the EO. At this time, Plans were also developed to create a BVR Center at the EO.

SECSIP II funded the construction of Data Centre in the first half of 2018. The previous data centre was rented space distant from the EO; Construction of the data centre at the EMB enhanced the EO’s voter registration operations and cut the costs of EO operations, as rent no longer needed to be paid. In 2018, the IC Operations Adviser drafted a comprehensive operational plan for VR for the EO. The project

supported the training for Revising Officers, and supported public hearings on the objections to provisional voters lists in all constituencies. This was a key area in the elections, as questions about “ordinary residents” were central to electoral contestation. SECSIP deployed graduates to staff up the operations department, with recent university graduates assigned to support the EO in information technology logistics, human resources and field coordination (two graduates for this set of tasks). The SECSIP operations advisor also took the lead in electoral security by supporting operational planning with RSIPF for the BVR update and NGE. SECSIP worked with OXFAM to develop guidelines and training for youth monitoring for elections. And SECSIP’s IC Electoral Adviser supported the EC’s reform efforts, the SIG Electoral Reform Task Force (ERTF), and the project through three missions over the year.

In 2019, as the elections approached, SECSIP procured 1,700 polling kits and indelible ink internationally for the NGE. Technical guidance was provided to prepare the local tender for printing 550,000 ballot papers with SIG funds; this and monitoring proved important as local printing through two selected firms differed in quality and quality control. The SECSIP Operations adviser provided important support to develop, adjust, finalize the electoral operations plan, and adjust it in actual implementation. The Advisor also contributed to the drafting of the electoral managers manual. The SECSIP operations advisor and officials of the Australian Electoral Commission facilitated two trainings, one for 70 temporary and permanent staff on Polling Station (PS) assessment and the allocation of Voters to the PS’s and the second on communications and reporting for 10 Election Managers (EMs) and 50 Returning Officers (ROs) that covered polling, counting, media and observer relations for 2019. SECSIP also helped address the staff shortage at the EO in a second way, by assigning two graduates to support operations.

The project’s Senior electoral advisor assisted through two missions and SECSIP also engaged a short-term Data Management Expert (DME) to provide additional operational support for analysis after the election. The DME developed tools and forms for the setting of batches of ballots for the counting and consolidation of results. At the EMB’s request, two additional rooms and the extension of the reception area were built adjacent to the main structure at the EO.

After the elections, SECSIP supported three provincial lessons learned workshops that brought together permanent EO staff, EMs, ROs and Assistant Returning Officers (AROs) and advisers. A lessons learned report was produced based on the experience in the first report on a NGE produced in the Solomons, plus a report with all the election results to help build institutional memory at the EO. This was a first for the EO – conducting regional learning and producing reports. The lessons learned report concluded that the technical capacity of the EO to conduct elections has reached an important level, as demonstrated in the implementation of 2019 elections. However, the participants also recognized that the EC and EO are affected by structural limitations such as staffing levels and low capacities in the areas of training, procurement, logistics and data-management. Therefore, participants noted that the EO will have to focus extensively on overcoming those limitations with the support of other governmental agencies and donors. Processes for 2018 registration and the 2019 NGE eliminated some of the most prominent problems with processes from 2014 - but participants noted that there is still a layering of procedures that sometimes are not needed. And some of adjustments made for the 2019 NGE were not comprehensively explained to electoral staff in trainings or to communities through awareness activities. The systems for BVR and administering the elections were still subject to late revisions, which limited training (especially on these late revisions) to staff - leaving untested procedures with

vulnerabilities. The NGE report also noted how far-off estimates and reality were for the cost of the administration of elections was in budget terms; while SBD 40 m were budgeted by the SIG, actual expenditures were said to be 48 m SBD “as the changes in the Electoral Act led to operational changes, the approved budget had to be repeatedly recalculated.” The Commonwealth assessment of the election recommended that the training of election officials be standardized to ensure consistency – and that count procedures be reviewed to increase consistency

Later in 2019, SECSIP provided logistical and capacity building support to the EO train staff and organize the first East Makira by-election under the new act for the National Parliament seat for East Makira simultaneously held with the elections for the Makira Provincial Assembly.

In the first half of 2020, the project finalised the asset/equipment transfer of SECSIP-acquired materials to the EO, updated the EO website and supported staff training on website updating. The main focus of the project’s work has been on supporting the planning and implementation of the by-elections held on 18 November 2020 under pandemic conditions. SECSIP supported the EO review of electoral processes under these conditions, provided COVID-19 personal protection equipment to support safe conduct of the by-elections as well procured video-conferencing equipment, and funded a day-long workshop on changing operational procedures for the by-elections to adjust to the pandemic. SECSIP then supported the training of the temporary staff for the by-elections. SECSIP commented on and supported the layout and printing of the 2019 National General Election report and the Corporate Plan 2019-2023.

<b>Output</b>	<b>Assessment of Achievements</b>
<b>Output 2: More efficient and effective administrative procedures designed and implemented for the Solomon Islands Election Commission (SIEC) to fulfill its mandate</b>	
<b>Output 2.1: Enhanced capacity of the SIEC to manage an electoral cycle</b>	<b>Significant progress</b>
<b>Output 2.2: Improved infrastructure for more efficient electoral management</b>	<b>Significant progress</b>
<b>Output 2.3: Coordination and planning ability of the SIEC strengthened</b>	<b>Significant progress</b>

**Output 3: National authorities and local networks have better capacity to train and educate the population on voter awareness and civic engagement (voter awareness/civic engagement)**

SECSIP II provided extensive support to the EO to support voter awareness and civic engagement, as well as supported CSO projects in these areas that promoted EO messaging through a range of face-to-face (FtF) methods through competitive grants. In 2017, SECSIP II support was provided by two national consultants on media and voter awareness (VA). SECSIP II supported two provincial media trainings and then three trainings in Honiara with the EO through CSO partner Media Association of the Solomon Islands (MASI). SECSIP worked with the EO to pretest VA posters in Guadalcanal before supporting their production and dissemination.

SECSIP also supported EO outreach programming on the only telecommunications channel with close to national reach, the government's Solomon Islands Broadcasting Commission (SIBC). In 2018, SECSIP continued to find CSOs to support VA, including on the VR update. The project also assessed the CSO work of partner VTT and a Training of Trainers (ToT) for Makira through the Solomon Islands Association of Community Learning Centres (SIACLC) implemented a 3-day training on VA plus CSO partner Tefila trained students in Malaita on VA. The project developed a partnership with staple food distributor SolRice to distribute VA/CE messages on bags of rice. SECSIP also developed and funded TV commercials, and an Isabel mock VR exercise. As CSO grants require substantial management in the Solomons, SECSIP brought on board a national CSO Coordination Manager in October 2018. Extensions were granted based on the performance assessment of the CSOs (Melanesian Board of Mission MBOM in Isabel, Stage of Change in Choiseul, Tefila and Hearts of the Hope in Malaita, and the Provincial Council of Women in Guadalcanal). The Coordinator also identified and completed the processes to engage three additional CSOs to undertake awareness activities in three other provinces (Temotu, Makira and Ngella).

SECSIP sent out 110,000 voter awareness leaflets ahead of voter registration through an innovative activity. The Association of People with Disabilities (PWD) supported this activity by inserting leaflets into SolRice bags in the first use of commodity distribution for VA which provided a way to reach across the dispersed population of the archipelago. The project also funded a telephone hotline, posters, and radio drama to support VA.

In 2019, SECSIP partnered with DSE and the Solomon Islands Social Accountability Coalition through Oxfam to support domestic observation of the elections and provided a 2-day VA training focused on PWD, which led to CSO observation in 49 of the 50 constituencies. Three new CSO partners were brought on board for Voter Awareness (Tawatana Community Conservation Development Association, Ngella Forum Trust Board (NFTB) and Nuo Theatre Trust Board). A second SolRice distribution with messaging was organized and implemented. The project designed and funded a local media/CSO refresher workshop on Malaita. After the election, SECSIP organized and funded a 3-day reflection workshop with the project's CSO partners on FtF VA, with participation from Ngella 8 partners. Project funding was extended through cost extensions for CSO partners Hearts of Hope, Tefila, Guadalcanal Provincial Council of Women, Stages of Change) to continue FtF VA work until the end of June 2019. SECSIP also used television to produce and promote a video on the vote through TTV with a focus on reaching the youth. As part of SECSIP's graduate programme, 2 additional people were brought in to work on VA with EO staff. Other VA activities were publishing and distributing the electoral calendar, supporting a training on VA in Western Province with CSO women, funding a Hotline to answer election-related questions, and supporting 8 weekly radio programs that disseminated voter awareness VA messages in the run up to the elections. In addition, the project supported the first monitoring of provincial assembly elections in Guadalcanal, the Ngella Islands, and Malaita through CSO partners Tefila and Stages of Change.

After the election, to learn about the effectiveness of VA and CE work, SECSIP supported a knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey. This survey was used to compare where the population is now relative to the first KAP survey conducted through a consulting firm for SECSIP in 2015. The new KAP was developed by a dedicated IC who worked with DSE and staff from CSO partners for the fieldwork as this mode of operating helped build national capacity to evaluate VA and CE among organisations that would

then use this knowledge going forward. SECSIP continued to support domestic electoral observation, through funding three observers for the East Makira by-election. To further support observation, SECSIP organized and held a Reflection workshop with NGE 2019 observers and Provincial Assembly Election (PAE) monitors to learn lessons and share experiences.

In 2020, SECSIP supported the EO to develop the draft 2020-2023 Voter Awareness Strategy and outreach materials to use for VA, as well supported the adaptation of these methods to manage and mitigate COVID-19 risks; the project supported the development and conduct of VA activities for the November 2020 by-elections for the two constituencies, which included one of the constituencies with the most sizable populations (Central Honiara). SECSIP also supported the Electoral Office in the organization of trainings for those media professionals applying to be accredited to cover the by-elections

<b>Output</b>	<b>Assessment of Achievements</b>
<b>Output 3: National authorities and local networks have better capacity to train and educate the population on voter awareness and civic engagement</b>	
<b>Output 3.1: Strategic ability of the SIEC to conduct civic and voter education enhanced</b>	<b>Significant progress</b>
<b>Output 3.2: Increased implementation of civic and voter education activities</b>	<b>Significant progress</b>

**Output 4: Electoral, legal and administrative reform supported to contribute to a stronger electoral commission and representative democracy (electoral reform)**

SECSIP I pursued initiative in this area under the heading Electoral and legal reform supported. Following the 2014 elections, SECSIP I provided IC expertise on the options for electoral reform through and papers support for discussions at workshops to the Electoral Reform Task Force led by the Prime Minister’s Office which included the EC and PPC. This type of as needed support continued under SECSIP II through the CTA, a lawyer, and through support for these processes. The ERTF also received advice through ESSP, which has placed a lawyer who is a senior electoral manager with the EMB since before the start of SECSIP in 2013. SECSIP II also worked with PPC to enhance its roles supporting electoral reform.

In 2017, under SECSIP I, the project supported the ERTF to hold provincial consultations on the draft EA, including idea of Limited Preferential Voting LPV, in six provinces. SECSIP I also provided political parties foundation training to political party leaders through an IC/firm. Under SECSIP II, the project supported the IC who reviewed and completed drafting of Electoral Bill, Political Parties Integrity (Amendment) Bill, and Constitution (Consequential Amendment) Bill; the project picked up this IC after an EU-funded contract for this IC concluded. The flexibility of the project in being able to provide this support was reportedly appreciated by the ERTF. In 2017, SECSIP II also support the participation of staff of the Political Parties Commission, and Integrity Commission, EC Chair, and representatives of four political parties at the annual UNDP Pacific Regional Dialogue on Political Parties.

Project support continued in 2018 for the IC legislative drafter; the final draft of the new legal framework was finally passed by the National Parliament in the last week of August 2018 with the

adoption of the Constitutional Amendment Act (22 August) and the Electoral Act (24 August). While the outcomes of electoral and legal reform depended on Parliament passing new legislation – which it did - the new Electoral Act as passed did not take up many of the larger electoral reforms and administrative or management changes suggested in options and white papers. The 2018 EA did not change the electoral system despite many discussions about moving away from FPTP (particularly to move to limited preferential voting as done in Papua New Guinea), support political party building, or take up TSM to increase the complement of women in Parliament.

The EO, as the administrative body that manages elections, is institutionally not well positioned to propose larger changes to the political system. SECSIP, as a provider of support to the EO and EC, has more of a mandate to support electoral and political reform based on the approval of the ProDoc within UNDP's respect for national sovereignty.

The acting CEO though December 2017 was reportedly not personally inclined or not in a position to advocate for the administrative/managerial reform components in the discussion of the new electoral act. While the next CEO had close connections to the PMO and interviews suggested that he focused on achieving institutional change through these legal reforms, he in the end found more modest successes. The 2018 EA made the EO budgetarily independent from the PMO and had the EO administer provincial assembly and local elections Ngala. In the wake of its passage, SIEC endorsed a regional presence for the EO in the provinces in order to conduct continuous voter registration and VA. These initiatives have the potential to strengthen the EO and the implementation of electoral processes in the Solomons; however so far, the regional presence has not been funded or staffed. At the EC, the Commissioners and Chair were not changed with the new act, despite the Chair suggesting that he preferred to change the system and no longer have the Commission led by the Speaker of Parliament.

SECSIP II continued support for electoral reform and the implementation of the new Electoral Act after passage. SECSIP is not in control of the content of electoral reform; some of the choices in the 2018 Act were not in line with expectations prior to the adoption of the bill, and other aspects left significant issues. One of the main issues in the 2019 election – and subsequent by-elections – has been the way that the definition of “ordinarily resident” in Section 4(2) of the Electoral Act 2018 has effectively been taken to mean that electors can register wherever they like, leaving the registration system subject to potential manipulation. Many provisions in the act were not clear, and left EC and EO with limited guidance. The EO had to ask the Attorney General's Office for clarification on who could and could not contest elections during nomination period. The project supported the development of key regulations to implement the EA, including ones to manage the ballot draw to determine candidate placement and for candidates to file the required statement of accounts after elections. SECSIP proposals to the EO for the revision of administrative forms led for the first time to the introduction of grounds for raising voter registration objections – which was key in 2019 as some of the most contentious issues were about whether registrants were ordinary residents in constituencies or were registering in particular constituencies as part of efforts to engineer the election of particular candidates. Also SECSIP support for PPC continued in 2018, with the project sending three graduates to support the thin staff of the institution. Graduates facilitated institutional collaboration between PPC and SIEC in the lead up to the NGE, particularly with respect to the process of registration of political parties and candidate nominations - which require verification by the PPC of endorsements by parties of candidates that run

as candidates of political parties. Graduates also supported the acting Registrar raise awareness through radio and presentations.

After the election, SECSIP supported the June 2019 EA review workshop towards learning lessons from the implementation of the new act. SECSIP also supported the participation of the delegation from the Solomons to the annual UNDP Pacific political parties regional conference.

In the first half of 2020, SECSIP supported two EO workshops with MPs on the general elections and electoral reform. Workshops covered EO priorities in electoral reform with MPs in March and April 2020, and operational aspects of the current act that need revision – particularly the vagueness of the term “ordinarily resident” that has proven controversial and consequential in elections - and the need for the review of the legal provisions governing provincial elections. SECSIP has continued to engage with PPC registrar towards developing plans and supporting awareness related activities to strengthen the office in 2020.

Output	Assessment of Achievements
<b>Output 4: Electoral, legal and administrative reform supported to contribute to a stronger electoral commission and representative democracy</b>	
<b>Output 4.1: Strengthened capacity of the PPC, SIEC and other actors involved in the reform process</b>	<b>Significant progress</b>

**Output 5: Increased capacity of communities to promote women’s political participation (women’s political participation/gender mainstreaming).**

SECSIP I added this output to the project in the 2015 (SECSIP I) revision of the ProDoc as “Capacity of the SIEC to promote gender mainstreaming in its institutional practices and the electoral process.” SECSIP II revised the formulation, which got around the problem of the limited capacity and interest in the EO and EC for gender mainstreaming beyond having one SIEO staff person serve as the Gender Focal Point for the Office. The hard work and focused effort of this one staff person in this area sometimes did not resonate with the rest of the Office. The new formulation of this objective focused SECSIP support on work with CSOs outside of the EO where promising, interested partners exist.

In the second half of 2017, SECSIP II continued to provide a national IC to support programming in this area and initially continued SECSIP I activities with secondary schools and teachers on women’s leadership and grants to CSOs for diverse activities towards expanding women’s engagement in and leadership through electoral politics.

In 2018, SECSIP supported a study on women’s leadership and political participation with fieldwork in 10 constituencies and the 2018 poster and essay competition for secondary students and teachers. Increased outreach led to increased visibility and participation in the contest, including at the awards ceremony. SECSIP also supported a panel for International Women’s Day with secondary students. In the second half of the year, SECSIP II then employed an experienced national gender equality consultant as an IC plus intermittent support from an international IC and held workshops to develop a strategy to improve the leadership and political participation of women through activities and a network, the

Women Support Network. SECSIP then held two four-day capacity building workshops for women towards these ends.

With the elections upcoming, SECSIP designed and organized pre-nomination trainings followed by two women candidate schools for the elections in February and March. In 2019, SECSIP supported women’s monitoring of the Provincial Assembly Elections in three provinces through CSO partners Tefila and Stages of Change. This was the first monitoring of PAEs by women’s organisation leaders. SECSIP also supported the setting up of 4 candidate resource centres located in Honiara, Auki, Buala and Kira Biala – and then handed-over office equipment afterwards - to the YWCA (Honiara) and the Provincial Councils of Women (Malaita, Isabel, Makira). SECSIP’s women’s leadership advisor provided technical support to women candidates, plus monitored elections in 11 polling stations herself.

After the NGE, in which two women were elected MPs (up from one in the previous Parliament), SECSIP organized a reflection workshop on the elections for women. The project also organized and facilitated individual training sessions for each of the 2 women candidates running for parliament in the one by-election in 2019; one woman was elected there in East Makira. This was the first time as many as three women have been MPs in the country’s history.

SECSIP also developed another initiative to promote women leadership in 2019. The Outstanding Women (OW) program had nominations for leading women and elections to determine OW at the provincial level, which then provided for additional recognition and visibility to these elected women. The OW program did outreach, training, and then managed elections with five OW elected in the last quarter of 2019; OW from the remaining four provinces and Honiara were to be elected in 2020. Delays ensued with the state of emergency’s measures against the spread of COVID-19 impeding activities by limiting social gatherings and travel. Eleven Outstanding Women, one in each of the 9 provinces and 2 in Honiara) were elected by the end of 2020. All of them, together with the presidents of the Provincial Councils of Women attended a one-week training in late 2020.

SECSIP II used its convening power and resources to support a 2020 meeting focused on women where the ANU observation mission report on 2019 NGE was presented. In 2020, the project has also continued to work to build up the profiles of elected OW and prepare for capacity building trainings to increase their leadership skills and knowledge. In late 2020, with new leadership at the EO, the project supported the review the Solomon Islands Electoral Office Policy on Gender and Social Inclusion and action plan, developed with the support of SECSIP I, through an IC. In the November 2020 by-elections, another woman was elected as MP - the first time that women’s representation in the Solomons has been as high as four MPs.

<b>Output</b>	<b>Assessment of Achievements</b>
<b>Output 5: Increased capacity of communities to promote women’s political participation</b>	
<b>Output 5.1: Enhanced ability of women to act as community leaders and representatives</b>	<b>Significant progress</b>

*2. Were the actions and activities implemented by the project effective to achieve project outputs and outcomes? How?*

SECSIP operated through its staff by providing technical assistance and material support to partners, particularly the EO, through ICs for specific activities, and through grants to CSOs under project outputs towards reaching the outcomes of the project. Interviews with project staff noted that the EO was a challenging environment for effective operations because of the small staff, limited capacity, and need to meet electoral responsibilities with little lead time. These characteristics made it challenging to effectively support the EO – and for effective operations of SECSIP.

*3. To what extent was the project successful in ensuring that lessons learned, good practices and other knowledge management outputs were communicated and understood and/or responded to in the design and implementation of new activities?*

SECSIP II supported lessons learned workshops after the 2019 election and wrote up the results of the three-workshops. This was the first time a NGE had been followed by regional meetings to learn from the experience of regional election administrators in an inclusive way. This was also the first time these lessons were written up into a formal paper by a SECSIP IC. These lessons were seen as useful by EO staff and leadership, as well as by SECSIP project staff.

SECSIP and UNDP in the Solomon Islands does not have an apparent knowledge management system or strategy to make project and CO-produced materials widely available in an organised fashion. Project materials are not widely available to partners and stakeholders in the Solomon Islands or Pacific, where many small island states face similar situations and issues. The ProDoc identified the need to strengthen the filing and archiving of the EO and of project materials which will also contribute to building institutional memory. Project support to date has been key in developing EO's web site; however, this is used more for operations towards providing public information in a timely way to support their participation in particular electoral events than broader learning and knowledge management. With the support of the new CEO, SECSIP is now engaging ICs to work on accessibility, filing and archiving (of both paper and electronic materials) and build internal capacities of the EO.

*4. To what extent did the project address gender and social inclusion issues?*

Project management and staff were conscious of and focused on reaching marginalized groups, in particular women and PWD, through activities that targeted women's political participation and leadership and the participation of PWD in electoral events. This effort was both mainstreamed in support for all outputs and through Output 5 focused on women's political participation and leadership.

## **Efficiency**

Efficiency is defined by the OECD/DAC as the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. The effectiveness section above noted the ways UNDP was able to deliver; this criterion assesses how commensurate these processes were given their costs.

*1. Were the actions to achieve the outputs efficient?*

The Solomon Islands are a difficult environment for efficient operations with a challenging geography and partners with limited capacity to implement efficiently. SECSIP implemented through a range of methods (project staff, ICs, international procurement support, national procurement to support SIEO and PPC, and grant awards to CSO partners). SECSIP worked through UNDP Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP) to competitively procure in ways that seem as efficient as possible in these conditions. The small size of the EO relative to the challenging environment made efficient operations difficult. These characteristics increased the need for the project to be flexible and adaptive to be effective in supporting activities towards project outputs, in ways that sometimes came a cost to efficient operations. The priority placed on effectiveness was seen as appropriate by interviews with SECSIP and EO staff.

## *2. How did the project deal with issues and risks?*

The ProDoc developed a risk log; SECSIP updated this log in project reporting. Risks were reported on and updated in reports to donors. This was also done orally to donors and at board meetings with concrete updates on progress made, in project reports, and in a systematic way by updating the risk log (such as in the January-June 2019 Progress Report). The EO also developed its own risk assessment for its future plans in the Electoral Reform Strategic Framework 2019-2023.

## *3. Were the actions to achieve the outputs risk informed and conducted in a timely manner?*

Best practices in electoral administration are to plan and prepare for activities essential to elections well in advance, and then to conduct these activities in a manner that supports high-quality administration and wide public engagement timed to meet this set schedule. The processes of electoral reform were uncertain and long; this was accurately seen as a risk by both the Office and Commission as well as the project. SECSIP too struggled with timeliness since project partners faced issues in this area. Plus SECSIP had its own challenges based on its administration and UNDP's administration in compliance with UNDP policies, which SIG and CSO partners sometimes felt were overly bureaucratic and slow even with a dedicated set of project staff working in administration and procurement.

## *4. Were there any lessons learned, failures/lost opportunities?*

SECSIP support for the development of a sustainable BVR system was seen by some interviewees as a lost opportunity. The BVR contractual arrangement with the BVR vendor does not enable full control over the system and jeopardizes future sustainability. While SECSIP had presented a number of alternatives to enhance national ownership and sustainability and the engagement of BVR experts was endorsed by the CEO in April 2018, it was stopped in September 2018 to avoid duplication and ensure best use of resources when project was informed that these aspects were to be covered by the vendor expertise directly engaged by the national authorities (ESI). However only one interviewee characterized this support as a failure. Other interviews noted that support from the project had supported SIEO's learning and developed the system, as well as expanded future ability to eventually manage this system. SIEO has not yet developed the capacity to manage the BVR system however which will require further investment in technical expertise, human resources capacities as well as hardware and software.

The experience of SECSIP II over the last two and a half years offers several lessons learned; Lessons are listed and discussed in their own section below.

*5. What might have been done better or differently?*

**Stronger planning and earlier action:** Interviews noted areas where project assistance, informants felt, would have been more effective and efficient, if planned and delivered earlier in the electoral cycle. For example, pre-nomination training for potential women MP aspirants, held in the months before the 2019 election was seen as late and was thought to have been potentially more effective if delivered with substantially more time for aspirants to use their increased capacity to build relationships and campaign.

**Clear communication and coordination:** Informants noted that communication between electoral assistance partners and between SECSIP and the EO was sometimes not clear, which led to challenges in coordination of activities and assistance and contributed to sometimes challenging relationships. Although there are less than a dozen key actors in electoral administration and VR in the Solomons, they nevertheless have found alignment difficult

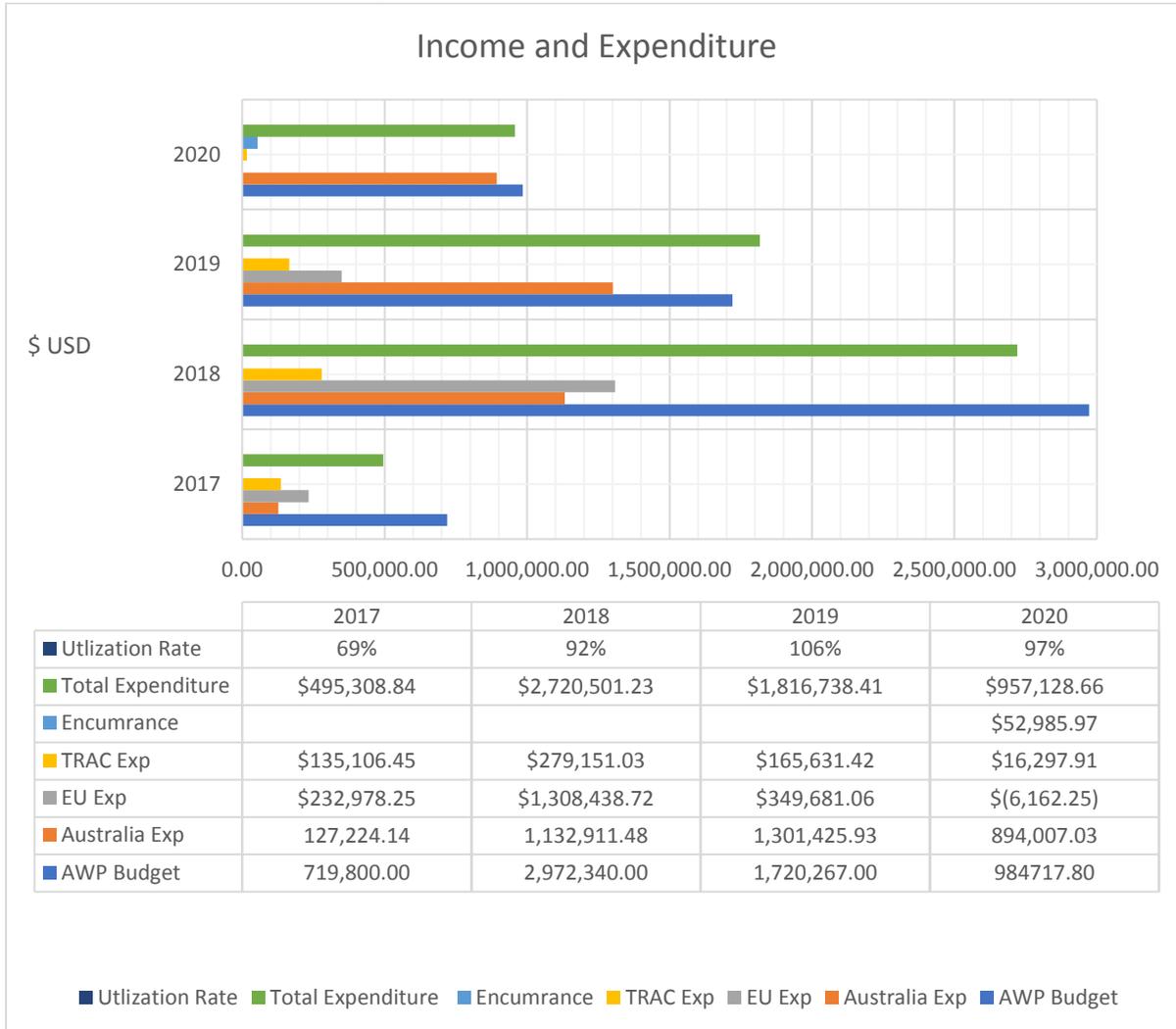
**Validated, agreed partnership agreements for particular components of assistance:** The breakdown in assistance over BVR suggests that stronger agreements between partners on agreed directions may be necessary.

**Increasing programmatic synergies and planning;** Increased collaboration with other UNDP projects and with UN Women and potentially UNFPA - especially for the efforts to support women candidates and reform and for work with youth -could help strengthen the efforts of SECSIP, other projects like the PBF-funded ones, and UN Women and UNFPA. Limited evidence of collaboration across UNDP projects and between UNDP and other UN organisations was apparent – even when UNDP peacebuilding project worked in some of these areas, as did UN Women and UNFPA.

*6. Were the resources (time, funding, human resources) sufficient and utilized in the best way possible?*

The Solomons are a challenging environment for project implementation, SECSIP faced challenges coordinating in a strategic way with other electoral support providers and great uncertainty about the legal environment, plans, and funding for electoral activities from the SIG and Parliament. The project's delivery follows as Table 1.

Table 1: SECSIP II Income and Expenditure, 2017-2020



Uncertainty in this fluid environment and these sets of issues made it hard to utilize resources systematically towards reaching project outcomes or to systematically support project partners. EO practices of demanding or assuming new and unplanned support from SECSIP for activities impeded efficient preparation and implementation in these cases. These demands also impeded relations between partners, particularly in VR, in ways that made it difficult to utilize resources in the best way possible. Support from the project for VR did not result in utilization in the best way possible; while support encouraged sustainability, the choice of the commission to go in the direction of SIG funding for the old ESI system did not take full advantage of project efforts towards sustainable, national ownership of the VR system for SIEO.

Project management and staff (excluding short-term consultants) over the period of SECSIP II, July 2017 through June 2021 (or this writing as of February 2021), have been:

CTA Olga Rábade, July 2017 - present (February 2021)

Project Coordinator Florrie Alalo, February 2020 – present

Project Coordinator PISOth Ving, October 2017 - October 2019

Procurement Analyst Crystal Saelea, July 2017- present

Finance & Administration Hyemin Hazel Yeo, July 2017 - present

Grant Coordinator Florrie Alalo, November 2018 – December 2019

Gender and Elections Specialist Afu Billy, July 2018 - present

Gender and Elections Specialist Deborah Kole, July 2017 -June 2018

Evaluation Specialist Mokther Hossain, October 2018 - October 2019

Electoral Operations Specialist Muammer Mrahorovic, June 2018-April 2019

### **Impact and Sustainability**

Impact is “the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.” Impact is differentiated from effectiveness in that it addresses the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of the intervention. It seeks to identify social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term or broader in scope than those already captured under the effectiveness criterion.

Sustainability assesses the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue, after the intervention ends.

#### *1. What is the main impact (intended and unintended) of the project?*

SIEC/SIEO, project staff, donor, and partner interviews and SECSIP, SIEO, and independent analyses all noted that the electoral office has important impacts, converging around carrying out successfully the 2019 NGE: legal reform and the new Electoral Act in 2018, widespread and varied voter awareness and civic engagement campaigns, the successful BVR update, 2019 NGE itself, and subsequent by-elections in November 2020, and supporting the Solomons to made headway in the election of women as MPs and in strengthening women’s leadership more broadly.

The project has successfully supported SIEC and SIEO address the most prominent problems of the 2014 elections and their aftermath – the lack of confidence voters had in the secrecy of the ballot. SECSIP I addressed the excessively large voter roll and registration fraud that were the main pre-2014 problems with electoral processes through the implementation of BVR. Measures taken at that time that used a unique serial number that linked each voter to their ballot, processing these ballots in ways that did not obscure the village or ward of voters, the failure of SIEO to secure and dispose of ballots after the election, corruption and prevailing cultural practices left it possible for politicians to identify “their” voters and single them out for services, while disfavoring others in their constituencies. SECSIP raised the need to enhance the secrecy of the vote numerous times with the EO and other key stakeholders, produced analysis papers supporting potential changes, engaged the legislative drafter and developed the operational procedures to mix batches with significant support of the operations adviser and the data and results management consultant who developed the necessary forms. The result was that SECSIP II support for legal reform changed the law to remove serial numbers, new practices of batching voters introduced SECSIP and ESSP support addressed this issue in vote counting, and better

administration and regulations addressed EO problems afterwards that had previously left vulnerabilities.

*2. To what extent have the project management, oversight and administration mechanisms and processes have contributed to a lasting impact on the electoral institutions and capacities, going beyond the lifespan of SECSIP II?*

Project reporting noted and interviews with the EO, SECSIP staff, and donors felt that SECSIP II support has had a lasting impact on elections in the Solomons through project support for legal and regulatory changes for the 2019 elections, and capacity building at the EO – as well as that this support is not enough for the Solomons to go forward to the next elections without additional support.

With SECSIP II support, several new processes were piloted in the Solomons for the first time, that set valuable precedents and built experience that can be – and has been – used in the recent by-elections. These practices include pre-election voting (pre-polling) for voters that staff or provide security for the polls, domestic observation, and the participation of PWD in electoral observation.

Other SECSIP support was seen as contributing to processes that were promising going forward. While the Solomons are still far from achieving gender equality, women’s representation in parliament grew from 1 to 4 MPs by the conclusion of the November 2020 by-elections.

*3. Were the actions and results owned by the national partners and stakeholders?*

SECSIP II support was briefed to the CEO and Chair of the Commission, and approved by the project board, co-chaired by the EC Chair. This structure was meant to ensure national ownership. Particular activities within the project - came at the request – and often specific, detailed and sometimes ad-hoc request – of leaders of the EO and Commission.

SECSIP support for voter awareness and women’s political participation through CSOs has the ownership of these organisations, which identified the types of activities and modalities of delivering them themselves (with a common set of knowledge and standards on VA and CE provided by the EO). CSO partners in women’s leadership and political participation also own the content of their activities. Support to women’s leadership by the project is not owned by the EO as outside of their mandate. Interviews noted that this area was outside of the commission’s remit; however that was not seen as a problem.

*4. Was the capacity (individuals, institution, and system) built through the actions of the project?*

SECSIP supported capacity building for institutions (the EO and PPC) and for individuals in these institutions and civil society – as well as connections between them – that could be said to have helped build the capacity of the electoral system in the Solomon Islands. Individuals’ skills in the EO and SECSIP’s CSO partners have improved and the EO has more capacity for electoral operations as well as for VA and CE. The capacity of the electoral system however remains limited and continues to rely on large SIG outlays for BVR through ESI and support from SECSIP and ESSP with international funding.

*5. Were the delivery modalities 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?*

SECSIP II, as with the first phase of the project, has been delivered through direction implementation (DIM) by UNDP. This modality limits to some extent national ownership and sustainability – but is seen by UNDP, donors and project staff as a necessity for accountability reasons. Some EO interviews noted a preference for national implementation (NIM) because activities implemented in this manner were expected to have more ownership of the EMB. However this is not seen as a realistic possibility.

Grant awards to CSO partners were used as a way to help build sustainable capacity in civil society on voter awareness and women’s leadership. The ways some SECSIP activities were designed and implemented focused on helping to build the capacity of multiple partners. The 2019 KAP survey used SIEO staff and CSO partners (with IC support) that will continue to work on voter awareness rather than contracting to a private firm as with the 2014 KAP survey.

Sustainability was considered in the design of SECSIP II, both in the outputs themselves (such as Output 1: Sustainable voter registration system created to strengthen the inclusiveness and integrity of the electoral cycle) and by designing the project in such a way that included both a short-term focus on the 2019 NGE and a long-term focus in each output. Expectations for sustainability seem to have been modest, based on the 2016 capacity assessment of the EMB done by SECSIP I and UNDP’s experience implementing in the Solomons with SIG partners and civil society.

*6. Will the outputs/outcomes lead to benefits beyond the life of the existing project?*

In BVR, the EO is more aware of the challenges that their lack of control and ownership over the software and data pose for the EMB. The EO has more capacity in electoral administration and voter awareness than before SECSIP, and this capacity will carry on past the planned end of the project in June 2021. Project support to CSOs has also increased their capacity in voter awareness and women’s leadership as well as capacity in grants management. This capacity will continue to benefit CSOs going forward, not only in these areas but generally as organisations. Their links and connections to the EO will also likely endure which can facilitate quality, consistent FtF voter awareness work in the future from these CSO partners.

*7. Will the Project actions on cross cutting issues including gender and social inclusion contribute to a lasting and sustainable impact?*

Women’s political participation and leadership as well as the full inclusion of PWD pose difficult challenges in the cultures and context of the Solomon Islands. The project’s important initiatives in these areas worked to strengthen women’s organisations, key women leaders, and the leading PWD organisation and its members in the Solomons. This strengthening contributes to meeting the longer-term needs for sustainable, strong organisations and individuals in the Solomons to lead in women’s political participation and realizing the rights of PWD. SECSIP support for VA and CE as well as its

activities in women's leadership and political participation have helped strengthen the capacity of EO staff in gender and social inclusion; this experience will continue to have a positive impact on the EO post-SECSIP II through the EO staff that continue in the office.

## **Project design and management**

### *1. To what extent did the design of the project help in achieving its own goals?*

SECSIP II was designed in a similar fashion to SECSIP I, with only modest changes to the language of some of the outputs. However these changes were also more realistic as they made it clear how SECSIP would collaborate with actors other than SIEO/SIEC towards achieving some of its key outputs, particularly in women's political participation and leadership through work with CSOs. The design was thus conducive to achieving the goals as partnership with SIEO was key to achieving outputs on voter registration, electoral administration, and voter awareness/civic education.

### *2. Was the context, problem, needs and priorities well analyzed while designing the project? How did the final evaluation of SECSIP Phase I feed into the design of phase II?*

The ProDoc had both a brief political economy analysis of the situation surrounding elections and the SIEC before then using the capacity assessment done under SECSIP I to analyze the situation of the small EMB. The project design also noted that it took into account the conclusions and recommendations of the independent final evaluation of SECSIP I from June 2017 and appeared to do so; nevertheless the realities of working with a small SIEC with limited capacity that posed challenges for SECSIP I remained for Phase II, as did the challenging context for coordination with other AHC-funded assistance to SIEC.

### *3. Were there clear objectives and strategy?*

SECSIP and donors noted that the objectives and strategy of the project were clear. SIEC and SIEO staff also interviewed also noted that they understood what SECSIP II was trying to achieve and the framework the project used towards reaching these objectives. The understanding that SECSIP had to both support immediate needs for elections and to support longer-term capacity building was well understood. These dual modes however were challenging in practice, as SECSIP was pulled to meet unexpected or changing needs of SIEO and found it difficult to support strategic goals like a sustainable BVR system in the context of SIEO's choices.

### *4. Was the process of project design sufficiently participatory?*

Project design meetings commenced in late 2016. A number of multilateral and bilateral discussions took place until LPAC in June 2017. The draft ProDoc was developed in May 2017 based on the experience of SECSIP I, a mission to Honiara by the UNDP Regional Electoral Advisor for consultations and project drafting, and took into account the conclusions and recommendations of the independent final evaluation of SECSIP I from June 2017. The ProDoc was endorsed by the Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) in June 2017. At this point however the EO did not have an appointed CEO but only

an acting CEO. In hindsight, maybe having a permanent incumbent in this key post instead of an acting one could have brought additional contributions from senior management to project formulation. This left the EO not in a strong position to collaborate with SECSIP in project design to develop the new three-year project focused on its long-term priorities or integrated with the Office's plans. Electoral Commissioners too did not have the expertise or experience to develop their own strategy to be implemented by with the support of SECSIP.

*5. Was there coherence and complementarity by the project with other electoral assistance providers?*

Coherence and complementarity of electoral assistance providers the Solomon Islands has been and continued to be challenging over the period of SECSIP II. Interviews noted that the EO often did not coordinate assistance providers and did not link ESI, the firm engaged for BVR, with assistance providers. Assistance providers themselves (SECSIP, ESSP and the AEC) had challenges coordinating with each other – even when they were all funded by the government of Australia. The small community of international assistance providers has not been able to plan and coordinate in a strategic fashion in support for the electoral cycle – even when most providers operate out of the same small EO office space and SECSIP has invited ESSP advisors to all project meetings, including board meetings.

*6. Was the project structure at management and team levels (in terms of human resources, time management, availability of relevant skill etc.) and at project board level appropriate?*

SECSIP II was managed by the same CTA throughout its period of implementation July 2017 to the present, with an international Project Coordinator for two years from October 2017 to October 2019 and a Project Coordinator in 2020. SECSIP provided key advice and legal advice) from the CTA and supplemented this with other staff with extensive experience in electoral operations that was needed by the EO. SECSIP has also employed full time procurement and administrative staff due to the demands of DIM implementation in the Solomons context. Board management has challenges because of the limited capacity and expertise in elections of the EC Commissioners, which they themselves recognize, and the part-time nature of their roles.

*7. To what extent donor visibility and acknowledgement was ensured?*

SECSIP staff reported working hard to ensure visibility and following procedures to brand publications and display banners. SECSIP branded its support and activities appropriately with the logos of the government of Australia, the EU, and UNDP. Donors noted their appreciation with the recognition and were well satisfied with the visibility the that the project provided them as donors. The EUD in Fiji greatly appreciated the reporting of the project and sharing information about electoral processes in the Solomons, which was appreciated by the diplomatic as well as EEAS staff – particularly after the EU closed its office in Honiara in 2018.

*8. How effective was the monitoring and evaluation, reporting and result management of the project?*

The program has monitored program implementation through staff, including a dedicated M&E specialist, and through reports from CSO partners. SECSIP has reported to both of its donors through

semi-annual and annual reports as well as ad hoc reports, including on particular issues such as the Outstanding Women programme. At the end of 2019, the project team produced a final report to the EU on the activities and results of assistance from 2013-2019.

The AHC has independent reporting on electoral support activities from ESSP; the AHC nevertheless appreciated the quality and timeliness of project reporting. The EUD, especially after closing their office in Honiara, greatly valued project reporting as well as other contact with SECSIP to stay apprised of electoral developments in the Solomons.

The ProDoc's expected outputs were challenging to measure and some had limited connection to the intent of the output (e.g. proportion of eligible voters registered for 1.1 does not address sustainability of the VR system) and/or did not develop indicators that could be readily monitored or that were monitored. The ratings system developed in the Results Framework does not seem to have been used. The results framework may not have been useful for management, but has been used to structure the reporting in annual reports.

## **5. Lessons Learned**

*Project implementation is challenging in timebound, politically sensitive areas of assistance such as electoral processes in the Solomon Islands.* The EO and SECSIP both were often seen to not be as early as needed or ideal in preparation for electoral events or assistance towards these events.

*The interaction of key political questions and issues with questions and challenges of electoral administration are close and present many uncertainties for UNDP electoral assistance in the Solomon Islands. Technical assistance design and delivery in such an evolving context is difficult.* The contested and uncertain progress of electoral reform made planning and eventual activity design and implementation difficult – as many of the expected changes to the electoral framework and institutions were not made in the 2018 EA.

*Clear communications and commitments have proven difficult to make and sustain in areas of electoral administration, particularly BVR.* Stronger, closer stakeholder engagement and partnership may be needed to avoid misunderstandings that have proven detrimental to project design, project implementation, and results.

*Sustainability has proven difficult in BVR and electoral administration since the EMB and country have limited capacity in IT and so few staff.* The Project has not been able to successfully work with the EO to achieve a sustainable system for BVR, for which the Solomon Islands still depends on ESI, a private firm. The EO successfully managed the 2019 NGE with help from international partners, but the challenging communications/IT situation and the challenges of recruiting, training, and managing the large complement of temporary staff for the sensitive work of election administration remains to be tackled again for the next NGE.

*Tensions between capacity support and capacity substitution are difficult with the limited capacity of the EO and the pressing needs to deliver on electoral events. SECSIP support thus had to be flexible – in supporting capacity development when possible but also providing essential support for the delivery of key VR, electoral, VA, and CE products and processes.*

## **6. Recommendations**

1. SECSIP should focus on what can be accomplished in final six months period of the extended project (through June 2021) under COVID-19 conditions and the preparation of a successor follow-on project.
2. UNDP/Solomon Islands should decide whether to develop either a broad democratic governance project or a more focused project supporting electoral administration.

UNDP should engage with partners, stakeholders and donors on whether to develop a successor electoral cycle support programme with a broad focus on democratic development as well as support for the administration of elections – or a narrower project dedicated to electoral administration. Problematic links between Melanesian social patterns and the political system have been identified as some of the causes of the 1998-2003 “Tensions” that led to international intervention, limit the effectiveness of governance, and has been convincingly linked to the limited character and extent of socio-economic development across the Solomons. A project developed around improving good governance through elections in the Solomons could engage widely across society and government towards reaching an understanding of ways democratic practices could better support good governance and development. This may still be timely as constitutional reform remains on the agenda. Such an undertaking would however be a complex working politically exercise.

For a focus on democratic governance as a successor electoral support project:

- 3a. UNDP should consider conducting a broader political economy analysis of governance in the Solomon Islands to underpin its projects overall – which would also contribute to preparing a project prepared to think and work politically in democratic governance (and electoral administration).
- 3b. UNDP should consider support to increase transparency and accountability in the political system, including in political parties and coalitions, and what work can be done with PPC and other partners and stakeholders to increase the relevance of political parties in organizing politics and governance in the country.
- 3c. UNDP should consider supporting analyses of the benefits and costs to the development of the country of channeling so much of SIG government development funding through MPs through the CDF and other funding mechanisms compared to programs that could operate through programmes of Ministries or Provincial Governments. UNDP should support broad public awareness and discussion of these questions and alternatives across the country.

3d. UNDP should continue to support programming to enhance women’s political participation and leadership. While the number of women contesting and winning positions has grown, the opportunities for strong independent women candidates or women linked to political parties to win elections remain limited – at the provincial assembly or Parliament level. A comprehensive approach that provides substantial support to large number of women to boost their leadership skills and experience working with communities, wards, constituencies, and the country remains needed to strive towards the overall goal of gender equality in electoral politics.

4. For both narrower successor project focused on electoral administration and as part the potential alternative broader projected focused on democratic governance:

4a. In the remaining six months of phase II, SECSIP should prioritize conducting an inclusive, comprehensive technical capacity assessment of the EO to identify clearly the existing capacity of the EMB and its capacity gaps in terms of meeting the current responsibilities and future plans of the office.

4b. SECSIP should work closely with the new leadership of the EO and the staff to facilitate agreement and consensus on realistic goals for the EO, action plans to achieve the strategic plan, and activities to support institutional capacity building to meet the goals of the agreed-upon action plans. With a capacity assessment and prioritized action plans and new CEO, UNDP can plan and prioritize electoral cycle support programming to help the EMB achieve these goals. Having a CEO without extensive experience in electoral administration suggests high-level operations advice and support should remain a priority for the EO and international assistance.

4c. A follow-on project in electoral administration should considering using the same objectives of SECSIP phases I and II because international support appears to still be needed to achieve the outputs of:

Sustainable voter registration system created to strengthen the inclusiveness and integrity of the election cycle

More efficient and effective administrative procedures designed and implemented for the EO to fulfil its mandate

National authorities and local networks have better capacity to train and educate the population on voter awareness and civic engagement

Electoral, legal and administrative reform supported to contribute to a stronger electoral commission and representative democracy

Increased capacity of communities to promote women’s political participation

All other areas of potential support identified as appropriate in the 2019 NAM can fit well under these objectives.

5. Any successor project should be developed through results-based methodologies that articulate clear outcomes that the project will contribute to – with clear outputs that can lead to these outcomes. Outputs should be clearly articulated and be measurable, with baseline data and plans to measure progress towards outputs going forward under the next project. However, it may be more difficult or not be possible to develop a comprehensive, clear a results-based project in outcomes in broader areas

of democratic governance as there are substantial uncertainties about national choices of governance modalities and reform. Outputs should be designed with a focus on sustainable results owned by national counterparts. SECSIP should consider hiring an experienced IC for substantive dialogue and engagement to develop an outcome-based project with clear expectations about outputs and their contributions to expected outcomes.

6. UNDP should consider joining with the AHC and potentially the EU or other interested international parties to form a regular, small donor coordination group on electoral assistance (or democratic governance and electoral administration) in order to strengthen cooperation and collaboration and avoid issues. Membership and leadership of this group should be at the level above SECSIP and ESSP. A future project would benefit from a clearer, agreed roles between assistance efforts. SECSIP and this group should also consult with IFES about their workplan and activities to be conducted under their USAID contract in order not to duplicate these engagements in the development of a new project – and collaborate closely to not only avoid duplication in implementation but to complement the activities and results from each intervention. Extensive consultations with DFAT and its partners are also required to understand future Australian electoral assistance through ESSP or the AEC.

7. UNDP should consider using the same staff or IC(s) for these linked processes and products (capacity assessment of the EO, action plan towards meeting the SIEC strategic plan, and successor UNDP electoral cycle project document – and potentially the political economy analysis) because of the need for comprehensive stakeholder engagement and links between these processes and a high-quality, partner-owned successor project that can emphasize sustainability of the achievements made in the electoral system and key actors within it in the Solomon Islands in the next project.

8. UNDP should increase its efforts to collaborate across UNDP projects and with other UN agencies, particularly UN Women and UNFPA - especially for the efforts to support women candidates and reform and for work with youth -to strengthen efforts to achieve similar goals and objectives.

9. UNDP should develop and sustain a dedicated website that organizes and makes widely available both brief descriptions of all projects, including SECSIP, and the products produced by these projects in ways that can be used by citizens in the Solomons and other Pacific island countries to support discussion, debate, and development in the Solomons.

## **Annex 1: Terms of Reference**

**Services/Work Description:** To conduct an independent end evaluation of SECSIP II project

**Project/Programme Title:** Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project phase II (SECSIP II)

**Consultancy Title:** Project Evaluation Consultant

**Duty Station:** Home-based

**Duration:** 25 working days

### **1. BACKGROUND**

The UNDP SECSIP II (Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project Phase I) was established in 2013 by UNDP to support the Solomon Islands electoral authorities, the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) and its executive branch, the Solomon Islands Electoral Office (SIEO). SECSIP initial phase ended on 30 June 2017. An end evaluation of this phase was conducted in May-June 2017. A follow up project phase (SECSIP II) was launched on 1 July 2017 with an expected duration of three years. SECSIP II has mobilized USD \$ 5.7 million managed through a multi-donor basket mechanism which has received financial contributions of the Government of Australia, the European Union and UNDP. The project mandate is consistent with UNDP assistance throughout the entire electoral cycle (pre-election; elections/polling and post-election) offering support to the electoral authorities mandate to conduct inclusive and credible electoral processes. The Project focuses on five components: capacity development, voter registration, electoral reform, civic engagement/voter awareness and women's political participation/gender mainstreaming.

Solomon Islands is a country of some 900 islands with a rich diversity in terms of social values, norms, cultural beliefs, practices, languages and religion. These factors have an impact on the design and implementation of strategies in connection with the knowledge and possible perceptions of the electorate relating to effective governance, democracy as well as to political and economic issues of the country. The overarching objective of the project is to strengthen the link between the electoral cycle and other key governance processes and institutions and to contribute to social cohesion and the development of a pluralistic society. In this context, SECSIP has endeavoured to consider the country's diversity by developing synergies and strategic partnerships with a range of national stakeholders from the government as well as from civil society to ensure that an enabling environment for credible and inclusive elections is created.

The Project Document of SECSIP II identified and prioritized support actions to assist the capacities of the Solomon Islands authorities in the planning, preparation and implementation of the 2019 national general elections held on the 3rd April 2019 and post-election activities. Where possible this support was dovetailed with other longer-term initiatives to expand inclusiveness and build the institutional strengthening.

The Solomon Islands Election Commission (SIEC) has requested the continuity of UN electoral assistance throughout the next electoral cycle with expected general elections to be held in 2023. In 2019 the UN deployed a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) which recommended the continuity of assistance. In this context and as required in SECSIP Project Document, UNDP seeks to engage an experienced consultant to conduct an independent end evaluation of SECSIP II project. The aim of this evaluation is two-fold: to assess the impact and relevance of the project implementation and to provide a tool for the design of the next electoral assistance project by identifying achievements and lessons learned.

## **2. SCOPE OF WORK, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED WORK**

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

### **Relevance**

1. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to SIEC goals and challenges?
2. To what extent 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 UNDAF, UN electoral assistance mandate and UN SDGs, in particular SDG 16?
4. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic with respect to the national development strategy?

### **Effectiveness**

1. To what extent did the project achieve its outputs?
2. Were the actions and activities implemented by the project effective to achieve project outputs and outcomes? How?
3. To what extent was the project successful in ensuring that lessons learned, good practices and other knowledge management outputs were communicated and understood and/or responded to in the design and implementation of new activities?
4. To what extent did the project address gender and social inclusion issues?

### **Efficiency**

1. Were the actions to achieve the outputs efficient?
2. How did the project deal with issues and risks?
3. Were the actions to achieve the outputs risk informed and conducted in a timely manner?
4. Were there any lessons learned, failures/lost opportunities?

5. What might have been done better or differently?
6. Were the resources (time, funding, human resources) sufficient and utilized in the best way possible?

### **Impact and Sustainability**

1. What is the main impact (intended and unintended) of the project?
2. To what extent the project management, oversight and administration mechanisms and processes have contributed to a lasting impact on the electoral institutions and capacities, going beyond the lifespan of SECSIP II?
3. Were the actions and results owned by the national partners and stakeholders?
4. Was the capacity (individuals, institution, and system) built through the actions of the project?
5. Were the delivery modalities 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?
6. Will the outputs/outcomes lead to benefits beyond the life of the existing project?
7. Will the Project actions on cross cutting issues including gender and social inclusion contribute to a lasting and sustainable impact?

### **Project design and management**

1. To what extent did the design of the project help in achieving its own goals?
2. Was the context, problem, needs and priorities well analyzed while designing the project? How did the final evaluation of SECSIP Phase I feed into the design of phase II?
3. Were there clear objectives and strategy?
4. Was the process of project design sufficiently participatory?
5. Was there coherence and complementarity by the project with other electoral assistance providers?
6. Was the project structure at management and team levels (in terms of human resources, time management, availability of relevant skill etc.) and at project board level appropriate?
7. To what extent donor visibility and acknowledgement was ensured?
8. How effective was the monitoring and evaluation, reporting and result management of the project?

### **Study of relevant stakeholders**

- Government stakeholders included Solomon Islands Electoral Commission and its Electoral Office, Political Party Commission and the Office of the Registrar of the Political Parties, and Ministries (namely Ministry of Home Affairs and Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs).
- Donors: Australia, EU and UNDP
- Civil Society
- Media
- Electorate

## **Process and Methodology**

Based on UNDP guidelines for evaluations and UNEG evaluation norms and standards, and in consultation 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 (KIIs) 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 other electoral stakeholders

Special measures will be put into place to ensure that the interview processes are ethical. The sources of information will be protected and known only to the interviewers.

The assessment will be completed in two phases: Inception Phase and Assessment Phase. In the inception phase, the details of the assessment methodology will be agreed upon. The inception phase will include interaction with the UNDP Country Office and SECSIP to prepare an Inception Report which will describe the evaluators' understanding of what is being assessed and the rationale for the proposed methodology to reach the stated objectives of the assessment. It will also provide a detailed proposed schedule of tasks, activities and deliverables.

The assessment phase will take place after the approval of the Inception Report by UNDP Country Manager. The assessment phase will include: KIIs with relevant stakeholders and sharing of draft findings and a final report.

### Key Informant Interview (KIIs):

A minimum ten (10) KIIs will be conducted with relevant stakeholders who will be selected from the list of stakeholders mentioned in page 3. SECSIP Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), M&E Consultant, and project team will assist in connecting the evaluation consultant with senior management, development partners, beneficiaries and key stakeholders.

Prior to KII the CTA will provide key project documentation, and SECSIP project staff will assist in developing a programme to facilitate interviews and teleconferences as necessary.

## MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

Under the direct supervision of UNDP Country Manager, the evaluation consultant will conduct the end evaluation within 25 working days over a period of one month. SECSIP Coordination Officer in coordination with M&E Consultant will be responsible for follow-up so as to keep the exercise on time, on target and on budget.

The PB will duly be presented the methodologies, inception report and all subsequent reports, and informed of progress.

The key stakeholders of the evaluation will have the opportunity to reflect on the draft findings of the evaluation; the final evaluation will be public and published on UNDP ATLAS. The CTA will ensure that the independent consultant adequately addresses and provide a rationale for any comments that are not accepted. They will also bear responsibility to ensure all factual information in the evaluation is corrected prior to its publishing.

### 3. Expected Outputs and deliverables

#### a) Inception report:

The evaluation consultant will submit an inception report based on a desk review of the relevant documentation and face to face/teleconference discussions with the SECSIP office (report: max 7 pages plus annexes). It will assess the appropriateness/implications of the proposed evaluation questions and identify the final components to be surveyed and how. It will outline a detailed description of the envisaged methodology and an explanation as to why this is the most appropriate way forward. The inception report will include proposed work plan and report structure with preliminary KII questionnaires and envisaged timeline.

b) Draft report: The consultant should submit a draft report for review and feedback from SECSIP team and other relevant stakeholders. This report should not be more than 25 pages plus annexes. This report should include study methodology, findings, good practices, lesson learned, challenges, and recommendations for future interventions. SECSIP will hold a national stakeholders' workshop for validation of the findings at which the consultant should present the findings either in-person or through teleconference.

c) Final report: Based on the feedback on the draft report, the consultant will update/correct the factual information and findings. The consultant will be in charge of incorporating to the largest extent possible the comments and correcting all factual issues identified, while preserving his/her independent views as an evaluator. The report should address all evaluation questions agreed upon in the inception phase.

The final report should not exceed 30 pages, not including appendices or the Executive Summary. It should provide good practices, lessons learned and a clear evidence basis for all its recommendations. All recommendations should be actionable. The UNDP Country Manager will have editorial control of the final report.

## TIMEFRAME

The total duration of this assignment is for 25 working days.

Inception report – (Home-based) 5 days

- Desk review
- Proposed report structure and timeline
- Preparation of KII checklist and questionnaires

Production of evaluation report – (Home-based) 20 days (unless otherwise requested by UNDP CO taking into account COVID 19 situation)

- Conduct KII
- Field visit/s (if needed and agreed by project management)
- Presentation and validation of findings
- Draft report submitted for comments
- Final report

<b><i>If COVID19 situation prevents from travelling, the assignment will be completed home-based with the use of teleconference means for the conduct of bilateral and multilateral meetings, interviews and discussions. If this is the case no DSA (Daily Subsistence Allowance) will be provided. Activity</i></b>	<b>Number of Days</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>
- Desk review - Inception report as outlined above	5 days	Inception report
Key Informant Interviews	5 days	KII narrative as a part in the draft report
Draft report Validation of draft findings Debrief presentation with findings, conclusions and recommendations Field visits if agreed	10 days	Draft report with findings, good practices, lessons learned, challenges and recommendations Honiara
Final report	5 days	Final report with findings, good practices, lessons learned, challenges and recommendations and annexes

## 4. Institutional arrangements/reporting lines

To ensure the independence of the process, the incumbent of this consultancy will be reporting to UNDP Country Manager.

The incumbent will be in 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.

## **Annex 2: List of Documents Reviewed**

### **Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands (SECSIP) documents**

2020

Final Report for the European Union. 1 July 2013 – 31 December 2019.

Progress Report, January-June 2020

Individual Consultant Procurement Notice (ICPN) Terms of Reference (TOR) National Consultant – Graphic Designer. Annual Work Plan, SECSIP Phase II, January 22.

Report on Outstanding Women in Solomon Islands Initiative

Outstanding Women (OW) of the Solomon Islands: Celebrating Women’s Leadership in our Communities. September.

OW leadership workshop evaluation findings

2019

Annual Report 2019. Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP II),

Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP II), January – June 2019.

Annual Work Plan, SECSIP Phase II.

2019 National General Election – Summary of Discussion on Lessons Learnt (Operational Aspects). May.

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) Study Final Report. September.

ICPN TOR Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) Study Consultant

Solomon Islands National General Election 2019 Data Analysis. April (Maharjan, Pradip).

Post-Election Lessons Learned of UNDP Support.

Concept Note – Outstanding Women of Solomon Islands.

Running to Win – Women Candidate School Final Report (Selvaratnam, Shamini).

2018

Annual Report 2018. Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP II),

Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP II), January – June 2018.

Quarterly Progress Report, 1 July to 30 September 2018

Quarterly Progress Report, 1 April to 30 June 2018

Quarterly Progress Report, 1 January to 30 March 2018

National Women’s Leadership Workshop August 2018 – Official Programme.

Electoral Risk Assessment – Solomon Islands, June.

ICPN TOR Senior Biometric Voter Registration Advisor

National Women’s Leadership Workshop, Official Programme

Research on Women’s Leadership and Political Participation in Selected Constituencies of Solomon Islands – Synthesis Report.

ICPN TOR, Data Center Officer.

Annual Work Plan, SECSIP Phase II.

2017

Progress Report 1 January – 30 June 2017.

Progress Report 1 July – 31 December 2017.

Quarterly Progress Report, 1 September to 31 December 2017

Quarterly Progress Report, 1 July to 30 September 2018

Quarterly Progress Report, 1 April to 30 June 2018

Strengthening the Electoral Cycle Project in the Solomon Islands – Final Evaluation – Evaluation Report.

Media Trainings: Evaluation Report. June (Palmer, Ednal).

Review of Limited Preferential Voting in Papua New Guinea. November (Peter Brent).

ICPN TOR Review of Limited Preferential Voting in Papua New Guinea

2015

Voter Awareness Survey Evaluation – Final Report.

**Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC)/ Solomon Islands Electoral Office (SIEO) materials developed with SECSIP support**

2019. Solomon Islands Electoral Commission: Corporate Plan 2019-2023.

2019. Electoral Reform Strategic Framework (2019-2023).

2018. You, Me, Our Country (Voter Education Booklet).

2018. Voter Awareness Manual 2018-2019.

2018. Voter Registration.

2016. National Voter Awareness Strategy 2016 – 2019.

## United Nations materials

Executive Summary - Solomon Islands: United Nations Electoral Needs Assessment Mission, 29 October – 3 November 2019

United Nations Pacific Strategy 2018-2022. November 2019.

[https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/UNDP\\_WS\\_FINAL\\_UNPS\\_2018-2022.pdf](https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/UNDP_WS_FINAL_UNPS_2018-2022.pdf)

## Other sources

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“Making it count: Lessons from Australian electoral assistance 2006–16.” Canberra: Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/making-it-count-lessons-from-australian-electoral-assistance-2006-16.pdf>

Australian National University Department of Pacific Affairs. 2019. Solomon Islands National General Election – Observation Report. October.

[http://dpa.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/uploads/2020-01/anu-election-report-2019\\_final\\_print\\_version.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2kZWpyhbRizBaeCc-21-3P\\_hwLAIZMzwjrM2SwbZ9w43UxL01oql0GtLs](http://dpa.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/uploads/2020-01/anu-election-report-2019_final_print_version.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2kZWpyhbRizBaeCc-21-3P_hwLAIZMzwjrM2SwbZ9w43UxL01oql0GtLs)

Commonwealth Observer Group. 2019. Solomon Islands National General Election: Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group. April. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

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Dinnen, Sinclair, and Doug Porter and Caroline Sage. 2011. “Conflict in Melanesia: Themes and Lessons.” World Development Report 2011 Background paper. Washington: World Bank.

<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/970751468144280744/pdf/620250WP0ConfI0BOX0361475B00PUBLIC0.pdf>

Freedom House. 2020. “Solomon Islands.” In *Freedom in the World* Washington D.C.: Freedom House.

<https://freedomhouse.org/country/solomon-islands/freedom-world/2020>

International Monetary Fund (IMF). February 18, 2020. “Solomon Islands: 2019 Article IV Consultation- Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director for the Solomon Islands.”

Washington: IMF. [Solomon Islands : 2019 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director for the Solomon Islands \(imf.org\)](https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/02/18/20200218solomon-islands-2019-article-iv-consultation-press-release-staff-report-and-statement-by-the-executive-director-for-the-solomon-islands)

Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG). 2019. MSG Observer Group 2019 Solomon Islands National General Elections. Port Vila: MSG Secretariat.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC). 2019. “Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use, OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation.” Paris: OECD.

<https://search.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf>

Wood, Terence. June 21, 2019. "The 2019 Honiara riots: what went wrong, and what does it mean for aid?" Canberra: Australian National University (ANU), Devpolicy Blog at <https://devpolicy.org/the-2019-honiara-riots-what-went-wrong-and-what-does-it-mean-for-aid-20190621/>

Wood, Terence. April 23, 2019. "Development and the 2019 elections in Solomon Islands." Canberra: ANU Devpolicy Blog at <https://devpolicy.org/development-and-2019-elections-solomon-islands-20190423/>

Wood, Terence. August 17, 2018. "How politics keeps Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea poor and poorly governed." Canberra: ANU Devpolicy Blog at <https://devpolicy.org/politics-keeps-solomon-islands-png-poor-poorly-governed-20180817/>

### **Annex 3: List of Interviews**

#### **SECSIP**

Ms. Olga Rabade, Chief Technical Adviser CTA & Project Manager  
Ms. Florrie Alalo, Project Coordinator  
Ms. Crystal Saelea, Procurement Analyst  
Mr. Hyemin Hazel Yeo, Financial & administration project officer  
Mr. Muammer Mrahorovic, Former Electoral Operations Consultant  
Mr. Carlos Valenzuela, Former Consultant  
Ms. Afu Billy, Women in Politics/Gender Specialist,  
Mr. Mukter Hossain, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Consultant

#### **SIEC/SIEO**

Hon. Patterson Oti, Chair  
Ms. Jane Waetara, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)  
Mr. Mose Saitala, former CEO  
Ms. Philothea Paul, Head of Communications

#### **Donors**

Olivia Chambers, Australian High Commission  
Sofia Ata, Australian High Commission  
Bridget Sitai, Australian High Commission  
Luis de Torres, European Union Delegation in Fiji

#### **ESSP**

Walter Rigamoto, Electoral Advisor

#### **Civil Society Organisations**

Gloria Konare –Maeaniapu, Stages of Change  
Jennifer Wate, Development Services Exchange (civil society umbrella organization with more than 65 CSOs)