Project Evaluation

Joint Programme for Support to Universal Suffrage Elections in the Federal Republic of Somalia 2018 - 2021

Final Evaluation Report

24 August 2021

Contents

Abbreviations

AMSON	African Union Mission in Somalia
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
BUILD	Bringing Unity, Integrity and Legitimacy to Democracy project
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
DP	Development Partner
EAD	Electoral Assistance Division
EDR	Electoral Dispute Resolution
EISA	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa
EMB	Electoral Management Body
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
EU	European Union
F	Female
FGS	Federal government of Somalia
FMS	Federal member state
GESI	Gender equality and social inclusion
GIS	Geographic information system
HACT	harmonized approach to cash transfer
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation

IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IESG	Integrated Electoral Support Group
IT	Information Technology
JP	Joint Programme
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
LOA	Letters of Agreement
M	Male
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOIFAR	Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
NAM	Needs Assessment Mission
NIEC	National Independent Electoral Commission
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OPPR	Office of the Political Party Registrar
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PD	Programme Document
POQA	Programme Oversight and Quality Assurance Unit (UNDP)
PSA	Public Service Announcement
PR	Proportional Representation
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
TA	Technical Assistance
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Trainer of Trainers
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Support
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
USD	US Dollar

PROJECT/OUTCOME INFORMATION		
Project/outcome title	Joint Programme for Support to Universal Suffrage Elections in the Federal Republic of Somalia	
Atlas ID	Award: Output: 000107518	
Corporate outcome and output		
Country	Somalia	
Region	FGS and FMSs (Five regional member states)	
Date project document signed	**15 January 2018**	
Project dates	**Start**	**Planned end**
	Jan 2018	Dec 2021
Project budget	**$23,574,208**	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	**$13,135,483**	
Funding source	**Donors: EU, Germany, Norway, Sweden, UK FCDO, USAID, UNDP**	
Implementing party [1]	**UNDP**	

Note: The Joint Programme for Universal Suffrage is also referred to in this report as the "Joint Programme" and "project". For ease of reference for footnotes, the *Joint Programme for Support to Universal Suffrage Elections* is listed as "Project".

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The *Joint Programme for Support to Universal Suffrage Elections in Somalia* was a USD 23.5 million four year phased electoral cycle project (2018-2021) intended to develop the technical building blocks to administer the first direct elections in Somalia in 50 years through building the institutional capacity of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) and supporting the developing of the enabling legal framework, most notably the electoral law through support to the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MOIFAR). These elections were expected in late 2020 but following a 2020 political agreement between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS) an indirect process will be used instead in late 2021 administered by ad hoc electoral committees.

The project is fully funded by the European Union (EU), Germany, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom (UK), United States (US) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is a joint programme of UNDP and the United Nations Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) directly executed by UNDP through their Joint Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG).

This independent evaluation of the project took place in June – July 2021.

PURPOSE FOR THE EVALUATION

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide UNDP, project partners and stakeholders with an overall independent assessment of the performance of the electoral support project. This will provide evaluative evidence of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of current programme, which can be used by UNDP and its partners to strengthen existing programmes and to set the stage for new initiatives. The evaluation serves an important accountability function, providing national stakeholders and partners in Somalia with an impartial assessment of the results of UNDP governance support in line with national priorities, corporate strategies, and UN electoral assistance policies.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

In answering the evaluation questions, the evaluator will use mixed methods for analysis, synthesis and drawing conclusions. These include: trend analysis of key outcomes, analysis of associations between observed outcome and project supported efforts, assessment of the relevance, coherency, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and results of JP assistance and validation through triangulation (validation discussions with UNDP, IESG, NIEC, development partners, project staff and other partners/beneficiaries, and by information provided in the documents reviewed. As a result, based on the information available and stakeholder perceptions, the evaluator will make judgments on their value and the extent that these outputs contributed towards the achievement of the Joint Programme's intended outcomes.

FINDINGS

Relevance and coherency. The project as designed is aligned with the United Nations (UN) mandate to support universal suffrage elections in Somalia, and the goals of United Nations Strategic Framework (UNSF), UNDP Country Programme (CPD), the national development and NIEC strategic plans, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It was highly relevant at the time given the political commitments and electoral roadmap agreed to after the 2016 indirect electoral process. The phased nature of the project's design and its electoral cycle approach are best practices, and particularly relevant in a post-conflict and state-building environment still lacking basic agreement on the fundamental nature of the state. The outputs selected matched the needs of building an independent electoral management body (EMB) capable of administering universal federal elections and the legal framework needed to ground that process.

The IESG reflects a strong integration of UNDP/UNSOM efforts and was well placed to implement this project. IESG flexibility, along with that of UNDP, UNSOM, and NIEC, enabled the project to remain relevant despite the political uncertainty, delays, and insecurity. However, once politicians reverted to indirect processes with ad hoc committees, the NIEC was excluded and the project purpose lost relevance. IESG is providing limited technical and financial support to the indirect process as approved by its Board and allowed within the UN mandate. This will contribute to Somalia's stability in the near term, which is essential, but it is the opposite of an electoral cycle programme.

Effectiveness and impact. The Joint Programme (JP) was directly affected by a number of factors that shaped its effectiveness and the nature of its response. These included the lack of political will for universal federal elections, the lack of NIEC acceptance by some FMS due to FGS-FMS political friction, a problematic legal framework, and a difficult security context that limited access to many areas, and prevented the embedding of the IESG within the NIEC. Its strengths included the continuity and quality of its technical assistance (TA), tenacity and the ability to find technical solutions for the evolving contexts, readiness of the UNDP and UNSOM senior management to deal with difficult issues, and the dedication of the NIEC, IESG, UNDP, UNSOM and the Donors to inclusive political processes.

Output 1: Strengthened institutional capacity of the NIEC. Project efforts contributed to the evolution of the NIEC from an embryonic organization to a fully staffed and functioning institution with a large secretariat and field offices in every state. This would not have happened without IESG's substantial provision of TA, strategic planning, financial and logistical support, and capacity building. The actual effectiveness of this support is unknown as increases in knowledge or skills were not tracked, and the institution has yet to implement a voter registration or electoral process, except for some indirect by-elections done independently. It has however registered more than 100 political parties and was perceived by several federal Somali institutions in interviews as a technical electoral expert. NIEC staff benefited from the large number of trainings delivered and by the on line certificated courses provided during Covid, but some looked for more specific job training. At this stage in the NIEC's development, a complete institutional capacity and needs assessment should be done linked to institutional and professional development plans and to target future efforts more effectively. National advisers working within the NIEC and MOIFAR provided the embedded support IESG staff could not, but are doing some of the institutional work as well providing advice.

Output 2. NIEC supported to enhance public awareness of electoral processes, including promotion of women's political participation. IESG support helped the NIEC outreach to a number of civil society organizations (CSOs), political parties, media and others to share information on progress made towards voter education, party registration and other areas. It also helped develop a NIEC Voter Education Unit, voter education strategy and curriculum. Initial implementation of the strategy was curtailed by FGS-FMS political tensions, driven according to the NIEC, by sentiment against the one-person, one-vote election, but five public service announcements (PSAs) were aired on important issues and NIEC field offices undertook some effort in their areas before it was stopped. No data was available to assess the effectiveness of these effort, or its reach, although a snapshot for social media showed one PSA posted on Facebook reaching around 17,000 persons, but only a few views for those on YouTube. The IESG and NIEC ensured gender parity in trainings and staffing. Most outreach to women was through the CSOs attending NIEC outreach sessions. IESG and NIEC advocacy, and others, ensured 30% of party candidates would be women, but were unsuccessful in the legal adoption of the 30% for women representation in parliament. Limited attention was paid to persons with disabilities (PWD) and marginalized groups.

Output 3: NIEC's operations, including preparations for voter registration supported. Project efforts for operational support were hampered by the political delays in enacting the enabling legislation, and the lack of agreement between the FGS and FMS on the nature of federalism. Among others, this resulted in missed deadlines in the electoral roadmap and the inability of the NIEC to operate in Jubaland and Puntland, and missed deadlines in the electoral roadmap. Substantial effort went into developing different voter registration options and operational procedure drafting. A pilot voter

registration exercise based on a biometric registration was initiated but suspended after the political decision for an indirect election. A geographical information system (GIS) mapping of potential voter registration sites was done successfully in three states and gave some operational practice to the NIEC field offices. The NEC's Office of the Political Party Registrar (OPPR) successfully provided temporary registration to 110 political parties, although only about 10% of the parties registered were thought to be viable in evaluation interviews. Had direct elections gone forward, it appears likely that the NIEC could have handled their administration with the substantive assistance of the IESG, UNSOM and others, although in limited locations given the security context.

Output 4: *NIEC permanent facilities established.*   The IESG supported the NIEC to establish its own facilities separate from other government entities to avoid interference and perceptions of bias. The Joint Programme funded the data centre while the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) covered the costs of the main offices and an electoral dispute resolution (EDR) centre and UNSOM covered the warehouse and security infrastructure upgrades. The datacentre was built and handed over to the NIEC. Only a few security enhancements to the compound remain and the NIEC is expected to start using the facilities in the third quarter of 2021. As the NIEC had not yet moved into the facilities, it is not yet possible to determine the efficacy of the efforts and usefulness of the construction. It will however enable more in-person contact with the IESG as the compounds are closer together.

Output 5: *Enabling electoral legal framework supported*. Project efforts through MOIFAR with national advisers supported the drafting of the electoral law and facilitated stakeholder consultations resulting in the design and adoption of a context appropriate electoral system based on a proportional (PR) representation system and 30% gender quota by the NIEC, MOIFAR and after some delay, the Council of Ministers. This progress was upended in Parliament with its late adoption of a first-past the post system in a revised law that needs clarifications to be implementable. Output 4 hit at the crux of the political problems within Somalia. The legal framework is needed to hold credible, universal elections. There is no incentive for those without political will to pass this legal framework. The implementation of this output was littered with red flags, passed without consequences. This work was overtaken in 2020 by the political decision for the indirect process. The IESG is still supporting the NIEC to review existing legislation with the expectation that it will administer universal suffrage elections in 2025. However, there are many lessons learnt from the project's 2018-2020 efforts that need to be addressed for future efforts to be successful.

Efficiency and project management. Until the decision for indirect elections, the project consistently followed the phased design in the project document and annual workplans. Activities were implemented in a timely and as participatory manner as the context allowed. The IESG team was able to adjust to the shifting landscape and seemed respected as an impartial technical expert group by Somali institutions and politicians. The use of UNDP's direct implementation modality (DIM) was essential in the context and provided security for the use of donor funds. Letters of agreement (LOAs) enabled the MOIFAR and NIEC to directly implement some of the joint workplan activities increasing efficiencies in the security-restricted operating environment for UN staff. Having to meet UNDP audit requirements strengthened NIEC financial and administrative capacity and those audit findings were generally satisfactory, however further improvements are needed to strengthen programmatic coherence and effectiveness in their use. Covid directly affected the nature of programme implementation, adding another layer of difficulty. IESG adapted quickly given the limited face-to-face time allowed by the security environment, and provided zoom licenses and training to the NIEC and others that enabled them to continue their work remotely.

The IESG was a well-integrated UNDP/UNSOM team with a symbiotic relationship with the UNSOM political office. Its efforts were more silo'd with other UN/UNDP inclusive governance efforts, and more coordination is needed on donor election assistance efforts at state levels since many areas overlap, such as voter registration. Although regular consultations were held with donors on project implementation, donors looked for more engagement on bigger picture policy issues that affected project performance and the ways they could help address these issues.   The project reported

regularly on its activities. These were primarily descriptive with limited analytical content. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan and indicators were not sufficient to measure the quality of project performance beyond activity achievement.

Sustainability. The project used the electoral cycle and capacity building approach which is designed to build sustainable outcomes. IESG assistance helped to set up the systems, structures and procedures that the NIEC is using to manage its institution, and handle the limited operations that it has undertaken so far. These can be expected to remain in place for the near term. Most of the implementation capacity is within the persons who received the training. The institution itself is untested and without practical experience except for the GIS site mapping exercise and some indirect by-elections. The project ensured that the NIEC has its own permanent facility and government funding covers staff salaries and some other costs. However, it remains dependent on the project for most of its activity costs. The NIEC budget should be assessed to determine what the FGS funding can cover beyond personnel, and advocate with the NIEC and donors for increased FGS funding to ensure its minimum operating costs are covered, This will also help determine actual level of need from the donor side for the upcoming years. Planning and procedures needed to administer universal suffrage elections remain incomplete. The political decision to hold another indirect ad hoc electoral process raises the issue of value for money and the need to ensure sustainability for the technical level progress made. The political issues need to be resolved for any real sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS

The project was highly relevant and strategically located within the context of the post-2016 electoral process. It provided a trusted and effective platform for international support to the NIEC and enabling legal framework, and played a valuable advisory and coordination role for the broader community. It was able to effectively implement its phased activities despite the extremely difficult security context and political challenges. Results are the cumulative effects of the work of the IESG and its partners since its inception in 2015. These include:

- Strengthened institutional and professional development of the NIEC. This has created a credible, recognized entity able to administer indirect by-elections, advise Parliament and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) on electoral issues, register political parties, and with IESG support, plan for the first national level voter registration and direct election process in decades.

- Strengthened ability for the NIEC to act independently and to be perceived as an independent and nonpartisan institution through the provision of funding for its activities and construction of its own facilities.

- Ensured a continual focus on the inclusion of women within the legal, institutional and procedural frameworks for direct elections, party registration, NIEC employment, and with others, on the gender quotas within political processes.

- Kept the issue of universal suffrage elections in the forefront of discussions and policy makers through its continued focus on advancing their technical preparations, consultations and advocacy. This was reinforced at the political levels by UNSOM and the international community. This was not enough in the end, but so far has kept the indirect process to being the deviation, and not the norm.

The project's M&E plan and indicators were not sufficient to measure actual programme effectiveness or its results. Results at technical levels may be greater for some of the activities than what was visible during the evaluation.

Somalia's democratic transition is a long term endeavor. The absence of a consensus among the FGS and FMS on the fundamental basis for the state eclipsed project's efforts and its purpose and requires political resolution. The political building blocks and commitment to a democratic system need to catch up to the technical electoral ones already built, and for technical level projects, such as this one,

to succeed. This needs high level attention, unified messaging, and the effective use of good offices. It is important not to lose the gains made while this political resolution is found. Donor shift of focus towards state level electoral processes raises issues on coordination and harmonization, as well as the nature for the next joint project.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Maintain the technical and institutional progress made towards developing the electoral building blocks for universal elections while the political situation is addressed.* Continue a phased electoral cycle approach that will go through the next cycle that can follow political developments and implementation of a new electoral roadmap towards direct elections, yet not get a head of the political progress(UNDP should take the implementation role)

- *Ground Joint Programme efforts within the larger reconciliation and state-building processes* working to establish the political building blocks needed for universal suffrage elections, and ensure stronger integration and synergies within the inclusive politics sector. UNDP should support this effort by building a mutually supportive, synergistic portfolio directly targeted at getting the political pieces into place which are needed for its inclusive politics programmes to succeed. Include within this leadership training and capacity building of decision makers on the fundamental structures and processes of government as reflected in the Somali constitution(UNDP should take the implementation role).

- *Make effective use of the UN's good offices, and donors' interest* in a peaceful and democratic Somalia, *to provide unified messaging and coordinated efforts to advance the policy dialogue* and political agreement on the basic nature of the state as soon as the new national leadership is in place(UNSOM and UNDP).

- *Develop and continually use a principal level joint UNSOM - UNCT (FGS line ministries and NIEC) - Donor steering committee* to oversee election efforts, ensure needed actions are taken, and to monitor implementation of the electoral roadmap once the new government is established. The frequency of meetings should follow the electoral calendar and become more frequent as the electoral benchmarks approach or as roadblocks are encountered(NIEC, UNSOM and UNDP).

- *Condition funding on the timely achievement of benchmarks* as verified by the steering committee. As noted by the ICPE for UNDP Somalia in regard to effective institutions and inclusive politics, *where political commitment is absence, support should cease.[1]* Use the NAM mechanism to reinforce these efforts and raise the visibility of issues. It should also review programme relevance, effectiveness, and constraints annually or as conditions change. (UNDP should take the implementation role).

- *Strengthen the strategic focus of IESG coordination and discussions with donors and partners, and broaden it to include state level processes* if the UNSOM mandate is adapted as expected (UNSOM with the support of UNDP and different level of government authorities).

- *Assess the scope of electoral assistance efforts underway at state levels*, the capacity of the existing state-level EMBs, gaps, and levels of coordination and harmonization between the different assistance efforts and institutions at state and national level. Develop a long term vision and strategy for how these diverse efforts can contribute to one electoral system harmonized among the FMS and with the national system taking into consideration the strategic assessments and planning already done by donors(UNDP, UNSOM and NIEC).

- *Adopt a gender equality and social inclusion approach for the design and implementation of the next project phase* to strengthen attention on youth, PWD and other marginalized groups, such as minority clans and IDPs. Support efforts for a more socially inclusive electoral

administration, enabling legislation, regulations, outreach and participation(UNDP should take the implementation role).

- *Explore relationships with other UNDP country and regional programmes to develop internship opportunities for NIEC professional staff and directors*, to work on a counterpart basis within respected EMBs for hands on election administration experience. Provide professional certifications at the end of the internships(UNDP and NIEC)

- *Increase the analytical and results-based content of project reporting and provide financial expenditure data at output levels*. Include discussions of the political dimensions and how this impacts project implementation and performance, and in donor meetings discuss what they and others can do to help address these issues through their own channels as well as through the project. (UNDP should take the implementation role).

- *Develop a complete M&E plan with performance based indicators for the next phase of the programme.* This should be done in the first quarter of the new project and include targets, baselines, tracking tables and the allocation of responsibilities for collecting and aggregating data, monitoring activities, etc. Use the same results framework for the life of the project to ensure consistency in reporting and the ability to track the performance of key indicators over time. Ensure the collection of baseline data at the start and end of the project, and at the start and end of each capacity building effort. Invest in regular public opinion polling for M&E and programmatic use if current donor polling is not continued(UNDP should take the implementation role).

2. Evaluation of the Joint Programme for Universal Suffrage in the Federal Republic of Somalia 2018 - 2021

UNDP commissioned this evaluation of the Joint Programme for Universal Suffrage. It is intended to provide UNDP, project partners and stakeholders with an independent assessment of the Joint Programme, its performance and contribution to its anticipated development results. It will be used to strengthen future programming and provide lessons learned for other programmes being implemented in similar circumstances.

In particular, the evaluation was asked to:

1. Assess the relevance, coherency, and responsiveness of the Joint Programme to national needs and priorities, as well as to the objectives of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, UNDP, and the SDGs;

2. Analyze the project's effectiveness, extent of project outputs, and factors affecting the achievement of project outcomes;

3. Review the extent of project contributions towards gender equality, women's empowerment and other cross-cutting issues addressed during project planning and implementation;

4. Assess the quality of partnerships, national ownership, and sustainability vis-à-vis the project strategy, identify gaps and document lessons for future reference;

5. Assess the efficiency of project implementation, use of resources and management structure;

6. Review project coordination with UNSOM, donors, stakeholders and other relevant UNDP and election-related projects;

7. Review the oversight, reporting and monitoring structures designed to support the project strategies and implementation; and

8. Extract lessons learned and best practices that can be considered in the planning and design of a future phase, and provide recommendations that can be applied to projects of similar nature.

The evaluation took place in June and July 2021 with the interviews done virtually due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The evaluation was conducted by Sue Nelson, International Consultant, an expert in democratic governance and electoral assistance. She undertook a qualitative assessment of the relevance, coherency, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Joint Programme's assistance and the factors that affected project performance. The evaluation used a triangulation methodology and mixed methods of analysis to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on stakeholder perceptions and the information available. In particular the evaluation:

- Reviewed relevant documents, including the project documents and reporting, Board meeting minutes, letters of agreement, project and project-funded products, and available monitoring and evaluation data (Annex 1);

- Collected information and perceptions of the project and electoral processes through virtual interviews with: UNDP Somalia; current and former IESG staff and experts; UNSOM, EAD; NIEC; former MOIFAR advisors; Members of Parliament (MPs); CSOs; donors and other electoral assistance providers (Annex 2);

- Validated the information collected through interviews, document reviews and use of additional data sources and third-party interviews;

- Assessed the relevance/coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and inclusiveness of the project interventions, along with the project's management and implementation. It also looked at the impact of Covid 19 on the programme and its implementation. Identified the factors that facilitated or hindered the achievement of results and the lessons learned/best practices of the project; and

- Validated the preliminary evaluation findings through discussion, interviews, and the evaluation debriefing of initial findings and draft evaluation report.

The complete methodology for the evaluation is provided in the Evaluation Inception Report (Annex 3). The evaluation's Terms of Reference (TOR) are provided in Annex 4. Given the complexity of the programme and its operating environment, the evaluation was limited by the time available, the availability of key informants for interviews, and the limited amount of results level data available.

The evaluation findings are organized in this report according to the criteria stipulated in the terms of reference: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. It includes discussions of the Joint Programme's contributions towards the achievement of the key outputs as intended in its project documents which are covered in the section on effectiveness. It also looks at the impact of the political context on the relevance of the programme and its implications for future programming. Issues of project management and implementation are covered in the section on efficiency. The evaluation report closes with the assessment's main conclusions and recommendations.

2.1 Political and electoral context

Somalia is at the beginning of a democratic transition after decades of civil war that devastated its institutions and socio-economic infrastructure leaving it without a stable central government and the de facto secession of the region of Somaliland. After more than a decade of transitional governments, insecurity and other challenges from different political and religious groups that affected not only Somalia, but the region as well, it adopted a provisional constitution based on universal and equal suffrage, with a multiparty system and federal system of government with a legislature comprised of an Upper House and House of the People in 2012.

It used a 4.5 clan based system for the 2012 parliamentary elections where the clan selected delegates to vote for the MPs. This system gives an equal quota of parliamentary seats to the four major clans and half that to everyone else who is not a member of those groups (the "minority" clans). This process established a one-chambered Federal Parliament of Somalia.

Somalia signed the New Deal Compact with the international community in 2013, opening the way for the state building process with international support. African Union peacekeepers have helped support its security, and the peace and state building efforts since 2007 through its African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISON). The UN mission in Somalia was established in 2012 and now has offices across the country. It is mandated by the UN Security Council to work with the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states to support peacebuilding and state-building, including electoral support.

Based on the constitution and government commitments, universal elections were expected in 2016 to elect the new parliament. The president is then elected by the MPs. However, a political agreement among the FGS and FMS resulted in another intra-clan selection process based on the 4.5 formula, noting the absence of necessary legislation and a lack of institutional preparedness by the newly established NIEC. This was expected to *remain a one-off, extra-constitutional process to facilitate a political transition at the end of the constitutionally mandated limits of the legislature and the executive."*[1]

The NIEC, established in 2015 as the constitutionally mandated body to conduct elections, was given no role in this process and it was administered by ad hoc temporary electoral bodies. This process was also supported as a one-time effort by the international community, which provided security, technical and financial support. This included support by the first UNDP/UNSOM joint electoral support programme in Somalia. This did result in the peaceful transfer of power to a new bicameral

Table 1: Road towards universal federal elections		
Milestone	**Agreement**	**Actual**
2012 parliamentary elections	Universal elections	4.5 process. Established Federal Parliament. 135 clan elders voted. 14% MPs women
NIEC established	Before 2016 elections	Established July 2015, Secretariat 2016
2016 parliamentary elections	Universal elections	Indirect 4.5 process. Established bicameral parliament 12,594 clan delegates voted; 24% MPs women
2017 presidential election	MPs voted	Done. Peaceful transition to new government
Constitutional referendum	Pending since 2012	Lacks political agreement. Was expected to be administered by the NIEC before 2020 elections
Passage electoral law	PR electoral system	Started in MOIFAR 2016. Approved by Council of Ministers 2019, submitted to Parliament June 2019. Revised version with 1st past post system adopted Feb. 2020 and signed by President Feb. 2020. Law needs clarifications.
2020 Political roadmap	Universal suffrage elections	Endorsed by Council of Ministers
NEC provides options for electoral dates	June 2020	Provided Parliament with two voter registration options and election dates: if no registration March 2021. If registration July 2021
Dhushamareb process	July 2020 Indirect election	Political decision for indirect 4.5 process. NIEC to administer

17 September 2020 agreement	Parliament: Dec 2020 President: Feb 2021	Political agreement on election dates. Elections to be administered by ad hoc electoral committees, not NIEC
Legislation to extend mandates by 2 years	April 2021	Replaced agreement 17 September with universal process within 2 years and extended terms of parliament and president until then. Rejected by Upper House.
Militia on streets	April 2021	Violent clashes in Mogadishu 25 April. Annulled extension mandates 27 April. Prime Minister tasked to organize indirect elections.
FGS- FMS agreement	27 May 2021	Agreement on way forward 29 May 2021
Parliamentary elections	Indirect elections	4.5 formula, starting July 2021
Presidential elections	MPs to vote	10 October 2021

parliament, president and government and the political commitment of the new government to hold universal suffrage elections in 2020.

The country remained politically fragmented and relations between the FGS and FMS have continued to be difficult, especially with Puntland and Jubaland. This has hampered progress on finalizing the constitution and resolving issues of federalism and power sharing. In 2018, the new

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[1] *2016 House of the People Electoral Process Operational Plan*, p 5

government and FGS agreed to a political roadmap for universal elections which set the timeline and milestones for universal suffrage elections in December 2020. This project and others supported NIEC's institutional development and capacity to administer these elections along with the legal framework needed to hold them.

The roadmap's timeline was not respected by the political actors, leaving technical preparations, such as those for voter registration, hanging without the legal framework in place. As a result, in June 2020, the NIEC informed Parliament that the elections would need to be delayed until early 2021. In July 2020 this was used again as justification by politicians to revert to the 4.5 clan system, this time expanding somewhat the number of delegates voting, and using the NIEC to administer them. However, a political decision in September 2020 to use ad hoc electoral committees instead eliminated the NIEC from this process.

The political and security context is still extremely volatile and fragile. State militias were out on the streets in April 2021 resulting in violent clashes after the House of the People voted to extend its own term, and that of the President which had expired in February 2021, by two years and then hold direct elections. After intense national and international pressure, the FGS and FMS agreed to resume negotiations to hold the indirect elections, the legislation was annulled with the Prime Minister delegated to organize the indirect process expected in July - September 2021 for parliament and in October 2021 for president. These preparations are currently underway, supported by the international community to ensure a peaceful transfer of power.

Conditions in Somalia remain difficult. As noted by the Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) for UNDP Somalia, the *rapidly changing and contested political settlement, with tensions between the federal government and federal member states, complex regional politics.. enduring major insurgency and related military offenses, widespread societal, criminal violence, rock-bottom state capacity, and massive poverty and economic hardship, compounded by severe environmental challenges, including drought, illegal depletion of national resources and vulnerability to climate*

change. The evaluation recognizes that most of these factors are inter-linked and mutually reinforcing, creating a highly complex environment.[2]

The Varieties of Democracy classify Somalia as a closed authoritarian state ranking it 155th on its *Liberal Democracy Index* and 166th on the *Electoral Democracy Index*.[3] Freedom House ranks it as not free, giving it a 1 out of 40 for political rights and a 6 out of 60 for civil liberties.[4] International IDEA's index on the *Global State of Democracy for Somalia* has the same findings (Table 2).

According to assessments, Somali women, girls, minorities and IDPs are among the world's most marginalized persons.[5] Although its legal framework provides for gender equality and non-discrimination, these are not respected in practice. The system is predominately patriarchal, and politics and community leadership are considered male domains. Women are

Table 2: Somalia: Global Democracy Index

systematically excluded from or under-represented in decision making which is dominated by male clan elders. The 30% quota for women in parliament

and government remains a verbal agreement and is not enshrined in law. Although 24% of the MPs are currently women due to a quota used in 2016, their participation in parliament has been weak because of a lack of legislative skills and deference to clan interests.[6]

More than 75% of Somalia's population is under the age of 35, with almost 30% between 15 and 19 years old. More than half of the youth are illiterate, and two out of three live in poverty.[7] The political system is primarily controlled by elders, minimizing their opportunities for the political participation and civic engagement. There is limited information on the situation of persons with disabilities in Somalia however it is thought to be high due to the levels of poverty, the impact of war and limited access to health care. According to reports, PWD are stigmatized and face significant barriers to political participation. Several PWD focused nongovernmental organizations have been established that provide services, however, studies show that they are rarely consulted when laws and regulations are prepared.[8]

Minorities clans make up about 30% of the Somali population. They include ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities.[9] They are marginalized from the socio-economic and political processes and highly vulnerable to rights violations from the majority clans. Many have been displaced and still remain in IDP settlements in mostly urban areas. There are an almost an estimated 3 million IDPs in Somalia, the vast majority (2 million) located in South Central.[10] Somalia is second on the Minority Rights Group's *Peoples Under Threat Index*.[11]

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[2] UNDP, IEO, *Independent Country Programme Evaluation, Somalia*, p 1

[3] Varieties of Democracy, *State of the World 2021* p 13 and p 35

[4] Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2020, Somalia*

[5] USAID, *Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Analysis*, p iii

[6] USAID/Somalia *Gender Assessment 2020, Final Report*, p viii

[7] USAID/*Somalia Youth Assessment*, p 5

[8] K4D, *Disability in Somalia*

[9] USAID, *Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Analysis*, p 11

[10] UNHCR, *Operations Data Portal, Somalia: Internal Displacement*,

[11] Peoples Under Threat, *People Under Threat Index 2020*

2.2 Assistance to the electoral processes in Somalia

The international community has been supporting the road towards universal elections in Somalia since the start of the 2016 electoral process. Many of the programmes today are follow on projects to those efforts, including this joint UNDP/UNSOM support to universal suffrage project.

UNDP has several programmes in its inclusive politics portfolio that complement assistance in the electoral sector. These include support to parliament, the constitutional review process, and women's political participation. These are all joint programmes with UNSOM, and include UN Women for the women's political participation project. That programme (the women political partcipaittion program) supported a gender adviser for the NIEC for six months to help it develop its gender strategy and advocacy for the gender quota for the parliamentary elections.

The UK has a four-year £ 27m *Somalia Forward* programme (2018 – 2021), which among other things contributes to this UNDP/UNSOM joint programme being evaluated. Its purpose is to advance *fairer and more stable political settlement.*[12] In addition to *helping to deliver more inclusive and democratic elections,* it supports broader and more inclusive political dialogue on power and resources sharing, the constitutional review process and empowering citizens to understand and engage in such processes.

The US Agency for International Development (USAID)'s bilateral programme, *Bringing Unity, Integrity and Legitimacy to Democracy* (BUILD) project, had the closest links to the IESG efforts. One component worked directly with the NIEC focused on building *greater integrity, accountability, and transparency in electoral processes* through supporting the NIEC. This five year programme (2016 – 2022) also focused on strengthening political parties, working with the OPPR in its initial registration of parties, and providing direct TA to political parties on the registration process, as well as

strengthening their ability to engage in the electoral processes. Within this it also focused on the youth and women's wings in the parties. It also provided technical assistance to the NIEC, including areas such as voter registration and information technology (IT). BUILD's focus shifted away from the NIEC after the 2020 political decisions and is focusing now more on its work with civil society, among others.[13] That is being done in part by the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) that has provided some workshops and assistance to the NIEC, parties and primarily CSOs at state levels. It also supported the MOIFAR and parliamentary committees on the electoral law process.

2.3 Joint Programme for Support to Universal Suffrage Elections

The Joint Programme for Support to Universal Suffrage elections in the Federal Republic of Somalia was designed as a four year USD 23.5 million project[14] (January 2018 – December 2021) intended to develop *the building blocks necessary to develop conducive conditions and institutions required for universal elections.*[15] It was a follow-on project to the *Support to the Federal Electoral processes in the Federal Republic of Somalia* project (2015 – 2017). That USD 10.4 million project helped establish the IESG comprised of UNDP and UNSOM advisers, and its multi-track approach to supporting the development of the newly established NIEC, its administration of the elections and voter registration, and the development of an enabling legal framework. It had also provided direct operational assistance to the indirect electoral process of 2016.

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[12] UK, *Somalia Forward: Fair Power and Stable Settlements, Annual Review 2020*, p 1
[13] USAID/Somalia, *BUILD Fact Sheet*
[14] Financial data provided by the project
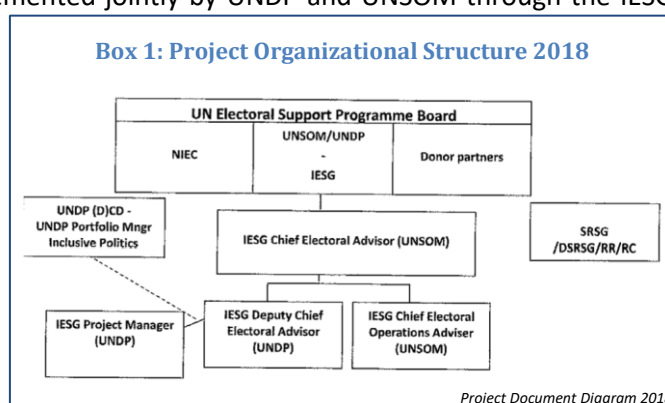[15] Project: *Project Document 2018*, p 12

The 2018 – 2021 Joint Programme continued the IESG efforts to build the foundations for the first direct elections in Somalia in decades along the same lines as the first project. Its overarching goal was to *enable Somali institutions to run independent, impartial, transparent and inclusive elections* and contribute to *enhanced Somali women's representation and participation in politics and public sector institutions*.[16] It also intended to contribute to the strategic outcomes of the UN, UNDP, Federal Government of Somalia and NIEC. It intended to do this through capacity building of the NIEC and technical advisory services to the MOIFAR on the electoral bill. Assistance was provided at the federal level and with IESG staff located in Mogadishu and with a presence in state capitals to accompany the NIEC field offices. Its anticipated budget in provided in Table 3.[17]

Table 3 Anticipated Project Budget by Outputs
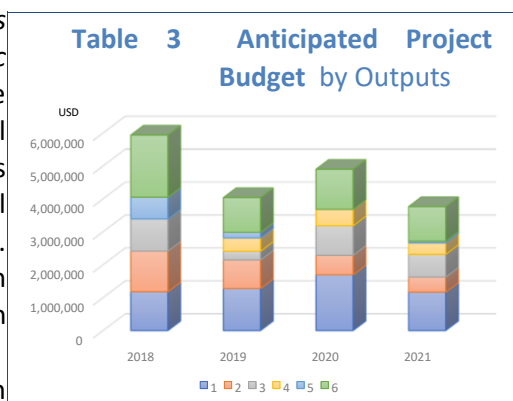
To accomplish its objectives, the Joint Programme focused on achieving five main outputs:

1. *NIEC equipped with necessary capacities and structures to prepare for and conduct credible and inclusive elections* (Output 1);

2. *NIEC supported to enhance public awareness of electoral processes, including promotion of women's participation* (Output 2);

3. *NIEC's electoral operations supported, including preparations for voter registration* (Output 3);

4. *Permanent NIEC office facilities established* (Output 4); and

5. *Development of an enabling electoral legal framework supported.* (Output 5) Output 6 covered programme management.

The Joint Programme is managed by UNDP with funding provided bilaterally and through the MultiPartner Trust Fund (MPTF). It is implemented jointly by UNDP and UNSOM through the IESG mechanism and through its two main partners, MOIFAR and the NIEC. It was executed through a direct execution modality by UNDP, with some funding provided to the NIEC and MOIFAR to directly implement some of the annual workplan activities as 'Responsible Party' through LOAs under the UN Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) mechanism. The IESG is led by a UNSOM Director, and a project-funded Deputy Chief Electoral Advisor.

Box 1: Project Organizational Structure 2018

Project Document Diagram 2018

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[16] Project: *Project Documents 2018 – 2020*

[17] The estimated budget and expenditures tables used in the report are for illustrative purposes only. Planned expenditures are based on the estimates listed in the annual project document.

The programme structure as of the start of this project is provided in Box 1.[18] As of June 2021, IESG had a staff of 52, 11 of which are funded by this project.

Table 4: Joint Programme Funding		
Donor	**MPTF**	**Bilaterally**
EU	4,786,135	
Germany	4,695,088	
Norway	1,731,390	
Sweden	3,274,756	
UK		4,616,609
US	2,509,650	
UNDP		1,960,289
Totals	**16,997,019**	**6,576,898**
Total all sources: USD 23,573,971		

The Joint Programme is located within UNDP Somalia's Inclusive Politics Cluster. It has a Project Board that was to meet quarterly or more frequently as needed.[19] The Board was to provide quality assurance supported by UNDP's Programme Oversight and Quality Assurance Unit (POQA) for monitoring and oversight.

The Joint Programme is funded by six donors: the EU, Germany, Norway, Sweden, UK, US and UNDP (Table 4). Their contributions were channelled through the MPTF with the exception of UK's bilateral contribution. UNSOM provided an estimated USD 16 million in in-kind support.

The IESG has three other projects that support some of the sub-outputs of this Joint Programme. They are not part of this Joint Programme evaluation and are:

- Support to Mechanisms to Prevent and Manage Conflict During Elections (Security) funded by the Peacebuilding Fund.
- Support to Electoral Dispute Resolution Mechanisms (EDRM) also funded by the Peacebuilding Fund.
- Support to the Establishment of Secure Electoral Assets- Management Centre for the NIEC funded by the Government of Japan.

The project anticipated having midterm and final evaluations. The midterm evaluation was not done. This evaluation covers the entirety of the project until end June 2021.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 Relevance and coherency

This section looks at the relevance and coherency of the project to the Somali context, to the UN electoral mandate, UNDP/UNSOM's role and comparative advantages in electoral assistance, and to the project's intended outputs and activities. Design issues and the project's theory of change are also included.

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[18] The organigram is from the 2018 Project Document. Some of the titles were modified slightly by 2021. The organigram omits MOIFAR which is a board member. The current IESG structure is provided in Section 3.3.2 (Management) and is also in Attachment A.
[19] Project: *Project Documents 2018 - 2020*

The project was originally designed following the indirect election process of 2016, the findings of a 2017 NAM, and the lessons learned from its first joint programme (2015 – 2017). It also used the lessons from electoral support in other similar post-conflict contexts such as Afghanistan.[20] It was highly relevant at the time given the political commitments and electoral roadmap agreed to in the post-2016 context. The NIEC was still a nascent organization, still developing its institutional structure, systems, operating procedures and human resources among others. It had limited FGS funding and had been dependent on the previous project for advisory services, technical expertise, logistical and financial support.

The project's intended goal of *enabling Somali institutions to run independent, impartial, transparent and inclusion elections* [21] was considered as an integral component of the state-building process. This objective corresponded to the UN electoral mandate for Somalia, and to the UN, national development and NIEC priorities (Box 2). The goals also corresponded to those of the donors for fair, inclusive elections. These also aligned with the objectives of the SDGs, most notably SDG 5 on *Gender Equality* and SDG 16 *Peace Justice and Strong Institutions.*

The project's focus on supporting universal elections, and building the institutional capacity of the national institution mandated to administer those elections, and strengthening the legal framework required to administer that process, were directly relevant to achieving the project's goal of supporting universal suffrage in Somalia.

enhanced.
PD 2018-2020

The design is based on the guiding principles of a Somali-led, Somali-managed electoral process with its focus on "*support for the preparation of an inclusive, credible and transparent universal national elections and constitutional referendum if agreed to*."[22]   It lays out a clear programmatic framework for the institutional, technical, operational and financial assistance needed for that support which are tied together through the five outputs selected, and planned out across the electoral timeline along with the programme efforts needed to be done for each milestone by year.[23] The outputs match the needs of building an independent EMB capable of administering universal federal elections and the legal framework for that process.

The longer-term vision and planning of the design reflects the phased electoral cycle nature of the approach. The four year time frame provided the overall horizon for the project, with incremental funding anticipated for each year of the programme's activity based on the progress made in the implementation of the electoral roadmap and timeline at the time. This gave stability and structure to the programme and its efforts, enabling planning and technical progress in an environment of electoral uncertainty and flux. At the same time, the incremental approval of phases each year, insulated the programme to some extent from advancing too far on the technical aspects of election preparations without the prerequisite roadmap benchmarks having been met. This was a lessons learnt from the previous project, which started with short (three-month) project documents and an electoral process that abruptly changed track and reverted from direct elections to a selection modality.

[20] Project: *Project Document, 2018*, p 17
[21] Specified in *Project Documents 2018, 2019* and *2020* on pages 1, 2, 2 respectively.
[22] Project: *Project Document, 2018*, p 17 [23] Ibid, p 26

The electoral cycle approach also ensured capacity building activities were planned and implemented well before the expected events, so that the institutions would be ready for the actual work, and needed training would not overlap or distract from their work. This is a best practice especially in the context of first time universal suffrage elections for everyone concerned. The design also incorporated a human rights perspective of respect for political and civil rights, inclusion of women and under-represented groups, and gender mainstreaming. The end result was a balanced design between long term democratic development objectives and short term election imperatives.

The programme's theory of change was evident in the project document and design:

> *If* key stakeholders are supported to develop institutional, administrative and staff capacities, improve operations and establish sustainable organizational frameworks, *then* that will facilitate universal elections.[22]

This provides a clear programmatic vision for the project and objective. The outputs and activities selected support the building of the NIEC's institutional and operational capacities, and the enabling framework needed for their efforts developing the technical building blocks for the holding of universal elections. Other joint UNDP/UNSOM programmes focused on the other essential foundational elements at technical levels, including most importantly constitutional reform and parliament.

The flexibility of the IESG, UNDP, UNSOM and the NIEC enabled the project to remain relevant to the needs of developing a context-appropriate electoral law that could enable direct national elections, and to building NIEC institutional capacity in a context of political uncertainty, delays, and insecurity. However, the programme's efforts were overtaken by the lack of political will for universal suffrage and the FGS-FMS's eventual reversion to the indirect model. This exposed the fatal flaw in the theory of change, that the success of the technical level is dependent on the political building blocks being put into place. Without the political agreement between the FGS and FMS on the basic rules of the game and commitment to respect the constitution, technical efforts can only go so far.

The lack of will was the determinant factor for this programme as well as for most of the other inclusive politics programmes according to the interviews and the recent ICPE of UNDP's Somalia programme.[23] The political decision to revert to an indirect process using ad hoc electoral committees was made despite the technical preparations and the progress made with the NIEC. Once that happened, the NIEC was excluded from the process, and the project's theory of change and purpose lost relevance.

Providing short term ad hoc support for the indirect electoral process now being done by ad hoc electoral committees is the direct opposite to an electoral cycle approach and to sustainable

development objectives. This has been accepted by the UN and international community as a means to ensure a peaceful transition of power. The project noted in its 2020 annual report that *the agreement on an indirect model contributes to the current political stability in Somalia. This is important for broad consensus among all key stakeholders at every stage of the implementation of the process so it remains credible, legitimate, peaceful and acceptable to all.*[24] Just shortly before this evaluation started, militias had been mobilized protesting the "Special Law" adopted by the House of the People that extended the mandates of current office holders for two years, resulting in violent clashes and demonstrating the fragility of the political compact and need for reconciliation.

The 2020 electoral cycle experience has been a lessons learned that consensus is needed on the basic rules of the game and the constitution finalized and accepted, so that Somalia can move on with its democratic development, and that the political actors are unlikely to reach such agreements without the continued support and encouragement of the international community.

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[22] IBID, p 17
[23] UNDP IEO, Op Cit
[24] Project: *Programme Annual Report 2020,* p 5

Project support is limited to assisting the NIEC and the universal federal elections as determined by the UN mandate and the NAM. That assumed there would be enough political will for these elections given the political commitments reiterated periodically by political leaders and the UN mandate for universal suffrage. There were no scenarios in the project document that envisioned a change in plans or partners. It stated that these might be needed but that any changes would need a Security Council mandate or be driven by realities on the ground.[25]

The changed context required the IESG to revisit the language of the UN mandate and follow political guidance on whether assisting the indirect process was possible and if so, how it might be provided. Even if it had not been thought out in the project design, such scenario and contingency planning within the IESG at the start of the programme, and periodically, would be a good idea in the context of a post-conflict, fragile state which had already demonstrated a lack of will for direct elections.

These issues and the mandate were still under discussion during this evaluation, although the IESG had already started providing some technical advice to the OPM given its active role in the 2016 process, and the use of the electoral basket fund for its operations was being discussed with the donors.

In one sense, this shows the continued relevance of the IESG mechanism to the needs of the "electoral processes" in Somalia, and which are likely to contribute to continued stability within the country which is a major factor. But its relevance to its programme design is negligible at this point although it is still continuing support to the NIEC.

UNDP and UNSOM were well placed to implement the Joint Programme having completed the previous project and set up the IESG. UNSOM had the assets of the political mission and its good offices which raises the level of counterparts for UNDP to the political level and helps to ensure a more unified messaging and voice. UNDP was also centrally positioned to act as a platform to manage donor support for the process, and was considered as a trusted partner to help implement the programme. UNDP saw its role as facilitating the processes for the Somalis, seeing the processes as Somali led. Both agencies provided experts to the IESG and it was a well-integrated effort. These are essential when the overarching constraints are political. Integration could have been strengthened with donors although the project was responsive to their inquiries. Programme efforts were more silo'd with other UN/UNDP inclusive governance efforts, and because of the mandate, did not extend to FMS focused electoral assistance work. This became relevant in the post-2020 context as donor focus shifted towards bottom up democratic development, and to supporting state level EMB and electoral processes, including voter registration.

3.2 Effectiveness and impact

This section starts by identifying some of the key factors found that affected project effectiveness, and continues with the findings on project performance for each of its main output and sub-output areas.

The results framework for this project is not consistent across the different project documents and the numbering and wording for some of the activity results varied. For ease of reporting and evaluating purposes, the evaluator has consolidated these into a streamlined results framework that groups like activities. As a result, the numbering and wording for the sub-output level will not match those used by the project for activity results in some cases.

Key factors

The Joint Programme was directly affected by the political and security context within Somalia and other factors. These shaped the nature of its response and effectiveness. Many of these same factors also directly affected project efficiency, relevance, coherence, and sustainability. Some of these were:

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[25] Project: *Project Document 2018*

- *Lack of political will* for universal federal elections and consensus on the fundamental nature of the state and federalism among the states and with the federal government. This resulted in the abandonment of the direct electoral process in 2016 and in 2020 in favor of a selection process by a limited number of persons, and a lack of respect and accountability for political commitments made for more inclusive democratic processes and to the terms of the provisional constitution. The disagreements between the states and federal government on foundational issues have limited NIEC acceptance in some states and the inability to operate some of its state-level offices at times. This lack of commitment is also reflected in the constant changes and delays in the adoption of the election law and in the flawed version passed by Parliament, as well as in the lack of progress on the constitution itself. There is also an apparent lack of consequences for these actions according to those interviewed.

- *Security.* Security affected all aspects of the programme's work. It prevented the IESG from being embedded within the NIEC, and although IESG experts had extensive virtual contact with the NIEC, it limited their face-to-face interaction to a few hours a week, except for the national advisors who worked within the institutions. Security is a huge consideration for how elections will be conducted and will determine where voter registration and polling will take place, the number of places it can be done, and if it can take place at all. One expert likened it to "working in a strait jacket."

- *Strong integration of UNDP and UNSOM in the IESG.* The IESG has developed into an integrated unit without visible distinctions between the UNDP and UNSOM hired persons for the programmatic work. It is headed by an UNSOM staff member but the deputy is UNDP hired. The IESG director reports directly to the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) which allows for programme input into UN policy level decisions and helps ensure policy level support for the technical aspects of the process, such as the inclusive content of the electoral law. There also seemed to be a symbiotic relationship between IESG and the UNSOM political affairs and mediation group at the working level, that provided synergistic support on key issues. UNDP on its part helped expedite IESG's logistical, financial and procurement needs although it has a massive portfolio of projects. Informants also mentioned the readiness of UNDP/UNSOM senior management to deal with difficult issues which they felt helped to keep the technical level efforts moving forward.

- *Continuity and quality of IESG technical assistance.* Most of the IESG staff interviewed had a significant level of electoral experience in post-conflict contexts and stayed with the programme for a number of years. Some had been there since before this project started. They seemed committed to supporting the processes, and had the tenacity and ability to find technical solutions for the continually evolving situations, plans and legislation.

- *Commitment of the NIEC, IESG, UNDP, UNSOM and donors to* inclusive political processes and to Somalia eventually holding universal national elections. This meant that even though they were disappointed and frustrated with the difficult conditions and political setbacks, they still moved forward towards this goal. In particular, some of the national experts and staff working with the IESG and within the national institutions were impressive with their commitment towards more democratic processes (text box).

- *Mission context.* UNDP worked within the framework and mandate of the UN mission in Somalia as defined by Security Council resolutions and under the leadership of the SRSG. NAM recommendations and the SC mandate limited the scope of the programme's assistance to the federal level, and a limited number of institutions. This limited the flexibility of the programme to respond to other emerging needs and opportunities in the evolving context, affecting its relevance as discussed, as well as its effectiveness.

- *Covid 19.* The pandemic directly affected the project and its activities, adding an additional layer of constraints onto an already restrictive working environment. IESG staff worked from their home bases, as well as the NIEC. The IESG quickly developed systems and mechanism to sustain NIEC operations, and continued to work virtually, offering more online training and zoom licenses for the NIEC. The quality of the internet was an issue for many. As stated by one, *telecommuting challenge colored 2020*.

3.2.1 Output 1. Strengthened institutional capacity of the NIEC

The objective for Output 1 was *equipping the NIEC with necessary capacities and structure to prepare for and conduct credible and inclusive elections.* This was reworded in later project documents to *strengthening the institutional capacity of the NIEC.* [26] The project intended to accomplish this through *enhancing the NIEC electoral knowledge, skills and operational capacity* and *its institutional structure* [27] (Output 1.1), and *supporting the organizational infrastructure and operationalization of the NIEC at FMS levels* (Output 1.2).

> **JP national staff perspectives**
>
> *The project is very important to my country and my people. It is the first thing that Somali's will have. I am almost 30 years old and I have never seen elections in my whole life. This project will be a lifetime achievement for me helping my country. It will change the life of my country.*
>
> *The political dilemma in our country is the biggest challenge when it comes to preparing for elections. I feel disappointed, we are trying to build a nation for a better place, based on justice, fair representation and democratic elections towards the path of stability.*
>
> *I am proud of the NIEC working and feel what they are doing will make an impact. The electoral law is in place, political parties have been registered temporarily, voting centres have been identified and ready to function. I am proud to participate in this journey.*
>
> *We want to work for this country. For this people. I wish one day we have one person one vote elections. I did not like this indirect election to come again and again. I think there are many stakeholders that could influence this decision but everyone pretended that they're following what Somali leaders want, so here we are again. But I'm hoping that after another 4 years, maybe if we are given a chance, we will be able to have universal suffrage elections.*

[26] Project: *Project Documents, 2018, 2019-2021*
[27] Merged version of like sub-outputs for NIEC strengthening.

To achieve these objectives, the project intended to provide technical assistance for capacity development and overall support for operating costs. It also intended to assist the NIEC to develop its ability to plan, prepare, organize and conduct the anticipated elections. This included professional staff development, developing information management systems and financial and administrative processes, and by establishing its institutional systems. It also anticipated a focus on gender mainstreaming within the institution and promoting women's participation in electoral processes through its regulatory processes. Efforts were also anticipated for advocacy and lobbying for NIEC to be prioritized in the FGS budget and in relation to the FMS. The TA consisted of the IESG staff and national and international experts, along with national advisors contracted to work inside the institution to provide advisory services on a continuous basis. The end result anticipated was a *NIEC enabled to operate as a strong professional organization with the necessary capacities to undertake its role and responsibilities in an effective and credible manner.[28]*

The anticipated budget for the activities for this output was USD 5.3 million. This was more than a quarter of the planned project budget. Actual expenditures as of the end of June 2021 were about USD 3.37 million or 28% of all project expenditures (Table 5).

Table 5: Planned vs Expended Output 1
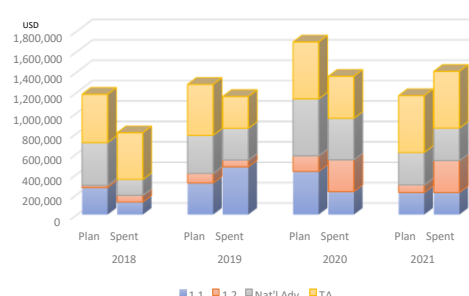
Strengthening institutional capacity (1.1). For this element, the project intended to strengthen the NIEC's capacity to *anticipate, adapt and structure its own processes, regulations and procedures to the subordinate regulatory electoral environment; increase its technical electoral knowledge and expertise; strengthen its organizational and operational management capacity, and support its organizational infrastructure and operationalization of the NIEC.*

The estimated costs for this component, which includes NIEC operational costs, were about USD 1.2 million. Of this about USD 250,000 was allocated for training and workshops (Table 6). Actual expenditures were about USD 1 million. This does not include the costs for the national and international advisers which had their own lines items and worked for all Output 1 activities.

The evaluation found that the continuation of IESG assistance that had started under the previous project, supported the evolution of the NIEC from an embryonic organization to a fully staffed and functioning institution, with a large secretariat, and field offices in every state. This would not have

Table 6: Planned Training Budget

been possible without the IESG's provision of substantial and uninterrupted technical advisory services for strategic and operational planning, financial and logistical support, and capacity building. There was other support to the NIEC, most notably the USAID-funded BUILD project, but this was intermittent and not to the scale of the IESG effort. It had also waned in recent years. In interviews, the NIEC characterized the IESG as their only continuous and committed partner, and meeting with different

IESG experts several times each day despite their not being embedded.

The actual effectiveness of IESG's institutional strengthening and capacity building is unknown as increases in knowledge or skills were not tracked, and the institution has yet to implement a voter

[28] Project: *Project Document 2018*, p 27

registration or electoral process except for a number of indirect by-elections done independently.[29] However, the difference between the NIEC in 2018 and today in terms of institutional growth and

Table 7: NIEC Status Start and End of Project	
January	**June 2021**
2018 3 year old institution HQ equipped. Offices temporary 64 staff, all with some training USD 3 million/year FGS allocation Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021 • adopted and in implementation • VR feasibility study done • 7 political parties registered with temporary certification • Regional consultations started end of 2017 • Somali Lexicon of Electoral Terminology launched • LOA done on cash reimbursement basis • Moderate risk rating in HACT assessment	• 6 year old institution • Offices still temporary but permanent HQ almost ready, with offices, datacenter, warehouse • Field offices and staff in every state • 99 election staff, all with some training • USD 3.5 million/year FGS budget allocation • Reports quarterly to Parliament • Conducted 11 by-elections • Pilot GIS mapping of VR sites completed • 108 political parties registered with temporary registration • Strategic Plan 2022-2026 being developed • LOA done on cash advance basis • Generally satisfactory HACT audit findings

scope of activities undertaken is provided in Table 7.[30]

There was a perception among the Somali stakeholders interviewed, including MPs that the NIEC was capable and a technical expert on elections. This is demonstrable in the fact that the Office of the Prime Minister informally asked the NIEC for technical advice on the indirect process and that the MPs stated that they appreciated the NIEC discussions on the draft electoral law. It was also cited by national experts as being more professional that other FGS institution, and it received a generally satisfactory rating during its most recent audit. Its Office of the Political Party Registrar has successfully registered over 100 parties and provided them with temporary certification. Polling data showed that the level of trust among Somali citizens in the NIEC had also risen from 45% in 2016 to 63% in 2020 with those trusting it "a lot" increasing from 10% to 49%.[31]

However, the ability for the NIEC to put its trainings into practice and to grow institutionally from those lessons learnt has been negligible due to the political context. The NIEC realizes it still needs institutional strengthening and capacity development support until it has that experience and can grow from it. This was noted during the NIEC/IESG retreat in January 2021 and in the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis done by IESG. IESG electoral experts noted the complexities of electoral administration in a fragile, post-conflict context, and from Somalia's least developed country context which would present significant logistical challenges on its own even without the security concerns, and the challenges that the NIEC would have to face in implementing universal elections nationwide.

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[29] By-elections are to fill empty MP seats, each decided by an electorate of 51 voters.
[30] Baseline information for the NIEC taken from the 2017 annual report of the earlier project.
[31] USAID, *Somali Perceptions Survey*

Capacity building. The NIEC prioritized capacity building it its strategic plan as a big proportion of its staff had no first-hand knowledge of democratic election practices. This was also a large focus for the project from its start, seeing the NIEC and its administration of elections as one of the fundamental building blocks for a universal elections. Almost half the trainings done from 2018-2020 contributed towards building its institutional strengthening and capacity (Table 8). The remainder also contributed to its operational and legal capacity. As a result, most of the capacity building issues are covered in this section of the report. The online trainings offered during Covid 19 were done

primarily on an individual basis. As such, they are not reflected in Table 8 as they are not comparable to the ones delivered directly by the project.

The project provided almost 90 trainings, almost half of these in 2020. The number of participants ranged from two or three persons to more than 50 depending on the topic. These covered the range of electoral administration and election issues. The most frequent trainings were on voter education related to voter registration, administration and finance, and logistics. Trainings on voter registration had the highest number of participants followed by trainings on partnerships/team building and professionalism/corporate governance respectively. It is unknown how many individual persons attended these trainings, as the numbers reflect the aggregate number of participants per course. Thus from the data available, it is not possible to determine how evenly the trainings were provided across the institution or staff members.

Table 8: Number Trainings Provided by Output
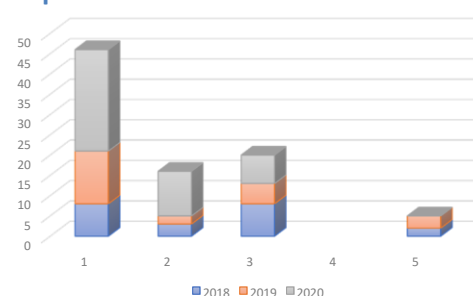
The project and NIEC made efforts to mainstream gender in capacity building and gender parity in trainings and staffing. There was gender parity in the national advisors provided to the NIEC originally, with half of them being women.[32] In trainings, two-thirds of the total number of participants were male (M) and a third female (F). There was a more equitable participation rate in the 2019 trainings (57% M - 43% F) while the majority of mostly on-line courses done in 2021 were taken by men (75% M – 25% f) (Table 9).

The project seems to have made effective use of some well-known and respected electoral administrators. In particular Judge Johann Kriegler, former Chair of the South Africa Independent Electoral Commission, who met with the NIEC Commissioners and senior staff, on issues such as building trust in a volatile electoral context, and on the importance of electoral dispute resolution. It also did several joint workshops with the BUILD project on the electoral process and coordinated workshops with others, which helped to maximize efforts for the NIEC and avoid duplication

Table 9: Number Training Course Participants

The NIEC developed a training department that received some trainer-of-trainers (TOT) training, including Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE). This was needed. The train the facilitator BRIDGE course on electoral processes noted that 85% of the participants had no facilitation skills and that this was the first time they had been exposed to this type of training. However,

they also noted that for the second part of the course held a month later, the participants had an increased display of knowledge and confidence.[33]

Much of the initial training tended to be general intended to familiarize the NIEC staff with electoral concepts, legal frameworks, operations, and planning. The generic and unskilled nature of some of the trainings was noted in the NIEC Strategic Plan updated in 2019.[34] Most persons interviewed felt the trainings had become more specialized over time, especially for the more technical units, such as administration and finance. That unit received more specific trainings focusing on UNDP's financial reporting requirements because of its use of the project's LOA.

However, this issue was still raised in the January 2021 NIEC retreat where some staff discussed the generic nature of the trainings, feeling they were not task specific. They also noted that *inappropriate training results in low staff productivity and a high dependency on advisors*.[35] The recommendation from the retreat was to develop and implement a comprehensive, relevant, and structured training programme for the staff[36] and linked to a performance management system.

There did seem to be a kind of training fatigue evident on all sides. Some of the IESG delivered courses done on zoom were said to have had high dropout rates or lacked participant interest, along with limited attention from some on the project side for better attendance. Given the unreliability of the internet, most zoom calls are done without video and with muted mikes. There is no way to know if a participant is still actively listening or out doing something else while his/her name is still on the screen.

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[33] Project: *BRIDGE, Train the Facilitators Report, Course in Electoral Processes*, pps 8 and 10 respectively.
[34] NIEC *Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020, 2019 Revision*, p 12
[35] NIEC, *The NIEC Self Reflection Retreat Report*, p 15
[36] Ibid, p 16 [39]
Ibid, p 19

Nevertheless, most NIEC staff interviewed, and in particular the field office staff, appreciated the on-line certificated courses that had been made available to them during Covid, feeling that this had increased their professionalism and knowledge. Some of the field staff interviewed said they had seven or eight certificates out of the 10 courses offered. Among the comments: "*it was mind blowing*" and "*I felt like I was building a career.*" The most frequently cited courses were *women's participation in the electoral cycle* and *electoral administration.*

The certificated courses were provided on an on-demand process. Some of the NIEC directors thought these certificated courses should be integrated into a more intensive professional development programme. The NIEC secretariat suggested setting up a knowledge management system for knowledge transfer through an intranet system, where anyone could join or take a course, to bring up the skills level of trainers, and to provide capacity development at a higher level. Most staff asked for more peer-peer support and for opportunities to participate in other countries' electoral processes to gain more hands-on practical experience. As stated by one: "*take a director to an election, it would be more effective than 20 workshops.*"

This evaluation agrees with the concept of peer-peer professional development however in a more hands-on way than election visitation. Setting up a system with well-organized and managed EMBs that embeds the staff member in the organization to work besides his/her counterpart in the preparation of voter registration or an election for a few weeks, would provide that practical experience that the NIEC is missing.

The NIEC retreat recommendation to *develop and implement comprehensive, relevant and structured programmes for staff*[39] should be implemented. However, at this point in the NIEC's development, a systematic institutional capacity needs assessment should be undertaken first for each department, and used to develop a comprehensive capacity development plan, followed by action and training plans. This should be accompanied by an organizational structure assessment so that the systems and structures can be updated and matched to the capacity development plan along with the development of a performance monitoring system that can alleviate the human resource issues raised by some staff at the retreat.

National advisors. The NIEC benefited from the presence national advisors who worked within the institution on a regular basis. Their presence allows the programme to provide the day-to-day TA and interaction that it cannot because of the security restrictions. There were nine initially, with five remaining. The NIEC still has the option to hire a few more if required. The ones who left were said to have not been needed since the direct elections were pushed back, or were not as well qualified.

The national advisors interviewed for this evaluation were very experienced senior professionals, although only one had some (indirect) elections experience. Without project funding, the NIEC would have been unlikely to hire them on its own, as one noted, a government salary cannot attract that calibre of people. The estimated cost for all of

the national advisors provided under this project (including for MOIFAR under Output 5) was about USD 1.6 million and actual expenditures were about USD 1.1 million (Table 10).

Table 10: Expenditures for National Advisers

The NIEC Strategic Plan notes that the national advisors bring experience and promote an environment conducive to learning and mentorship. However, it also notes that the role of these advisors and their respective terms of reference were not initially clearly understood by the secretariat which hindered the development of their ability to transfer skills and build capacity of the regular staff.[37] The secretariat now develops the national advisors' TORs and manages their recruitment process, however similar issues were still mentioned in the evaluation interviews. These seem to result from compartmentalization of information within different departments or Commission. The issue was also raised during interviews of whether the national advisors were providing capacity development for their institutions or if they were strengthening institutional capacity by doing the work for the institution. This seems to be a systemic issue in Somalia as the ICPE noted that capacity injection was not the same as capacity development, and found that this was most notable in the absence of a coherent capacity development strategy.[41]

The issue of capacity injection was discussed with the NIEC, national advisors and the IESG. The general consensus was that national advisors had been working themselves into a more advisory position over time, but it was still evident from the discussions that they were still doing some of the institutional work. One of the national advisors felt that working together as a team with NIEC staff on a task was capacity building in the context. Given that context, the use of national advisors will be a continuing need.

Institutional systems and structures. In addition to trainings and workshops the programme provided technical, logistical and financial support to strengthen the NIEC's corporate structures, systems, policies and management. The NIEC had received only limited government funding at its inception. The FGS increased its budget allocation to around USD 3 million a year (USD 3.5 million for 2021) after intensive lobbying by the NIEC and international community. The NIEC says the amount received is less than the amount allocated, and the allocation itself only covers salaries, by-election operational costs, and a few months running costs. The project's financial support of more than USD 800,000, allowed the NIEC to operate and cover its staff transport costs, website, internet, office

printing, meeting support, furnishings and other costs. Without this financial support, the NIEC could not have operated in any meaningful way if the information on the government contribution and use is accurate.

The NIEC administered much of this funding directly through cash advances on its letter of agreement with UNDP. This requires UNDP accounting and reporting standards to be met. The interaction and training of the project managers and project/UNDP administrative/finance staff appears to have been effective. The external audit for the NIEC's use of the LOA funds for 2020 showed satisfactory results for all systems except for the lack of an automated financial system due to financial constraints (high risk), and the need to update its asset register (medium risk).[38] UNDP is currently working on a

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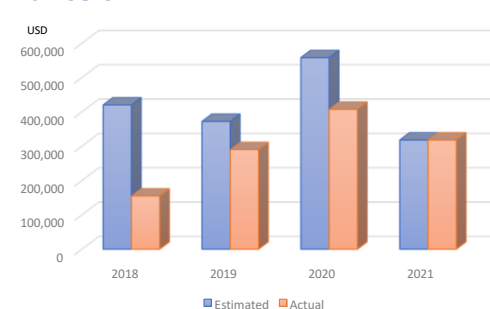
[37] NIEC, *NIEC Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021, Revised December 2019*, p 13 [41] UNDP IEO, OpCit, p 51

[38] Deloitte, *Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) Audit*, p 29

common solution for its projects with LOAs as the software must match FGS financial systems and requirements. The IESG intends to provide this to the NIEC once it is developed.

The NIEC has been able to increase its staffing levels and now has 99 permanent staff (excluding support staff and drivers) at headquarter and field office levels funded by the FGS (Box 3). In addition to recruiting for specific posts through a competitive procurement process, it hired nine recent college graduates as interns. Initially funded and trained by the project, they were then incorporated into the NIEC permanent staff structure with government salaries. This process helped staff the new units (legal, GIS and IT), that were being established at the time as well as the OPPR.

The infusion of competitively recruited staff and national advisors, and the continuous training and advisory sdervices provided by the project and others, has increased the level of professionalization within the institution according to the evaluation interviews. At the same time, it has created internal demand and discussion within the institution for a more performance-based system and structures.[39] This was raised by some staff during the NIEC 2021 retreat, which recommended that the *existing organization structure should be revised and updated to accommodate all the Commission's functions* and *establish an equitable grading and placement system for staff.*[44]

Box 3: NIEC Organizational Structure

NIEC Strategic Plan 2018 20201
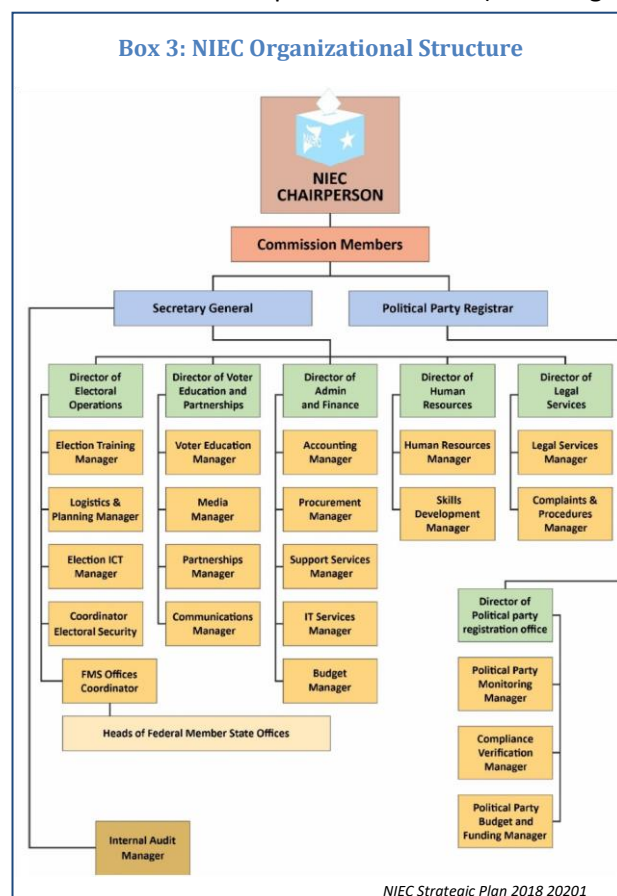
The NIEC Strategic Plan for 2017 – 2021 looked towards developing a governance and regulatory framework that could facilitate its work and rationalize its organizational structure. The IESG has assisted this process with advisory services, technical assistance for drafts, and supporting workshops on governance-related issues. The results so far are outlined in Table 12. The NIEC has already started developing its next strategic plan which is to start next year. However progress has been slow in other areas. The main factors appear to have been the initial lack of staffing in some

areas, the need for more timely decision making[45] and since 2020, the impact of Covid 19 and the need to work virtually. In addition, some elements, such as developing a common record keeping system and knowledge data base are pretty much on hold until the NIEC moves into its new facilities and has better internet and server connections. Records are now kept by departments on individual laptops, making uniform record keeping difficult even though the staff were aware of its

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Table 11: Development of NIEC Corporate Governance

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[39] NIEC, *The NIEC Self Reflection Retreat Report*, p 20 [44] Ibid, p 19

2018	2021
• Strategic plan 2017-2021 done & being implemented Corporate governance framework drafted, needed review • Lack of clarity on roles, responsibilities of Chair, • Commissioners and Secretary General • Operational activities centralized at board level • Review of standing committees needed • Legal department being established • No communications officer or public communications policy • No code of ethics for Commissioners & staff • No conflict of interest policies • No confidentiality policy • No fraud & anti-corruption policy • No procurement policy • Financial manuals in draft. No independent audit done[47] • No timely submission of financial reports • No risk management policy framework • No M&E policy • No performance management • No training policy • No travel policy • No archives • 15 women within the NIEC including support services No NIEC gender advisors	• Strategic plan 2022- 2026 being developed • Governance framework approved, being used • Roles commission, subcommittees and SG clarified in governance framework • Standing committee review and TORs done • Legal department established, staffed, and working • Communications Officer recruited; policy not yet developed • Code of conduct and code of ethics approved • No conflict of interest policy • Confidentiality policy to be developed Q3 '21 • Fraud/anti-corruption policy done • Procurement policy done • Finance policy is developed and operational. Manuals not yet developed • Financial reports done quarterly • FGS audit done 2019, several findings[48] • No risk policy framework • No M&E policy • Performance assessment & evaluation tool done. Plans to operationalize Q 3 2021 • Training policy being drafted • Travel policy adopted • No central archive, requires central server (waiting on move to new HQ buildings) • 44 women (30%) within the NIEC • Gender focal points in each department • Gender equality audit conducted and strategy developed

importance.[46]

The NIEC Chair, a former civil society activist for women's rights, championed gender equity for women in politics and public office and within the NIEC. She sought a 30% parity in the NIEC, sometimes with affirmative action. This focus has increased the number of women staff and Commissioners within the NIEC, and the institution has created gender focal points. IESG worked

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[45]   Project: *Institutional Matters*, p 10

[46]   Project: *Record Management Working Session*, p 2

[47]   Project: *NIEC Institutional Governance Report*, p 3 and Baker Tilly Merali's *Micro Assessment Report*, pps 10-12

There was no 2018 audit. The 2019 audit only listed discrepancies for all FGS agencies. For the NIEC this included: failure to prepare and submit annual accounts; unsupported payments for running costs for USD 95,054; unsupported payments for travel costs for USD 58,490; lack of an asset management policy; lack of NIEC registration for the five project-purchased vehicles; and failure to register contracts totaling USD 143,271 with the Office of the Auditor General. The NIEC's management response was that they had the supporting documents required and had shown these to the auditors. *Consolidated Compliance Audit Report of the F.G.S. 2019*, pps 117 - 121
closely with the UN Women's gender advisor to mainstream gender in the project efforts and within the institutional policies and electoral processes being developed.

Support to NIEC at FMS level (1.2) The project intended to support the opening and operations of NIEC field offices in every state with financial, operational and technical assistance. To support these efforts, UNSOM intended to recruit international and national staff as IESG field electoral advisors to be based in the UNSOM regional offices to work directly with the NIEC field offices.

The estimated activity budget for Output 1.2 was around USD 340,000, or about 6% of the planned Output 1 budget. Actual expenditures were about USD 104,000, or 10% of Output 1's budget (Table 12).

Table 12: Planned & Actual Expenditures 1.2

Until the political decision for the indirect process, the project was on track to meet its goals for this element of the programme. The IESG field staff were deployed and were working directly with their NIEC counterparts, providing much of their training and advisory services directly. The NIEC recruited four staff locally for each office, plus support staff and drivers. Most of those interviewed were well educated, articulate professionals, making a career change due to the work opportunity and full of ideas about how to do their work. The recruitment process was reportedly very competitive, with one field officer saying they had to pass a written exam to be interviewed, and about 50 persons took the exam with 15 interviewed for his post. According to the IESG field officers, hiring locally was an effective strategy as they already had the contacts and relationships needed to interact with local officials and civil society, and that persons coming from other areas would have difficulties given the clan system and their localization.

Several states provided facilities to the NIEC to use as offices, with the project paying for the rest (rental, furnishings, equipment and running costs) through the LOA to the NIEC. This did not seem to be standardized from the field interviews. The project was able to reuse some computers purchased for the 2016 indirect process. This was a cost-effective measure, although there were reports of a broken computer not being replaced by the NIEC, or not having received one at all in the interviews.[40] The project also directly procured a vehicle for each of the five offices (USD 155,000) to assure their transport. With Covid, the field offices said the NIEC no longer was covering the gasoline or internet because they were working from home. The fuel is understandable since they are not commuting, but they would be dependent on the internet with the work now being virtual if this information is correct. Security was a major concern in most areas, limiting their working hours and access.

The NIEC-IESG field officers seem to have a good rapport from the persons interviewed, and characterized themselves as a team. They met at least once weekly face-to-face pre-covid, which has now moved virtually with the IESG officers still providing training, mentoring and serving as a source of information for their counterparts. They also helped arrange their logistics and supported their

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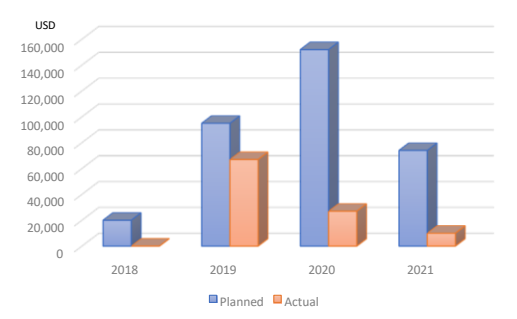
[40] According to the IESG more than 70 new computers were purchased for the NIEC; replacements are their responsibility.

outreach as did NIEC/IESG Mogadishu. As stated by one NIEC field officer "*UNDP is part of the process. Without UNDP we cannot move.*"

Communications between NIEC headquarters and most field offices needed strengthening, with some NIEC field officers saying they used the NIEC's website or newsletters for information, or used their own WhatsApp groups locally. Some of them were active learners, and several said they had

taken almost all of the courses offered online, seeing it as helping to build their career. From the discussions, they had internalized the lessons and were able to apply them to their own context.

Some of the field offices participated in the GIS mapping exercise, feeling that this had given them some practical experience in implementing an electoral operation and the opportunity to meet district officials. They also had undertaken the start of a limited voter education campaign and discussed electoral security issues with UNSOM and IESG funded by PBF. The NIEC and IESG field offices were more hands on with these efforts, and will be valuable assets once the NIEC is able to implement the electoral process.

With Covid and holding of indirect processes, most field officers seemed to be on an all call basis, participating recently in the updating of the strategic plan. The field officers are primarily using their mobile phones to attend meetings since the NIEC has not been covering their internet costs. These connections allow them to keep in contact, but they are not very stable.

The FGS-FMS relationship affected NIEC's ability to open its field offices and operate in every state. Although its Strategic Plan noted that it had *gained support for NIEC's mandate from all FMS presidents to conduct universal suffrage elections and established field offices in all FMS capitals by the first quarter of 2019,[50]* relations with Jubaland and Puntland remain difficult. When political tensions rose between the FGS and FMS, the Jubaland Ministry of Interior closed the NIEC field office, however, they felt things were moving more smoothly now. Although they still do not recognize the NIEC, "*they like the Chair.*" As these issues are political, they require more political level support to resolve.

3.2.2 Output 2. NIEC supported to enhance public awareness of electoral process, including promotion of women's political participation

The objectives for Output 2 were: *NIEC's outreach to and engagement with national and subnational stakeholders supported (*Output 2.1), *Development and dissemination of NIEC public information and awareness campaigns and materials supported with regards to general civic education, political party registration, voter registration and the conduct of electoral operations* (Output 2.2), and *NIEC promotion of women's participation as well as marginalized communities supported* (Output 2.3).[51]

Among other activities, the project intended to build NIEC staff capacity on civic and voter education, support the development and dissemination of voter education materials, and facilitate coordination between the NIEC and others at national and sub-national levels, including Parliament, state level EMBs and the CSOs expected to conduct civic education. It also intended to place specific focus on promoting women's participation and inclusive participation including supporting NIEC advocacy efforts on temporary special measures.

IESG intended to achieve this through the provision of TA, training, workshops and capacity building for NIEC staff at headquarters and field levels. It also intended to facilitate consultative meetings with stakeholders and policy makers, provide IT skills training for social media and communications campaigns, including the NIEC

Table 13: Anticipated Budget Output 2

Table 14: Planned vs Expended Output 2

USD

(bar chart showing Planned vs Expended values for 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021. Y-axis scale: 0 to 1,400,000. Planned bars decreasing from ~1,250,000; Expended bars around 300,000–500,000)

Legend: 2018 2019 2020 2021
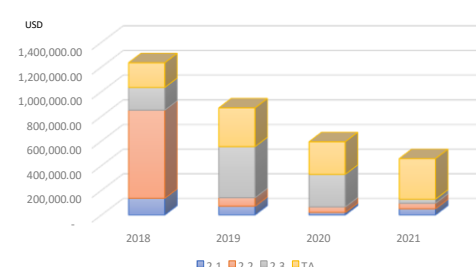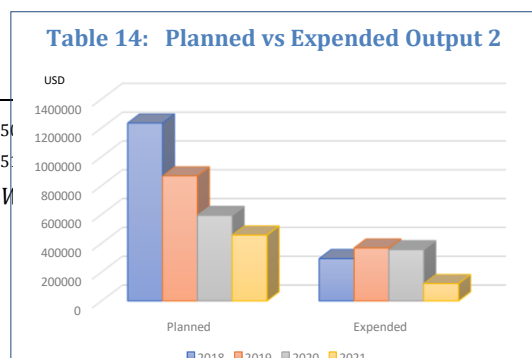
website, and fund audio visual and print products.

2018 Annual Workplan, p 3. Planned budget amounts from 2018 Project *Document*

The original planned budget for Output 2 was USD 3.1 million. This was about 16% of the original planned project budget (Table 13). These estimates were revised downwards significantly as the programme progressed and delays were encountered with the passage of the electoral law which was needed to ground much of the voter education campaigns and public outreach.

Some of the planned funds were reallocated for the construction of the data centre (Output 4) which had been an unfunded programme element. Eventually the outreach efforts became overtaken by the decision for an indirect process administered by other entities. Actual expenditures as of the end of June 2021 were USD 1.1 million which was 9% of all project expenditures (Table 14).

The project document's design for Output 2 does not clearly differentiate between external relations, public information and voter education. Public information is a tool for both external relations and voter education, but each of those are separate elements, with their own goals, challenges, needs and responses. The NIEC established a Public Outreach department with a Voter Education Unit within it. This unit was to do both outreach and voter education. Terms of reference for the voter education unit were developed with IESG advisory support for two units: a voter education unit and an external relations unit to handle the NIEC's relations with major stakeholders, provide accreditation for media/observers/pollwatchers, and maintain the NIEC's website and social media. These have yet to be adopted.

Box 4: NIEC Newsletter

ELECTION NEWSLETTER

National Independent Electoral Commission September & October 2020 Newsletter Edition 7

NIEC Awards Provisional Certificates to Six Political Parties

On October 7, 2020 - Six political parties received their provisional registration certificates issued by the office of the Political Parties Registrar (OPPR) at a ceremony on 8 October at the NIEC headquarters in Mogadishu.

The six Political Parties are:
1- Security and Justice Party
2- Qaransoor Party
3- Justice and Reconciliation Party
4- Somali Republic Party
5- Green Party
6- Peace and Unity Party

The ceremony was presided over by National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) Chairperson, Halima Ismail Ibrahim, and included Mr. Mohamed Mohamud Hassan Sandere, the Director of the Office of the Political Parties Registrar.

Mr. Sandere welcomed the newly registered Political Parties and praised them for their desire to participate in developing the political party system in the country and urged the parties to make all necessary preparations to become officially registered once the Amendments to the Political Parties Law receives the assent of the President. He also encouraged Political Parties to work together to ensure democratic elections are held in the country by 2024.

The leaders of the political parties thanked the NIEC for their professionalism during the registration process and expressed the desire for the country to move from the divisive, clan-based power sharing formula to a more inclusive democratic electoral process.

The NIEC Chairperson, Halima Ismail Ibrahim, stated that political parties play a crucial role in the political and economic development of their country and their presence is a good indicator of strong

HIGHLIGHTS
- NIEC Awards Provisional Certificates To Six Political Parties.
- NIEC Chairperson participates in a virtual African Union Security Council meeting.
- NIEC Chairperson Halima Ismail met with the Swedish Ambassador to Somalia.
- NIEC Field Office Staff attends Party Registration Training workshop in Dhusamareeb.

For the project, separating these elements along the lines of the responsibilities as outlined in these TORs would strengthen a future programme design and provide more conceptual clarity to the IESG and NIEC efforts, increasing their effectiveness and impact. It would also strengthen the ability for the programme to track its progress and measure performance.

Outreach (2.1). The project intended to facilitate and support NIEC outreach, engagement and coordination with national and sub-national stakeholders, including consultations with the FMS, political parties and CSOs. It intended to continue its technical assistance and capacity building for the public outreach unit which had been established under the previous project. This included skills training in social media techniques, and to develop a public outreach strategy and voter education curriculum.

Table 15: Planned vs Expended Output 2.1

USD
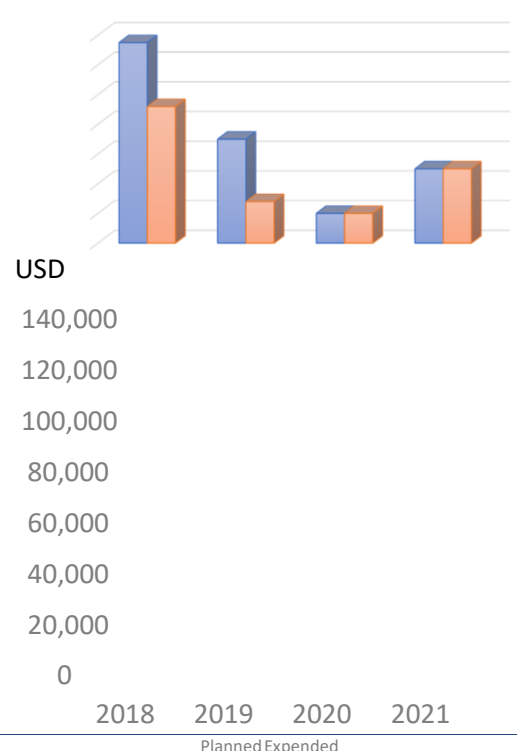
The anticipated budget for this effort was USD 275,000 which was 9% of the budget for Output 2. Actual expenditures were about USD 190,000 or about 17% of the Output 2 expenditures (Table 15).

The NIEC identified effective communications with the FMS and local communities as needing special attention seeing information as shaping perceptions of NIEC goals and programmes. It also noted the importance of communications as it not only shares information but builds ownership in the processes.[41]

A major outreach event was done under the previous project with the NIEC Commissioners visiting all of the federal member states and Somali diaspora in four locations abroad in late 2017. Their *Report on the Public Consultations for the 2020 Elections* was published in March 2018 with the IESG supporting the publicity for the consultations and NIEC meetings with the media on their findings and report.

Subsequent meetings were organized during this project with civil society, political parties, media and others. These did not appear to have been done systematically, with some characterizing them as organized on an as needed basis, focused primarily on providing information to stakeholders on the progress made towards voter registration, the opening of NIEC field offices, and the requirements for temporary political party registration. Notable ones from project reporting included: visits to some political party offices in Mogadishu to assess their capacity for official registration; three days of meetings by the Commissioners with the OPPR and NIEC field offices in Dhusamareb and Galmudug on political party registration with 40 participants (33 M, 7 F) [42] and a week-long meeting in May 2018 in Garowe between the FMS and FGS on improving relationships where the Commissioners advocated for the states to lobby the FGS for expedited electoral legislation, and political party law amendments.

Apart from the face-to-face outreach, the NIEC published a newsletter (Box 4) with updates on the commission's activities that it posted to its website and highlighted its work and meetings. This was more consistently done in 2020 with the last one apparently done for January-February 2021 which provided information on its lessons learned retreat and other NIEC activities.

The NIEC also has a Facebook page. This had 40,027 followers and 26,544 likes as of July 2021. This also did not appear to have been updated regularly since 2020, but had photos posted of the NIEC

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[41] NIEC, *The NIEC Self Reflection Retreat Report*, p 19

[42] Project: *Programme Annual Report 2020*, p 24

Commissioners visiting the new NIEC headquarters. An analytical snapshot of the website was only available for October 2019 (Table 16). This showed an average session duration of 2.43 seconds, a

Device Category	Acquisition			Behavior		
	Users	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration
	395 % of Total: 100.00% (395)	315 % of Total: 100.00% (315)	526 % of Total: 100.00% (526)	64.64% Avg for View: 64.64% (0.00%)	2.13 Avg for View: 2.13 (0.00%)	00:02:43 Avg for View: 00:02:43 (0.00%)
1. mobile	218 (55.19%)	182 (57.78%)	276 (52.47%)	67.39%	2.19	00:02:30
2. desktop	177 (44.81%)	133 (42.22%)	250 (47.53%)	61.60%	2.06	00:02:57

Table 16: NIEC Website Analytics October 2019

bounce rate of 64.64% and that 60% of the users were in Somalia followed by the U.S. at 14%.[43]

More attention to the social media sites as a dynamic outreach tool could expand the NIECs reach and information to the public. A recommendation from the IESG social media trainer was for the NIEC to identify specialized social media agencies in Somalia and hire a national adviser on strategic partnerships to support the communications team on the NIEC's strategic communications.[44] A recommendations from a NIEC field officer was to look beyond traditional groups for lobbying and suggested the art industry, social influencers, and those in the music industry, stating they had millions of followers asking why not use them?

Determining the scope and effectiveness of the outreach efforts is difficult. Reporting is descriptive and performance information is anecdotal. The indicators used are activity based. One measured the number of "*significant engagements.*" This

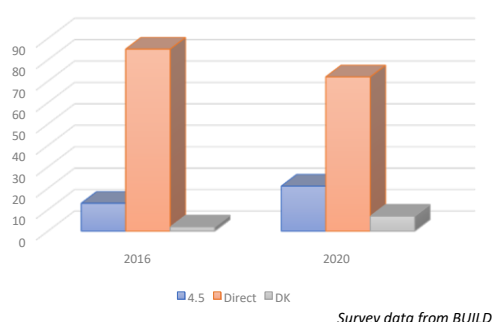[43] NIEC, *Google analytics, all web site data overview, October 19-23, 2019,* snapshot
[44] Project, *Communication strategies Workshop Report,* p 6

provides a number, but does not give an indication of the nature of the engagements or their outcome. Some of these efforts were also done conjointly with BUILD or in support of other assistance efforts. These show a good degree of collaboration among assistance providers, but this also makes it difficult to attribute any results found although the IESG was the only consistent and significant source of support for the NIEC, and for all outputs, for the project's duration.

Public information and voter education (2.2). The project intended to support the capacity building of NIEC staff on the importance of voter and civic education, to develop and disseminate educational campaigns and materials on the rights and responsibilities of voters and other electoral stakeholders, and facilitate coordination between the NIEC and the entities that were expected to conduct civic education to ensure consistency.

The anticipated budget for this effort was about USD

Table 17: Knowledge of 2020 Electoral Law %

Survey data from BUILD

Table 18: 4.5 or One Person-One Vote? %

Survey data from BUILD
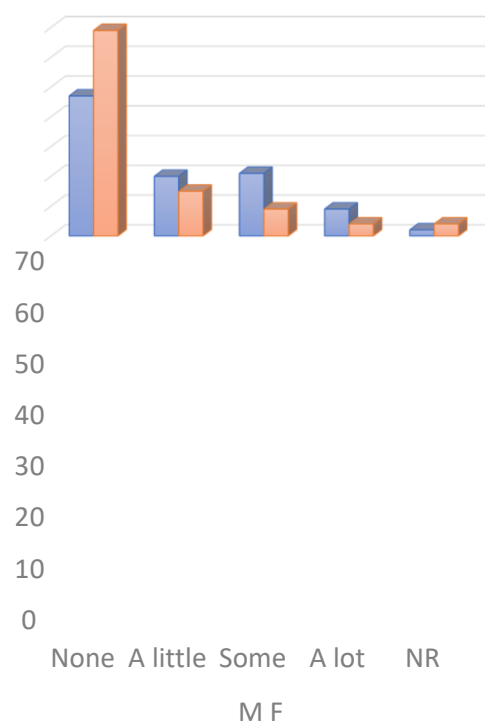
875,000 which was about 28% of the budget for Output 2. As noted, most of the planned funds for 2018 (estimated originally at around USD 715,000) were reallocated and annual planning after that was much more modest. Actual expenditures were about USD 144,000 or about 43% of the Output 2 expenditures.

The need for accurate information dissemination and consistency of messages was an important element given the limited level of knowledge among the public on the elements of a democratic system including

universal elections. Voter education priorities in the pre-election phase were to raise awareness on the

Table 19: Trust in NIEC %

electoral process and on the role of the commission, to mobilize the electorate for the elections, and to promote inclusive participation.[45] The end result sought was *enhanced public knowledge and awareness of the electoral process and the NIEC as an independent EMB.[46]*

Survey data from BUILD

There is definitely a need for this output in a country which has not had a direct election since 1969, where education levels are low, and which has had an

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[45] Project: *Project Document 2018*

[46] Ibid, p 29

autocratic system of governance for decades. However, quantifiable data on the actual level of knowledge and awareness of Somali citizens of the electoral processes and their attitudes is limited.

The evaluation found an almost total dearth of statistical information available on the democracy and governance situation in Somalia. This type of information is needed not only for programming,

and designing voter education programmes and messaging, but to measure progress and programme performance. USAID has done some polling through its BUILD project for its own civic education and M&E efforts. Although the information is public, it was not widely available and most persons interviewed did not know it existed.

This type of information is essential for an election support programme and the broader state building effort. The BUILD project will be ending in 2022. If other donor polling is not available, UNDP should ensure that this type of essential research is included in the next programme, both for its own use as well as for stakeholder use for their own activities.
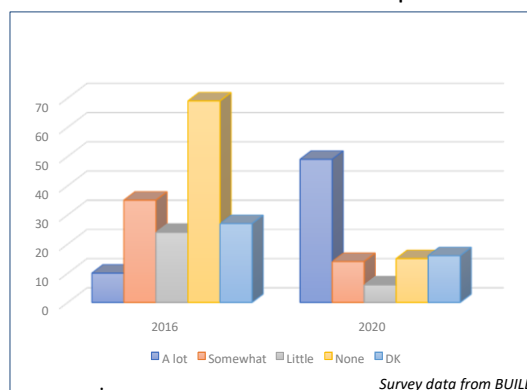
Some of the most pertinent data found by BUILD polling, which used a random sample of 2,000 persons, is included in this report. This shows that the percentage of persons favouring direct elections over the 4.5 clan selection process has decreased from 85% in 2016 to 72% in 2020 (Table 18). It also shows an increase in public trust in the NIEC from the baseline survey done in 2017 (Table 19). Polling data also showed 55% of the respondents thought the elections were important (84% M, 82% F). The group that gave it the highest importance were males 18 -35 years old.

As the Joint Programme supported a very limited public voter education effort, and as there were other actors working on civic education at grass roots levels, attribution for the increase in NIEC trust is not possible. However, the polls give an indication of the trends and with a more comprehensive survey the most effective messages and channels could be identified along with their reach and levels of public understanding.

NIEC Voter Education Graphics

NIEC YouTube Channel
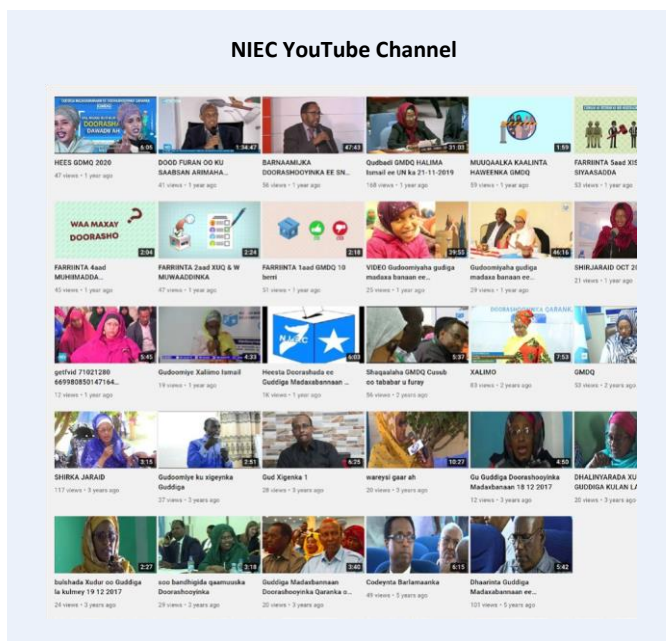
The NIEC also undertook an on-line survey as part of its 2017 public consultations. Only the data published in its report of the consultations seemed to be available, but this showed that the respondents felt that the most significant challenges to the election were security (30%), political (21%), financial (15%), corruption (15%), legal (11%) and awareness (9%).[47]

With IESG support, the NIEC developed a communications strategy for its voter education plans. This was divided into three components (voter registration, candidate registration and election day) to make it easier to understand and implement. It also supported the development of a voter education curriculum. This is reportedly quite broad as the NIEC was looking to do civic as well as voter education based on a Kenyan model. Broadening the NIEC's focus beyond voter education at this point was not recommended by the IESG advisor.

The voter education plan was designed to be implemented directly through the NIEC field offices and on radio and TV. Copies of the materials and messages were to be given to CSOs to ensure consistency of messaging and for them to distribute through their grass roots networks. This seems logical and a good use of NIEC-CSO partnerships. The IESG provided advice on the benefits of outsourcing the production of the materials and using the commercial and professional expertise available through commercial contracting for the design of the material.

A draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) was developed with the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism in April 2019 to cooperate on a comprehensive voter education programme that would result in a peaceful, free and credible election.[48] According to the MOU, the NIEC would develop the print and broadcast materials, while the Ministry would use all available media outlets for their dissemination. Although this partnership was overtaken by a change of Ministers and political events and was not signed, it does show forward thinking by the IESG and NIEC towards the different channels of communication available for the educational efforts and the collaborations needed to make it happen.

The NIEC did hire three local graphic designers who produced print materials with the support of the IESG graphic designer. The IESG expert provided skill training for the unit on the type of colours that would be good for designs, and how to integrate messages, such as gender, into the materials. Other than that, the project did not appear to have done any specific training for outreach other than on-the-job, working together as a team with the IESG advisor. This partnership will be a continuing need for the near term given that this will be a first time voter education programme for the NIEC.

Broad messages were developed for the initial voter registration efforts. This was done to avoid the use of more specific message that might not be aligned with the election law once it was adopted.

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[47] NIEC, *Report on the Public Consultations for the 2020 Elections*, p 40

[48] NIEC, *A Memorandum of Understanding and Collaboration (draft),* p 1

Not having the electoral law to work from was cited as the major challenge for the IESG-NIEC group working on voter education.

Five TV and radio public service announcements (PSAs) were developed to be broadcast between 2 February and 9 March 2020. The first one on the role of the NIEC was produced in two dialects, which the IESG stated was the first time this had been done in Somalia. These were aired on five radio stations and six TV stations including Jubaland TV and Puntland TV. Although the NIEC monitored the broadcasts to ensure they were aired, there was no data available for their reach or audience shares. This type of information should be routinely collected for future efforts so that the project and NIEC can see the reach of their messages, best times and channels for delivering the messages and so on.

Table 20: PSA Videos Tracking Report: Facebook and YouTube 4 Feb – 10 March 2020										
Channel	**Reach**		**Views**		**Shares**		**Reactions**		**Comments**	
	Mahaatiri	**Maay**	**Mahaatiri**	**Maay**	**Mahaatiri**	**Maay**	**Mahaatiri**	**Maay**	**Mahaatiri**	**Maay**
Importance elections FB	9,504	5,438	2,400	1,400	80	41	144	87	12	10
Importance elections YT			22		0		1		0	
For both languages										
NIEC Mandate Facebook	4,754		1,300		31		58		6	
NIEC Mandate YouTube			32		0		1		0	
Citizen rights & responsibilities Facebook	17,100		4,300		116		196		39	
Citizen rights YouTube			23		0		2		0	
Political parties Facebook	7867		2,400		66		85		5	
Political Parties YouTube			28		0		2		0	
Women's political participation Facebook	No Data		No Data		No Data		No Data		No Data	
Women's participation YT			32		0		2		0	

The IESG was able to get the tracking data for the PSAs on the NIEC's social media sites (Table 20). The views on the YouTube channel were negligible (ranging from 22 to 32 views). The reach on Facebook was much broader, up to 17,100 on citizen rights with 4,300 views. However, the audience retention

rate for PSAs of one minute or more was only 10 seconds. The advisor said the lesson learned was that messages should not exceed 30 or 40 seconds.[49]

The broadcasting was interrupted in Puntland, reportedly after seeing a PSA broadcast on its local TV, closing the NIEC field office and firing the TV station director saying they had not been consulted first. Officials in Jubaland also closed their NIEC field office on a temporary basis. However, the broadcast monitoring sheets show the Puntland broadcast recommenced after a few days, and was not interrupted in Jubaland.

The NIEC field offices had also started a general outreach effort at the same time (late 2019, early 2020). Some said they went to nearby communities and visited schools, elders, women's groups and CSOs. The scope of the outreach varied, about 100 individuals for one field office and another about 700 persons according to interviews. Some field officers met people in groups of 30-50 persons. They also did consultations at district levels, handing out calendars and meeting local officials. One NIEC field officer said he appeared a few times on the local TV station. They were ready to release posters and other materials, but then were told to stop on 20 March 2020 presumably because of the intensifying political crisis. Many of the field offices did not know why, indicating the need for better communications between HQ and field. Having to stop the efforts just as they appeared to be picking up speed was unfortunate as it gave the field office a taste of their tasks for voter education and a chance to meet the people and increase the NIEC's visibility.

The planned budget for this output shows a remarkable decrease in anticipated need after the first year of the project. The limited amount planned for 2021 is understandable given the changed context, but the sharp drop from the 2018 plans those in 2019 and 2020 seems counter-intuitive. In interviews, most explained this as not knowing enough of the specifics that would be in the electoral law to do a voter registration or other information campaign. However, in terms of planning for the next phase, it seems as though more attention needs to be paid sensitizing the public on the general concepts earlier in the project so that the NIEC can start to build up some of the momentum needed for universal elections. This assumes of course, that these activities are allowed in the states.

Participation of women and marginalized communities (2.3). The project intended to *enhance gender mainstreaming in electoral processes,* along with *access of women and unrepresented groups to the electoral processes.[50]* This was to be done through support and advisory services to the NIEC on its outreach to women, persons with disabilities and other marginalized communities, advocacy on the 30% quota for women in the electoral process and elected office, and its efforts to support CSOs working on the inclusion of women youth and other marginalized groups in the electoral process.

The anticipated sub-output budget was about USD 895,000 or 28% of the Output 2 budget. Actual expenditures are unknown as these were included in the expenditures for the Outputs 2.1 and 2.2.

Table 21: % Support for Women's Quota in 4.5

Survey data from BUILD
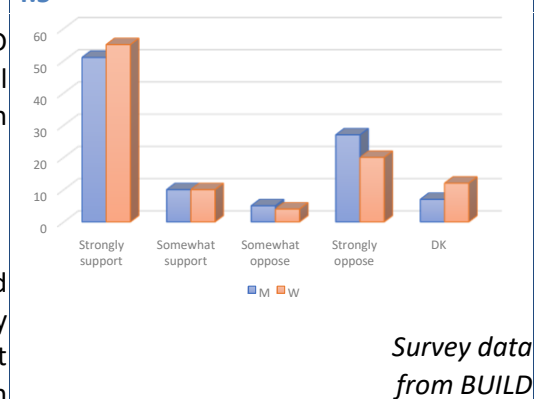
The evaluation found that the project mainstreamed gender in its activity implementation and in its advisory services to the NIEC on its work as discussed in Output 1. Most of the outreach to women was done through CSOs who were included in the information sharing/voter education meetings with the NIEC.

UN Women had a joint programme specifically targeted at women's political participation. A small portion including working with the NIEC on gender inclusion and women's political leadership. IESG

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[49] Project: *Report on PSAs Aired,* p 1
[50] Project: *Project Document 2018*, p 19

coordinated closely with the UN Women's gender advisor in these efforts. There were also a number of other organizations focusing on this area with the NIEC providing training and other support. Thus attribution of any results likely needs to go to this overall effort.

IESG/NIEC and other advocates ensured that political parties had to nominate 30% women candidates in the electoral law, but were unsuccessful at getting Parliament to adopt a 30% quota for women representation in Parliament. This is now only a verbal commitment. Currently 24% of the MPs are women due to a quota used for the indirect elections in 2016. Polling data shows that more than half the citizens support the quota for the upcoming indirect process, with women slightly more supportive than men at 65% - 61% respectively supporting the concept (Table 22).

The project's inclusion focus was predominately on women. Efforts with other marginalized groups including PWD were limited. There was one awareness session provided on rights of persons with disabilities in 2019 done by the UNSOM Human Rights and Protection Group, the Disability Advisor of the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development organized by the project and attended by 55 persons (45 M, 10 F). This was a good start as the purpose was to provide the NIEC staff and Commissioners with a better understanding of the barriers of those with special needs, including issues such as employment with the NIEC. However, more needed to be done to follow up this initial effort. PWD organizations and others supporting marginalized groups were included in NIEC meetings with other CSOs, but felt left behind in the electoral process and its preparations. PWD CSOs said they were voiceless as there were no disabled MPs and PWD were rare in the civil service. Minorities had some representation, given the 4.5 process used in 2016, they had 31 seats in House of the People.[51] However, they felt left out of the preparations and voter education efforts.

The lack of attention to PWD and minority issues was visible in the voter registration mapping exercise, where the lessons learned exercise identified that accessibility had not been one of the criteria used to identify potential voter registration sites. As a result, no data on accessibility was collected because it was not on the form.[63] The NIEC however had identified a registration site for IDPs in Hirshabelle. More attention needs to be given to accessibility and social inclusion issues and prioritized in any subsequent project funded activities. The project should also consider providing a national disability advisor to the NIEC, one that is a person living with disabilities and who understands the issues first hand. The UNDP project in Sierra Leone provides a good model for this and which helped to ensure a more inclusive and responsive process in that regard and that no one would be left behind. The UNDP project in Nepal also provides a good model for incorporating GESI into electoral programming and activities.

3.2.3 Output 3. NIEC's operations, including preparations for voter registration supported

The objective for this output was to *support NIEC operations, such as political party registration, voter registration, preparations and conduct of universal elections, and other electoral operations.* The project intended to do this through: *supporting voter registration* (Output 3.1), *supporting the NIEC temporary registration of political parties* (Output 3.2); *supporting electoral operations* (Output

3.3). The fourth sub-output was on electoral security with those IESG efforts funded through the

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[51] Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Country of Origin Report on South and Central Somalia*, p 42 [63] Project: Lessons Learned Report, p 3

Peacebuilding Fund and as such are not part of this Joint Programme project evaluation. The project intended to achieve these results by providing technical assistance, advisory services, IT support along with logistical, operational and financial support.

The estimated budget for Output 3 was USD 2.8 million (Table 22). This was about 15% of the overall project budget. Actual expenditures for the output as of the end June 2021 were USD 1.6
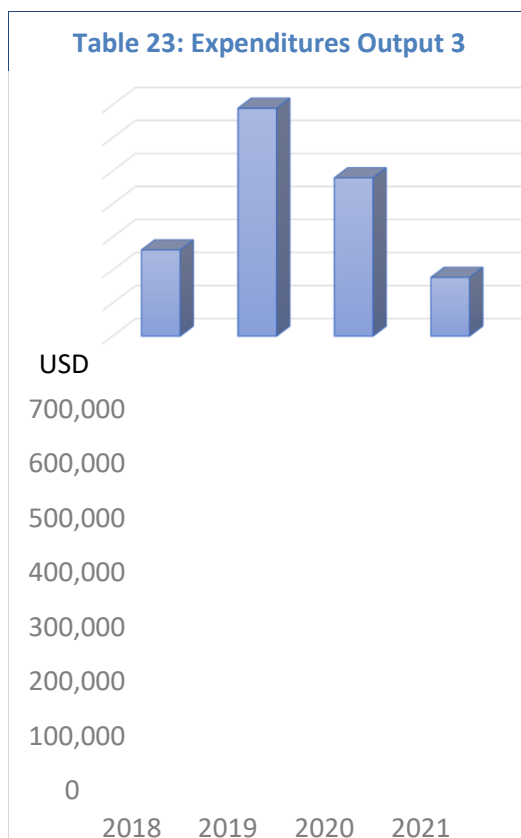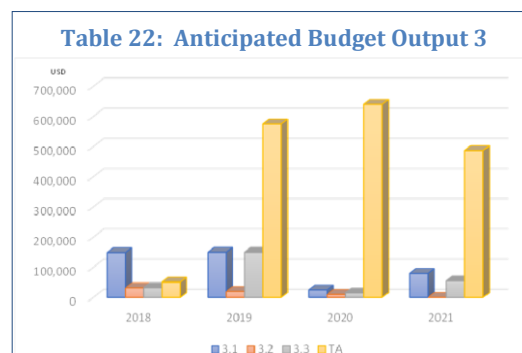
Table 22: Anticipated Budget Output 3

Table 23: Expenditures Output 3

million which was 13% of the total project expenditures (Table 23).

Operational support was expected to be implemented according to the electoral timeline, starting with support for planning and the development of procedures based on the electoral system in the electoral law, followed by operational support for voter registration and then for the elections themselves. Project efforts were severely hampered by the political delays in the enactment of legislation and the lack of agreement between the FMS and FGS on the nature of federalism. This was needed for the NIEC to operate in all states. In the end, the reversion to the indirect system with ad hoc electoral administration mechanisms prevented the NIEC from having any official role in the 2021 elections. Had direct elections gone forward it appears likely that the NIEC could have handled their administration with the substantive assistance provided by the IESG, UNSOM and others, although in limited locations given the security context

Table 24: Planned vs Expended Output 3.1
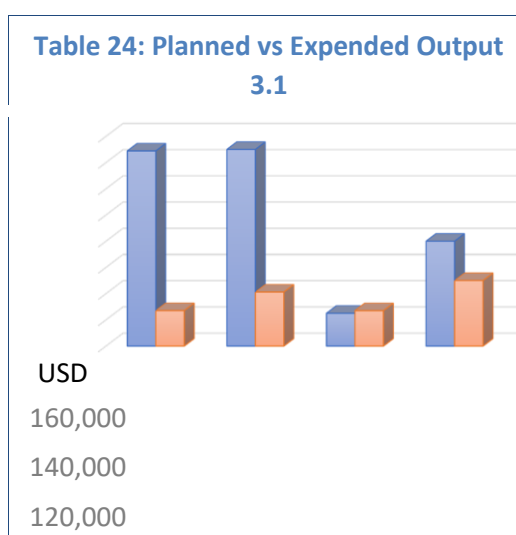
Voter registration (3.1). About USD 404,000 was intended to be spent for this sub-objective, about 16% of Output 3's planned budget. Actual expenditures were about USD 145,0000 (Table 24). Although the elections could have taken place without a voters registry, as offered as an option by the NIEC to policy makers in 2020 to expedite the electoral timeline, the assumption within the country and by this project, was that voters would be registered in advance so that their location and numbers were known for planning and identification purposes. The 2018 project document noted the critical need to undertake a credible and accurate voter registration exercise that would be accepted and trusted by stakeholders. However, the how-to-do-it elements of voter registration were daunting in the context of

Planned Expended
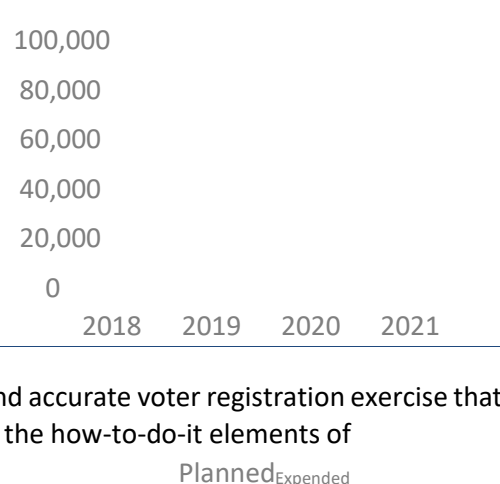
pervasive mistrust, political sensitivities and vested interests in the status quo, including armed interests.

The NIEC's strategic plan set a 2019 start date for voter registration. The IESG and NIEC efforts started well in advance under the previous project. A joint NIEC-IESG-BUILD voter registration feasibility study was done in 2017 that discussed options with different stakeholders and experts[52] in order "*to avoid another backlash by presupposing a voter registration model for Somalia*.[53] This was followed up in the current project with a BRIDGE module on voter registration and other related trainings to familiarize the NIEC with the registration process and different types of systems.

Not having a complete legal framework left many unknowns, generating the need for different options and scenario planning. Some of the key issues included whether it would be a paper-based manual system or biometric system, if it was going to be a PR system and if so, what type of PR system, the costs of these different systems, and their pros and cons among others. Security was another factor. Al Shabab had already assassinated more than 60 electoral delegates from 2016, and there was a concern among those interviewed that they would attack the voter registration process. Options also looked at how quickly registration could be done with some processes, such as taking fingerprints, seen as too time consuming. These different options were provided to the NIEC to help it make an informed choice.

The NIEC wanted a high-tech iris biometric registration system as was used in Somaliland. They felt this was the only way to gain trust in the process, and that this was what the people wanted according to their consultations. The donors, on the other hand, who were expected to pay for this system, wanted the less costly and they felt more context appropriate solution of a paper-based manual system.

At the same time, however, donors had funded the high tech voter registration system in Somaliland and some were funding a biometric state level voter registration pilot being undertaken in Puntland for direct elections at the district level. To the NIEC, this was a mixed message and a double standard about the use of a biometric system.

The IESG ultimately gained donor approval to fund a pilot biometric voter registration exercise, based on the NIEC decision for a biometric system with photos, and following the UNSOM assistance principle of "Somali led." It launched an international call for expression of interest of vendors in 2019

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[52] UN EAD, *Needs Assessment Mission 2017,* p 12
[53] Project: *Project Document 2018* p 19

to prequalify potential suppliers.[54] This was put on hold later in the year because of the lack of progress on the electoral law, needed to know what information to capture. The NIEC for its part did present both manual and biometric options to Parliament along with the timelines for each in 2020. However, all of these efforts were overtaken by the political events, and have been suspended until the new government is in place.

In retrospect those interviewed talked about a chicken - egg situation, with some feeling that if the voter sensitization on registration and the registration exercise itself had moved forward more expeditiously, and there had been a bigger push from the international community for the government to accept the registration process, it could have made the people feel closer to the elections and created some momentum for the direct process. However, the donors could not commit to supporting this process without the law and specifications in place.

One of the issues that emerged during the evaluation was the extent of donor engagement in the registration process in Puntland. Three pilot districts were done during this evaluation, registering about 45,000 persons over the age of 18. The registration is biometric and includes an iris scan. Cost was about USD 22 per voter.[67] Those district elections were expected to be held on 27 July 2021 but were rescheduled for 25 October 2021 as the state reportedly did not want those efforts to overlap with the indirect national process. This effort is managed by the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) as part of a larger multi-donor project.

This project, and another large multi-donor stabilization project, are both planning to support direct state-level elections administered by state EMBs. In Puntland this is to lead up to direct state parliament elections expected in 2023. They see a bottoms up approach as a better alternative to

working at the national level because of the lack of political will for direct national elections. In terms of voter registration, this raises the issue of creating parallel systems and the need to harmonize and coordinate the state and national voter registration systems. The UK stabilization fund is already undertaking a study of the wider system to see how these systems could be meshed together that is expected to be completed in October-November 2021.

Political party registration (3.2). The project intended to *support the NIEC for the registration and regulation of political parties.* This included support to establish the political party function within the NIEC, help to develop a range of regulations dealing with political parties, including their activities, campaigns and finance, developing mechanisms for political party compliance and promoting women's participation in political parties. It intended to do this through the provision of national advisory services and the facilitation of meetings with stakeholders.

The anticipated budget for Output 3.2 was about USD 62,000 or 3% of Output 3's planned budget. Expenditures were about USD 40,000 or only about 2% of the Output 3 expenditures.

IESG support to the OPPR started under the previous project setting up the office and the temporary registration process for political parties. Permanent registration requires the signatures of 10,000 registered voters which is not possible until voter registration is done.[55] Temporary registration of parties started in September 2017 with the first seven political parties registered in December 2017.

The registration of parties was seen in the NIEC's strategic plan as a milestone in the transition from a clan-based system to a multi-party political system. This goal will be difficult to achieve in the current

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[54] The pilot registration was to take place with the winning prototype selected from the bidding process, after testing of the prototypes submitted by firms that had submitted conforming bids. [67] Evaluation interviews with implementers

[55] The IESG and NIEC have jointly raised this and other issues with decisions makers, including the provision in the Political Party Law (Art 4) that states that the official registration of a political party is possible "within five (5) months before the start of the election" but political parties should be able to register officially as soon as possible to give them the chance to carry out various political party activities in advance of elections. Also applications for registration can only start from 5 months before the election which gives the NIEC very little time to carry out the necessary review process.

context. The parties that had registered did not actively lobby for direct elections. Most were said in interviews to be reluctant to come forward, afraid to jeopardize a possible government appointment or MP position. Parties were characterized as mostly one man shows or small groups that were not ready to compete and looking for alliances. Estimates ranged from only three to ten parties being viable out of the 110 parties registered to date.

The politicians interviewed noted this as well, and looked to the NIEC to contain the proliferation of parties by advising them to merge. Meeting the permanent registration requirement of having nine offices in 18 regions will be difficult for most of these parties, especially as some FMS will not allow parties to open offices in their state. The Registrar thought the permanent registration process would reduce the number of parties given the high percentage of unviable parties.

Those with more sizeable membership looked for support from the international community for the party system, noting the important role political parties play in a democratic system. They have no role now that the system has reverted to a clan based selection process.

The OPPR noted that most of their challenges for party registration were external and that their registration process worked well. Most of the parties that registered had women members as this was a requirement for registration. However, most were not in leadership positions. They estimated that less than ten women had come to the OPPR to register a party, and maybe three to four party chairs were women. No person with disabilities was noted as having come in to register a party.

The OPPR did some limited outreach on different issues, visiting some party offices. It intends to train parties itself, which it stated it had already done with EISA. The International Republican Institute (BUILD) had provided some direct training for parties, and through that had some contact

with the OPPR. The IESG is currently working with the OPPR on developing a database for political parties. Ensuring this system is compatible with the other data bases that will be developed will be important for NIEC efficacy and efficiency once the systems are in place for candidate registration, ballot design and printing, and accreditation of poll watchers and observer and pollworkers.

Electoral operations (3.3). The intention for this element was to *provide direct operational support for electoral operations, including preparation and support to the universal elections as well as other required electoral operations.* It intended to achieve these results by supporting the NIEC's operational and budgetary planning, identification of registration and polling sites, development of procedures for registration and elections, procurement of registration and polling materials, recruitment of temporary electoral personnel and operational and budgetary planning for byelections and other potential electoral operations.

The estimated budget for electoral operations was USD 252,000 or 10% of the planned budget for Output 3. Expenditures were about USD 145,000 or 9% of Output 3's expenditures. This obviously was not enough to cover the actual operational costs for an election and the project expected to increase its budget to cover some of those costs once those phases approached. As the electoral law was passed so late, and as its changed content raised so many questions, the project never reached this point, limiting most of its efforts to the planning and procedural drafting stage.

Table 25: Development of Operational Procedures	
2018	**2021**
• Voter registration kits field operations plan • Requirements for voter registration kits software developed • Hardware and software list developed for the operation of the data processing centre	• Voter registration operations plan drafted • Logistical movement plan drafted • Recruitment and training strategy for NIEC temporary operation staff drafted

	• Standard operating procedures for management of the NIEC vehicle fleet drafted

The IESG supported the development of several budgeted operational plans that provided options for voter registration and elections. It also produced a large number of draft procedures (Table 25).

The NIEC administered several by-elections during the project period. Very little was said about these efforts in the interviews although they seemed to have provided a good opportunity for some of the staff to get some hands on experience in the indirect process. It also gave visibility to the NIEC for its operations and role in managing an election.

GIS and pilot voter registration mapping. The project's work with GIS and the NIEC seemed to be effective, and generated positive results. It helped establish the NIEC GIS Unit, staffing it with eight interns from the UNDP accelerator project, and training them in GIS, remote sensing and use of that app. The interns have since been absorbed by the NIEC into their regular staffing structure. As noted during the interviews, this was seen the best way to approach the lack of IT skills in the context- to hire and train interns and give them job training, skills and practice.

The GIS mapping identified potential voter registration sites through remote sensing of population sites from satellite imagery done ahead of the actual field verification in eight sites. Each person in the unit managed the GIS data for one state with the original intention for each of them to be attached to a NIEC field office, with support provided by headquarters. This was overcome by the events and they are still based in Mogadishu.

This team has since helped with the mapping for the security joint operations centres that will now be used for the indirect process. They also help with the NIEC's information management, making data ready for analysis, and manipulating it so it is easier to visualize, like a dashboard or for infographics. According to the interviews, they are able to stand alone in this work with the IESG only providing advisory services when needed to do the more complicated elements such as mapping. Sustaining this capacity is questionable however given the demand for trained IT person. One has already left on a UN scholarship. Training of their replacements, if others chose to move on, will be required.

For the voter registration mapping exercise, the GIS team trained the NIEC field officers as trainer of trainers. They then trained the enumerators selected by local administrators who visited the sites and collected the data, supported by the headquarters GIS team. The NIEC attempted to have at least 30% female enumerators and clan balance, but the results were mixed in some FMS due to resistance by state senior officials according to project reporting. In Jubaland the state shut the NIEC office down shortly after the verification exercise started so there were no activities and the verification was not completed. It was also not done in Puntland due to FGS-FMS issues. In interviews, they reported no technical challenges, only the political ones, with unpredictable security.

The NIEC field officers saw this effort as a positive experience, being able to meet with local administrators, encouraging people about the holding of elections, and explaining its importance.

3.2.4 Output 4. NIEC permanent facilities established

The objective for this output was to *establish NIEC permanent facilities* at headquarters and state levels. The project intended to do this through: *construction of independent and sustainable NIEC HQ in Mogadishu* (Output 4.1)*, and support for the establishment of satellite offices in the FMS.*(Output 4.2).

The initial estimated budget for planning Output 4 activities was USD 1.2 million all allocated for 4.1. This was 7% of the overall project budget. No activities or expenditures were undertaken under 4.2 as construction of the NIEC headquarters was the first priority and is only now being completed. Actual expenditures were USD 1 million or 9% of the total project expenditures (Table 26).

The project saw institutional capacity as more than developing human resources. It also involved the ability to plan and operate, and having an enabling legal framework. It also required the infrastructure, equipment and assets needed to fulfil its mandate.[56] As an independent institution, the NIEC also needed its own facilities separate from other government entities to avoid interference and perceptions of bias. The project expected the construction of facilities at an independent and permanent physical location would serve as an important symbol of federal electoral authority and strengthen perceptions of its legitimacy. It also looked to the future towards independent sites for the NIEC field offices which would "*significantly increase the process of legitimizing the institution, it will also serve as an important symbol of genuine,* [Planned] [Expended] *federal authority*."[70]

Table 26 Anticipated Budget Output 4

The project anticipated the NIEC headquarters needed to be done by 2020. It included a permanent commission and secretariat buildings, a media/conference and data centre, and a warehouse to facilitate secure storage and processing of electoral material. This was expected to cost USD 6 million and its funding was under discussion with donors at the start of this project.

The outer wall and guard house was built in 2017 through funding from Japan, managed by IESG and implemented by UNOPS. The main building and EDR centre were funded by the PBF, and

coordinated by the IESG. The warehouse and security infrastructure upgrades were funded by the UNSOM Trust Fund.

The Joint Programme funded the data centre where construction started in 2019. This was completed by May 2020 and has been handed over to the NIEC. Most of the construction on the compound was reportedly completed by the time of this evaluation except for security enhancements and other construction which was behind schedule because of delayed supplies coming from abroad because of Covid. The NIEC anticipates moving into the compound when this is completed in the third quarter of 2021. As the NIEC had not yet started using the facilities, this evaluation is unable to determine the efficacy of the efforts and usefulness of the construction. Being physically separated from the presidential compound is a good move for an independent commission. There was a perception of the NIEC being close to the President notable in several evaluation interviews with Somalis. The physical distancing might help to alleviate some of this and make it more comfortable for some CSOS and political parties to visit the NIEC.

The new facilities are also reportedly wired for internet and intranet connectivity which will facilitate communications and work for the NIEC. It will also enable the development of the large databases

[56] Project: *Project Document 2018*, p 33 [70]
Ibid

needed for the registration and electoral operations as the project was holding off installing that equipment until the NIEC was in its new location.

3.2.5 Enabling electoral legal framework supported

The objective for this output was the *development of an enabling electoral legal framework supported.* The project intended to do this through: *supporting the development of the electoral law* (Output 5.1); *supporting consultations with stakeholders on the electoral law* (Output 5.2); *supporting the development of NIEC regulations in line with the legal framework* (Output 5.3); and *supporting the NIEC with the development of electoral dispute resolution framework and mechanisms* (Output 5.4). The work on EDR was funded through another project with the Peacebuilding Fund and is not included in this evaluation. Outputs 5.1 and 5.2 were part of the same process and for ease of analysis and reporting purposes are discussed together in this report.

The project expected to support the legal framework through advisory services to MOIFAR and Reconciliation and other actors in the drafting, review and interpretation of electoral legislation and electoral legislative matters, and to the NIEC on ensuring compliance of the NIEC rules regulations and procedures with the legal framework. It also intended to support stakeholder consultation at federal and

Table 27: Anticipated Budget Output 5

state levels on the electoral drafts and ensure coordination of the international efforts on the development of the legal framework.

The estimated budget for Output 5 was USD 1,090,060 (Table 27) which was almost 6% of the overall estimated project budget. Actual expenditures were about USD 845,000 or 7% of total project expenditures (Table 28).

Table 28: Planned vs Expended Output 5
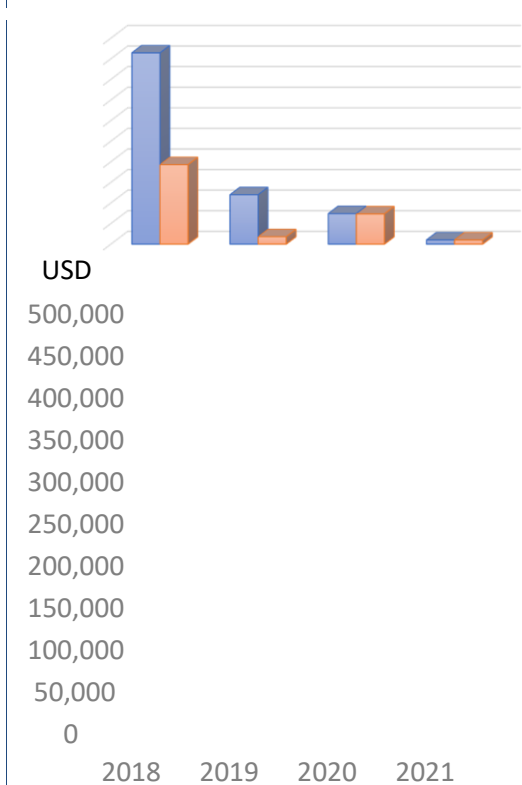
The baseline for Output 5 was provided in the 2017 NAM assessment that noted there was no formal legal and regulatory framework for elections and many unresolved policy issues. The situation at the end of the project was an electoral law that was adopted, but the system was the opposite of what had been in the draft approved by the Cabinet and endorsed by the MOIFAR and NIEC, and was seen as technically unimplementable, among other issues; and the political party law needed amendments to enable the regular registration of parties. The lack of significant progress was due to political issues beyond the control of this project as the technical aspects of drafting and designing an appropriate system and its enabling legislation were done and the IESG continues to provide comments on the legislation and drafts.

Electoral law and consultations (5.1, 5.2). The project intended to continue support to the development of the electoral law that had started under the previous project. This included technical, advisory and financial assistance, with a Letter of Agreement signed with MOIFAR. This was about USD 700,000 for 2018 and 2019. MOIFAR was the lead entity for drafting the electoral law,
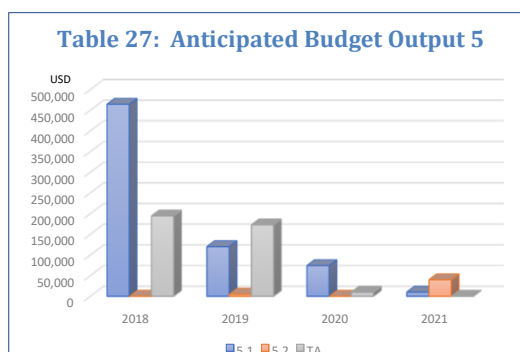
before passing it on to the Cabinet for approval, and then to Parliament for enactment. This effort was coordinated closely with the NIEC to ensure their technical input was incorporated into the draft. The anticipated budget for Output 5.1 and 5.2 was about USD 713,000 or 6% of the Output 5 budget. Actual expenditures were around USD 682,000 including the costs of the national advisors and TA. This was about 80% of the Output 5 expenditures (Table 29). This does not include equipment as laptops had already been provided through the previous project.

The project provided five national advisers to MOIFAR to support this drafting and consultation

Table 29: Planned vs Expended Outputs 5.1 5.2

Planned
Expended

USD
700,000
600,000
500,000
400,000
300,000
200,000
100,000
0

2018   2019   2020   2021

process including a senior advisor, a legal adviser, a gender adviser, an operations adviser, and an administration and finance adviser who helped with the organization of meetings, workshops and consultations. The national experts felt they were part of the Ministry in this effort, collaborating with two MOIFAR staff lawyers who had the legal archives on elections. They, with the help of the IESG legal adviser, comprised the Electoral Law Working Group, which did the actual drafting before sending the drafts to the wider institution.

One of the main challenges faced by this component was the political climate. There were several different ministers during this process, some more supportive of the work than others. It was difficult initially to have ministry support for the consultations needed on the drafts, and when this was enabled, they found that all of the different stakeholders had their own ideas and agendas for how the elections should be done.

The lack of experience with democratic elections and processes was another challenge evident in this output. Although these elements were overcome for the MOIFAR drafting component through tenacity and the expertise and comparative experiences provided, it was a time consuming learning process for all involved. At the start, the national advisors, most of whom also had no electoral experience and no common grounding, had their own perspectives for what needed to be in the law. Although most of that happened under the previous project, the lessons learned was the need to invest in orientation and team building when assembling a team for advisory or other services. They reportedly spent a lot of time initially convincing each other of what needed to be in the draft, and dividing tasks among themselves. They also initially lacked a clear idea of who needed to be involved in the process, and why, which would have helped to clarify their tasks, and develop a strategy for how to achieve them, which those interviewed felt would have increased their efficiency and effectiveness.

As an example, the team found drafting tough and challenging, requiring continuous consultation. They eventually reached out to other key stakeholders and created an informal Electoral Task Force. This included representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister, Office of the President, the NIEC, IESG and others to get their agreement and political buy in on the draft, and to reach the wider group of stakeholders. Participants saw the wider task force experience as an essential element of the electoral law development and noted that without this dedicated team, it would have been impossible to produce a draft legislation that all would accept. A limiting factor was the structural barriers that kept them from meeting with MPs, as this could only be done through the committee system.
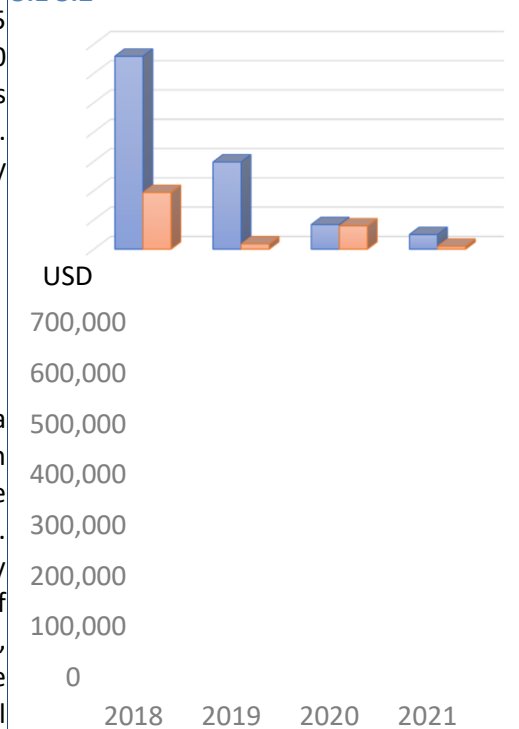
The IESG, NIEC and Working Group first had to develop an electoral system design that would fit the Somali context and be accepted by the different stakeholders. This required an inordinate amount of time analysing different options, and getting stakeholder feedback. The end result was a closed list, multi-party system and proportional representation that included provisions to enhance women and minorities' representation.

The Task Force generated some momentum for the electoral legislation, holding a well-publicized round table in October 2018 with the Minister and 60 stakeholders. It was a good blend of building political buy in through technical work. The Minister accepted the draft and submitted it to the Council of Ministers for approval and submission to Parliament for adoption.

The effort lost momentum however with delays at the Council of Ministers and the legislation that Parliament ultimately adopted was a reworked bill with a first past the post system that most experts felt was unimplementable as written. One lawyer interviewed characterized it as "absolutely terrible."

Coordination and programmatic synergies with the UNDP parliament support project were limited despite the project reaching out on specific elements in the election law that needed advocacy, or for updates on the situation in Parliament. According to one expert interviewed, that project largely saw the IESG as the experts on the topic so left this element to them.

This appeared to be a systemic issue within UNDP that it has acknowledged and is addressing with more synergistic elements in its next country development plan. This will strengthen the efforts for a more enabling framework as experts on electoral systems are not necessarily versed in the workings of parliament, nor have the connections and networks a parliamentary support project would have, that could identify champions and rally MPs to support the bill. This is especially important when facing challenges such as the lack of political will. It was a missed opportunity to rally support for NIEC advocacy in Parliament.

After the law was passed, the IESG provided the NIEC with different options on ways to make the electoral and political parties laws implementable and ensuring it covered some fundamental aspects that were not in the law, such as the regulation of women representatives and the representation of Banadir and Somaliland. The NIEC used this information in its advocacy and advice to the Joint Committee of both houses of Parliament. This did result in some clarifying resolutions adopted by the House of People, but other issues remained unresolved. The exclusion of the Upper House of Parliament in the adoption of these resolutions raises concerns about their legality and the lack of political support of the Upper House. This process took place within a context of political friction between the houses of parliament and was beyond the control of this project. Somali and international pressure to include a gender quota in the bill to ensure a minimum of 30% representation of women in the Parliament did result in a verbal commitment, but not in any changes to the legislation.

IESG did coordinate the international partners' technical comments on the electoral drafts, sending consolidated comments to MOIFAR and meeting with the NIEC, MOIFAR and Office of the President on them after which some adjustments were made.[57] This was useful for the Ministry as it had one set of comments to deal with rather than having to deal individually with each donor. It also should

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[57] IESG, *Written comments on behalf of the international partners on the draft electoral law*, 6 December 2019, and *Programme Annual Report 2018,* p 11

We came up with the electoral system we felt was the most appropriate for Somalia. They killed it and the new law is not functional. This was deliberate so there would be no election. This needed political commitment from the top… There needs to be a carrot and a stick. This should have been tied to the debt relief.

MPs felt they would lose their seat if they took the recommended version Their intention was already clear when they created an ad hoc committee to engage on the electoral law instead of using the interior committee that would hold regular consultations on the bill.

Many decisions are made on other political calculations The time is not right for the NIEC politically. Technical support needs political support. Put this on the table when there are FGS-FMS negotiations and articulate the role of NIEC on elections. Unless all people are on same page, the NIEC will not really be able to be accepted by all as a legitimate and credible body

Political will requires a lot of pressure. Not only from the UN but from the donors- they are key players. Get a united position and push leaders to accept. Otherwise 5 leaders will never change their shameful positions. They need to add political pressure to their technical investment… UN pushing has no consequences, but Somalis know, bilaterals will have consequences.

have increased the weight of the comments since they came from the international partners as a group.

The experiences in getting an electoral law drafted and passed, along with that of the rest of the legal framework, hit at the crux of the political problems within Somalia. The legal framework is needed to hold credible universal elections. There is no incentive to pass an enabling framework for universal elections for those without political will.

The implementation of this output was littered with red flags-- missed deadlines, foot dragging, changing systems or requirements after extensive consultations and commitments, and ultimately passing a bill years late that experts say is unimplementable. These were passed without consequences. As noted in the UK's annual review of its *Somali Forward* programme which funds this project, *the absence of condemnation may have emboldened approaches.* [58] The issue of conditions was raised in at least one Board meeting as the October 2019 minutes reflect *the* NIEC Chair's comments that *election 2020 is a shared responsibility and the international community should exert pressure on the FGS and FMS to compromise and come to an agreement on the implementation of the 2020 elections. Such pressure may involve making national support for election 2020 a precondition for support for democratization and governance programmes.* [59]

Ultimately, the decision to hold another 4.5 clan indirect process received international community support, including through the IESG despite the UN mandate for support to universal suffrage elections. The stability of Somalia and developing a tradition for the peaceful transfer of power were major factors in this decision. However, this is perpetuating a cycle of democratic dialogue and verbal commitments to universal elections that are not fulfilled, leaving the only option to ensure a peaceful transfer of power at the end of the presidential and parliamentary mandate is by accepting and supporting the FGS-FMS leaders to have their indirect process implemented. This cycle needs to be broken for the country to progress and for any technical assistance for democratic development to be relevant and useful in the long run.

Some of the Somali nationals' thoughts expressed during the evaluation on the political will situation and the role of the international community are provided in the text box.

Output 5.2. NIEC regulations (5.3). The project intended to *support the development of NIEC regulations in line with the legal framework.* It intended to do this through training and supporting workshops and conferences. It also intended to provide technical support to the NIEC to develop electoral regulations that were in line with the electoral law and other legislation. The anticipated

> *Supporting the NIEC is a shared responsibility. If I see someone wasting my investment, I speak up and say this. Donors stay diplomatic. This is not enough. This needs conditions… Some parties opened offices in Puntland, and the state would not allow them to function. That's a big deal, it should be a red flag. I blame the FGS, FMS and international community.*
>
> Sample from Somalis interviewed

budget was USD 85,000, or 16% of the total estimated budget for Output 5. Estimated expenditures were about USD 30,000. This is below the actual costs for these activities

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[58] UK, *Somali Forward, Annual Review 2020*, p 11
[59] Project: *Project Board Meeting Minutes, 9 October 2019*, p 1

as the NIEC received the support of the national legal adviser and IESG experts on regulations and their costs are covered under the other outputs.

Table 30: Development of NIEC Secondary Legislation	
2018	**2021**
• Political parties registration regulation revised • Forms and database for permanent registration of political parties required • Political parties finance regulation to be done • Electoral dispute resolution regulation required • Coalition and merging of political parties procedures required • Voter registration regulation to be drafted • Voter education regulation to be drafted • Candidates list and women's quota regulation to be drafted (based on the PR model) • Elections manual to be drafted • Code of conduct for election officials to be drafted • Code of conduct for media during elections to be drafted • Election observers' regulation to be drafted	• Political parties registration regulation finalized (still awaiting new amendments to the Political Party law) • Development of forms for permanent political party registration completed • Development of database development for permanent political party registration ongoing • Political parties finance regulation finalized • Electoral dispute resolution regulation drafted • Coalition and merging of political parties procedures drafted • Voter registration regulation drafted • Voter education regulation drafted • Candidates list and women quota regulation drafted (based on the PR model. Submitted to Parliament but not used) • Elections manual drafted • Code of conduct for election officials drafted • Code of conduct for media during elections drafted • Election observers' regulation drafted
For Indirect Process 2021	
• Indirect election dispute resolution drafted • Delegates selection procedure drafted • election Elders procedure drafted	• Candidate procedure drafted • House of the People and Upper House procedure drafted

In the absence of an electoral law and other needed legislation, the IESG and NIEC could only work on drafting regulations that could be adapted once the legislation was enacted. More than a dozen regulations have been drafted dealing with political party registration, through the voter registration and election processes and electoral dispute process (Table 30) In addition, due to the continual changes to the draft electoral law, and later from the political agreements on the indirect process, the NIEC draft regulations needed constant revisions and the structures required to implement the direct or indirect elections had to be changed by the NIEC several times. For instance, the NIEC started to draft secondary legislation (i.e. regulations) following the Dhusamareb Agreement, which still included the NIEC as the body responsible to implement the indirect elections, in order to implement this process. These remain in draft since the NIEC was subsequently excluded from the process.

IESG is still supporting the NIEC to review the existing legislation and drafts to identify changes that need to be made, and with drafts that can resolve those problems as the NIEC moves towards administering universal elections in 2025. Because of the intense efforts on the legal framework over the life of this project, and the continued engagement of the NIEC and technical assistance on these efforts, the NIEC is undoubtably more aware and knowledgeable on the problematic areas of the legal framework, and what it needs to pay attention to in the drafts than it was at the start of the project. As the project did not do any baseline or end of project knowledge, attitude or practices (KAP) type surveys, the actual extent of any capacity development on the legal framework and the NIEC regulatory process and its level of institutionalization is unknown.

A remaining legal issue for the NIEC is the NIEC establishment law which was amended by the House of the People at the end of 2020 to allow for a second term six year term for the NIEC Commissioners. This was reportedly signed by the President, but in June 2021, the Upper House claimed the amendment violated the constitution as it had not provided its consent on the bill. This issue will determine whether the sitting Commissioners will continue through the next electoral cycle or if the institution will have a new board.

3.3 Efficiency and project management

This section starts by looking at project implementation and continues with the findings on project management, reporting, and monitoring and evaluation.

3.3.1. Project implementation

The project had an immediate start up being a follow-on project that continued its core activities with the same staff and experts that were already working on these efforts. They already had the relationships built with stakeholders and a level of trust developed. This saved a considerable amount of time and cost from starting a project from scratch and ensured programmatic continuity. It was important not to have a lapse in activities or focus as this was at a critical time with the electoral law was still being drafted and debated, and the planning for voter registration was underway so that the technical preparations for universal elections could be in place by the expected 2020 election date. Being ready was a priority since the lack of technical readiness was what was used to justify the 4.5 process in 2016.

Programme implementation was done along the lines of the phased design. This was a useful approach as it allowed for the longer term strategic planning that needed to be done for timely and effective support to the process, but it kept the project from getting too far ahead of the legal and political processes needed to hold those elections. This limited most activities in the first year to institutional capacity building and training for the NIEC, and with the MOIFAR to getting an enabling electoral bill to and through Parliament. This phased approach also served as a safety valve that protected donor funding from being used too soon on activities that might not be needed if the political benchmarks were not met, or on activities that they did not agree with. Most recently, the donors were considering whether they wanted their remaining project funding used to support the indirect process, and which they agreed to in the project board meeting of 26 July 2021.

Until the announcement for indirect elections was made, the project consistently followed the plans as outlined in the project documents and annual workplans, implementing the activities in a timely and as a participatory manner as the context allowed. It was a challenging environment, with unresolved, highly sensitive issues of power sharing and representation in a fragile, post-conflict state that still needed political reconciliation. The project and IESG were able to adjust to this context and shifting landscape and seemed to be respected as an impartial technical expert group by the Somali institutions and politicians according to interviews. In this it worked in close coordination with the UNSOM political offices which provided the political guidance for their work, and which saw them as different sides to the same coin; with the political side using its good offices in negotiations for

agreements on basic principles which were then handled on the technical side by IESG for the electoral process.

The programme staff worked under extremely difficult physical conditions. International staff were confined to their base and only able to meet with partners outside their compound for a few hours a week. National staff had to drive the roads to the compounds to work, which was especially dangerous for those in some field offices. IESG also worked with partners with differing levels of expertise, interest, and expectations for the use of the project funds. There were also differences in style and personalities that aggravated some of the daily work at times for people on all sides. But overall, the project seemed to have a good working relationship with its Somali partners and were considered as part of their team by most of those interviewed.

Covid directly impacted the nature of programme implementation adding another layer of difficulty. The programme adapted relatively quickly as it had already been providing most of its assistance at arm's length and was used to having to adapt to the evolving Somali context. Obtaining zoom licenses for the NIEC as well as for the parliamentary committees working on the legal framework helped their work continue during the pandemic, and the access provided to NIEC staff to online courses allowed those who were interested to continue with their professional development. International experts were required to work from their home bases. Things had not yet returned to "normal" during this evaluation. Normal was where the IESG staff could all work in the IESG office, go to the NIEC offices for a few hours a week, and where the NIEC and national staff could enter the UN compound where the IESG offices were located.

Covid also came at a time when the decision for indirect elections was made, limiting the face-toface strategy meetings and discussions that would have been done within UNSOM/UNDP and the project, and with the donors. There is no information on how the pandemic affected the decision of the international community to accept the indirect process, but it would seem likely that it was a factor at that time.

The political decision to hold another indirect ad hoc "electoral" process raises the issue of the value for money and the need to ensure sustainability for the technical level progress made. It was also noticeable during the evaluation interviews that there was still a general expectation of a continuation of the status quo programming for the next electoral cycle among most of the Somalis, all of whom had a perception that there were no consequences for the politicians, and almost all thought that they were likely to repeat this same cycle for 2025.

Donors however were not on the same page, saying it would not be business as usual and that they would require political agreement before focusing on technical support, such as electoral assistance or constitutional drafting. The UK's annual review of its Somalia Forward Programme gave this project a B score because *changing models had prevented some activities.* The score the year before had been an A. [60]

The level of project effort towards universal elections dropped after the political announcement and focus switched towards support for the indirect process. As this assistance is just starting, it is too early for it to be evaluated and is something that should be looked at after that effort is completed for lessons learned. The project is still supporting the NIEC in its development of its strategic plan, and continuing its support to the objective of achieving an enabling legal environment. Its joint electoral legal framework review activity is assessing the electoral law, among others, and is being used to build NIEC capacity as an expert body that can provide advice to decisions makers on the legal framework after the indirect process is done. IESG is also continuing its work to facilitate the voter registration pilot exercise by drafting the needed regulation and procedures. The IESG is also ensuring the completion and readiness of the NIEC's new headquarters and covering the costs of the NIEC's activities and some field offices.

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[60] UK, *Somali Forward, Annual Review 2020*, p 10 and *Annual Review 2019*

UNDP implemented the programme with a direct implementation modality. This is the default modality for electoral assistance projects to ensure a neutral administration of the funds and that donor funds are used for the intended purposes as defined in the project documents. DIM was essential in the political and economic context of Somalia. Among other things, Somalia ranks at a 179 out of 180 countries on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index. [61] The DIM mechanism also allows for funding to be channelled to partner institutions through the letters of agreement to support project implementation.

The use of LOAs has become the main implementation modality for UNDP in Somalia given the difficulty of UNDP implementing activities directly in the restricted security context. LOAs were provided to MOIFAR and the NIEC under this project for their use to implement some of the activities in the project's annual joint workplans (Table 31). This was a continuation of practices started under the previous project. The LOA funding enabled the MOIFAR to work on the draft law and consult with stakeholders, and for the NIEC to cover its operating costs and to implement some of its activities directly.

UNDP undertook due diligence for the LOAs. It did a spot check on MOIFAR in January 2020 and found some systems needed strengthening, but generally no major issues with the use of the project funding checked.[62] UNDP also commissioned a micro-assessment (HACT) of the NIEC in 2018 which was rated as a medium risk and was subsequently able to receive cash advances.[63] Earlier LOAs had been done on a reimbursement only process. LOAs done on a cash-advance basis contain clauses intended to ensure compliance with UNDP financial requirements and for the continued engagement of UNDP in how the funds are used to ensure value for money principles and competitive procurement practices. They also require prior UNDP approvals for field visits, trainings and other activities, among other programmatic conditions.

UNDP enforced the minimum financial requirements according to interviews, which the NIEC has met as this is needed to receive the next cash advance. However, while programmatic elements were being coordinated with IESG, further improvements in this area are needed to strengthen the programmatic coherence and effectiveness in the use of those funds, and for UNDP to ensure other elements such as competitive recruitment requirements are met.

UNDP maintained control over the procurement of large ticket items for this project as well as paid the NIEC national advisors directly. Procurement is done by the UNDP Country Office, but was said to be slow in some cases, causing some concern about the timely purchase and delivery of electoral commodities in the times leading up to the election events once these get closer. The UNDP Country Office does have an extremely large portfolio and will need to ensure election-related items are prioritized at that time.

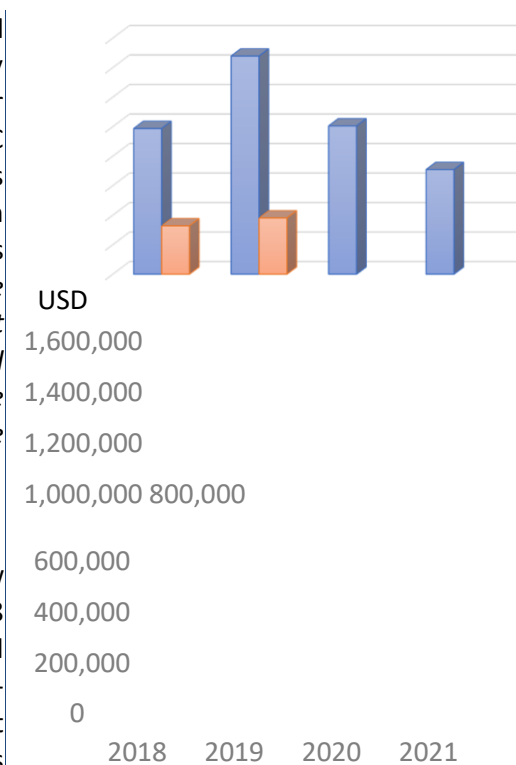> **Table 31: LOAs to NIEC and MOIFAR**

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[61] Transparency International, *Corruption Perception Index 2020*
[62] Deloitte, *Report on Financial Spot Check for Programmes Implemented by MOIFAR*
[63] Project: *Programme Annual Report* 2018, p 7

The NIEC had a generally satisfactory audit of its LOA fund use in 2019. It noted two main findings on as previously discussed. The most important one was the need for accounting software and training on its use for the NIEC finance team which UNDP is addressing for all of its projects. The other finding was on asset registers which was considered a medium priority. The UNDP project's own audit reports were satisfactory which means *the assessed governance arrangements, risk management practices and controls "were adequately established and functioning well. Issues identified by the audit, if any, are unlikely to affect the achievement of the objectives of the audited entity/area."[64]*

The Joint Programme operated on the basis of a new project document every year based on the original 2018 version. These fleshed out the plans for the year, and made minor changes and updates to the outputs, sub-outputs, indicators and activities. The 2019 amendment was 64 pages long. Although subsequent amendments were shorter, the need for the level of effort that it took to redo these documents is questionable, especially since the original project document had a well thought out four year plan laid out, including indicative activities for each year of the project. All

USD

1,600,000

1,400,000

1,200,000

1,000,000 800,000

600,000

400,000

200,000

0

2018   2019   2020   2021

that should have been required was a short amendment to add funding, update any changes needed to the original plan, and authorize the next year's workplan and budget. This could have helped ensure more consistency in the project's results framework and in tracking its results among other areas, as discussed in Section 3.3.4 on Monitoring and Evaluation.

Coordination. The UN mandate includes a coordination role for the IESG for international electoral support to Somalia. In this it expected to coordinate discussions with stakeholders from the FGS and FMS levels and the international community, including partners, donors and technical assistance partners, on the preparations for universal elections during the Pillar 1 Working Group on Inclusive Politics, co-chaired by MOIFAR, and the sub-working group on elections, co-chaired by the NIEC. It also intended to have project level coordination meetings with its donors and national partners. The evaluation found that the IESG did play this role, providing timely, accurate information on the technical preparations, the electoral timeline and other election-related areas to the PWG 1, and organizing regular technical level information sharing meetings with stakeholders, and with project donors and the NIEC for project issues. The project kept a matrix of all the organizations providing technical assistance to the national electoral process disaggregated by areas, such as gender mainstreaming and voter information. It was very comprehensive and showed a multitude of actors working in the sector.

The evaluation noted the absence of coordination discussions of the efforts to support state level EMBs and processes. IESG stated that this level was not within its current mandate, and that the mandate was currently under review in New York. However, one would have expected a minimal level of informational exchange with donors on some of their activities and plans for state level efforts as these will impact the IESG's future work and positioning.

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[64] UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations, *Report on the Audit of UNDP Somalia Electoral Support Project*, p 2

3.3.2. Project management

Management was listed as Output 6 in the project document. The budget included project operational support costs, project management staffing costs, staffing premises and medical, and other direct costs such as security support, M&E and oversight, office support, and common services. The anticipated project management budget was USD 5.2 million. Actual expenditures as of 30 June 2021 were USD 4.2 million or 34% of the total project expenditures. This includes UNDP's general management support cost _{Planned Expended} of 7% (Table 32).

The project was managed directly by the project team located in Mogadishu. The project staff was headed by the Deputy Chief Electoral Advisor with project administration done by a Project Manager. This was an effective division of responsibilities and they worked together as a team to manage and implement the project. Most of the programmatic staff/experts were based in Mogadishu although Somalia is a hardship posts with frequent leave allowed to their home bases. With Covid many of these have worked from their home base since spring 2020 with a few rotating into Somalia. In 2018, the project recruited ten persons in all (green boxes), to work with the 19 UNSOM recruited staff members (yellow boxes) (Box 5).

Table 32: Planned vs Expended Output 6

USD
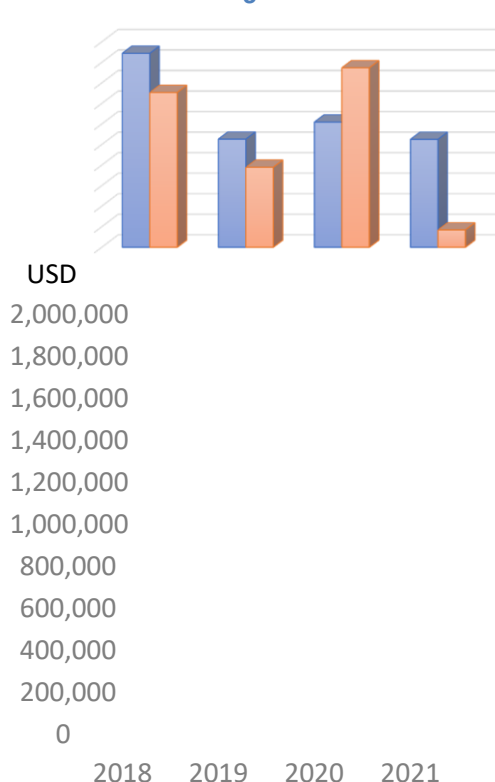
The IESG is led by an UNSOM Director and tasks are divided between operations and legal/external relations and project management functions. The 2021 organigram (Box 6) shows the gear up of the IESG as the Joint Programme progressed towards the operational (voter registration) phase.[65]

It was a well-integrated team programmatically as well as technically and was considered as one of the best UN integration models for electoral assistance according to those interviewed. The IESG and project management team seemed to be well organized, knowledgeable, and experienced in supporting post-conflict elections. They seemed well liked and regarded by partners, participants, and stakeholders in general. They were given

Box 5: IESG Organigram 2018
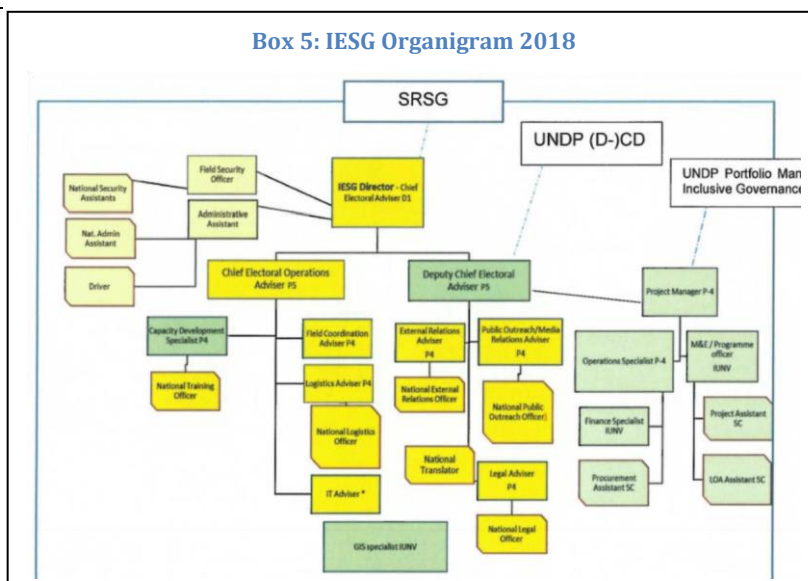
credit for adjusting rapidly to the changing conditions, for managing effectively and efficiently within a limited budget, ensuring project implementation remained on track (within the technical parameters

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possible) and for introducing some sound principles of electoral organization. This is an accomplishment in such a complex environment with so many different actors, institutions and interests.

Box 6: IESG Organigram 2021
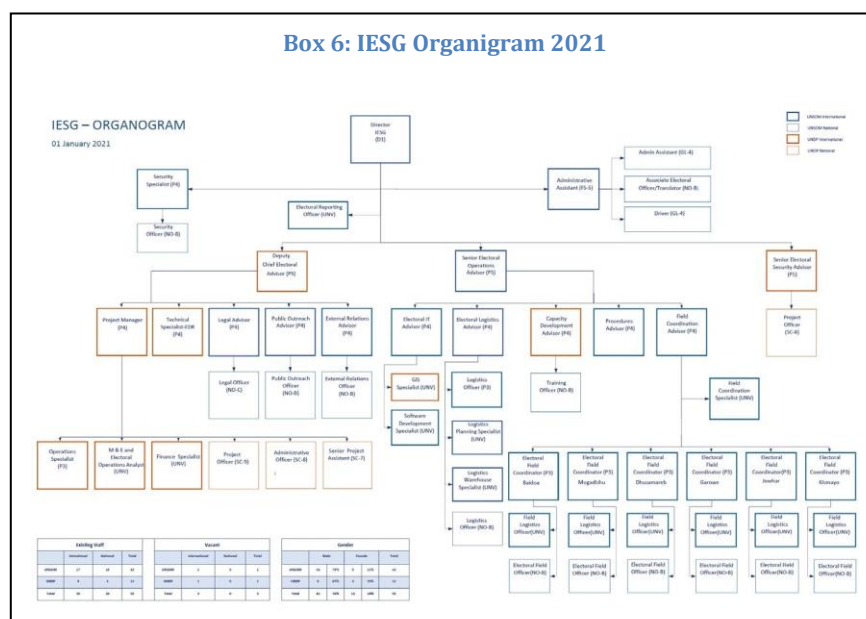
Most of the international staff were seasoned professionals, and the national staff dedicated. Some had been there since 2016. This provided consistency to the assistance that was likely an asset in an otherwise fluctuating context. Some felt their skills were under-utilized in the context, while others felt overwhelmed with the volume of work. This was attributed to under-performance by a few which required others to pick up their work, as well as to the nature of the relationships with the partners and the level of openness of some to their input.

An issues raised by the NIEC Secretariat was that it felt it had little personnel-type control over the national advisors including for their attendance, reporting and performance evaluation. The contracts are signed by the NIEC as well as their monthly attendance and leave sheets. However, responsibilities seemed to be divided between the Commission and Secretariat, and in future the personnel issues should be handled routinely through the Secretariat and include annual performance evaluations for the advisors, and quality control over their reporting. Some of the NIEC staff also mentioned that they had never received a performance report and this should also be done by the Secretariat.

The project was fully funded for the workplans developed. UNDP was flexible allowing donors to fund the Joint Programme through the MPTF as well as bilaterally. Reporting was simplified so that all donors received the same MPTF formatted report on a semi-annual basis. As a joint programme,

UNSOM provided significant levels of in kind contributions of staff for the IESG including the IESG Director, as well as some of the work on the NIEC's new headquarters. Some of their estimated costs are provided in Table 334. This helped extend the capacity of the Joint Programme and its efforts.

Table 33: In-Kind Contributions		
Partner	**USD**	**Purpose**
UNSOM	12.78 m	41 staff including the CEA. offices

UNDP programmatic supervision was done through its inclusive politics office that organized regular meetings with all the projects in its portfolio. However, given the mission context and joint nature of the programme, UNSOM played a more significant role in determining IESG activities. Quality control to ensure compliance to UNDP's minimum standards was provided by UNDP Somalia's Office of Programmatic Oversight and Quality Assurance which looked at procurement, human resource management, and meeting corporate standards for programmatic and financial management. It also

| UNSOM | 3 million | Security enhancement of NIEC compound including construction hard wall warehouse, bunkerized offices, security watch towers, external integrated electrical distribution system, water and drainage systems |
| UNSOM | 70,000 | Workshops |

monitored LOA compliance, schedule of payments, results and that all activities were done through third party monitoring. They noted the late delivery for some of the project and LOA documents which usually came with urgent requests for processing.

Board meetings were held bi-annually along with frequent donor-project and donor-project-NIEC meetings done as needed in between to make decisions and plan next steps. These have become more frequent with the upcoming indirect

election. Donors felt the IESG was responsive to their inquiries, however they looked for a more collaborative approach in the meetings and heads up for issues. One of the examples noted was the recent meeting to request donor approval for the use of project funds in support of the work being done by the Office of the Prime Minister on indirect elections planning. They felt pressed to make a quick decision and wanted more complete budget information and rationale first to better understand its use before making a decision.[66] They also looked for more consultative and analytical discussions on the bigger picture issues including electoral roadblocks and how they and the project could overcome them, stating that they also had bilateral channels that they could use to support the project's technical implementation.

A big picture issue not discussed in the project-donor meetings were the donors efforts at state levels, in particular, the efforts underway and planned for Puntland. There two major donor collective efforts are underway which includes support for biometric voter registration, plans to create an electoral basket fund to support the planned state level direct district elections, leading they hope to direct state level elections in 2023. These efforts will directly affect the role of the NIEC in the future, its voter registration plans, and the focus and level of support for the next UNDP joint electoral support programme. This is an issue that the project, UNDP and UNSOM need to address asap with the donors to ensure harmonization of the state-national systems and to see how to best adapt the Joint Programme as it designs its next phase.

IESG appeared to work closely with the other implementers assisting the NIEC. The main one was the USAID BUILD project which also supported the NIEC as well as political parties (and through that engaged the Political Party Registrar) and voter education through CSOs. The relationship reportedly improved with the most recent BUILD Chief of Party, and they reportedly picked up on each other's efforts and held a few joint workshops. This minimized the possibilities for duplication of efforts and

helped ensure consistency in advice. BUILD support was not as substantial as that of the IESG and has been minimal since last year as USAID shifted focus.

Project branding seemed appropriate and included the UNDP and all of the donors logos. Visibility for the IESG and the donors seemed good for the events held and in the publications developed. The

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[66] According to IESG, they were responding to a request from the Office of the Prime Minister to support induction training. They requested the OPM to push the training back as they felt it needed more planning, but the OPM kept to its timeline.

project ensured regular updates were made to the EC-UNDP Joint Task Force joint programme website, and published a regular IESG newsletter. It highlights activities undertaken, NIEC news and pertinent political events (Box 7). It was well designed and had useful information on the project activities and electoral context.

3.3.3. Project reporting

Project reporting followed the standard requirements of the MPTF and was done on a semi-annual basis. Reporting covers the project activities by the five main outputs, highlights key achievements and updates its progress report results matrix. It also has short sections covering other MPTF required reporting areas, such as gender, human rights, communications, visibility and looking ahead. Financial information is at the global level and there are no breakdowns by project outputs. It is difficult to know if these were submitted on a timely basis since they are not dated.

The reports meet the requirements for MPTF project reporting. They are though primarily descriptive, with donors looking for more analytical and performance based reporting. This appears to be another systemic issue as the ICPE recommended that UNDP's *inclusive politics portfolio management should address the poor record in reporting effectively to, and communicating with, the donor community as a matter of urgency, and ensure that both staff and management resources are devoted to improving the situation.[67]*

Project reporting could be strengthened by including more analysis of the progress made, information on what participants gained from the technical assistance and training and how this was used in their work; the constraints encountered and how the project was, or was not, able to overcome them. This, with the use of more performance based indicators, would provide a better indication of the project's actual performance in terms of the progress made towards achieving its five main outputs.

Box 7: IESG Newsletter

A breakdown of expenditures by output would also strengthen the reporting as there is no way to know from the MPTF report how the money was spent during the reporting period.

3.3.4. Monitoring and evaluation

The project made efforts to monitor the implementation of the programme. It kept records of all of its activities, required reports from consultants and for most trainings, obtained feedback from some trainings participants on the quality of the training, and kept sex-disaggregated data on participants for each event and training. It also did lessons learned, looked at activities such as the GIS mapping exercise, and on the status of the NIEC, its internal and operational procedures and what the IESG could do to address the issues identified.

Box 8: Lessons Learned

- Support to ad hoc institutions and processes may help a political transition but it is not a sustainable investment nor a durable development solution.

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[67] UNDP IEO, OpCit, p 67

- Importance of learning the lessons from 2016 and 2020 and applying them to the next phase of assistance to not repeat and normalize a dysfunctional governance cycle for a third time.

- Political red flags need addressing and monitoring at the political level, with a unified voice and concerted action by high level UN, international community, and Somali champions, starting on day one and continuing until the process is completed.

- Technical support projects can only go so far without the basic political building blocks being in place, starting with basic political agreement on the fundamental nature and structures of government. This is a prerequisite for a stable, nonviolent state and for credible election.

- Ensuring inclusion is more than addressing gender issues. The needs of persons living with disabilities and other marginalized groups in the electoral and political processes need as much attention and inclusion.

- Value of investing in team building when forming a task force or group working on complex issues in politically sensitive environment so that they are all on the same page, and focused on achieving the same goal.

- Importance of good coordination, information sharing and strong partnerships in a context of uncertainty and flux, and limited political will for the objectives of the project.

UNDP used a third party monitoring system to monitor implementation of LOA activities given the difficulties of projects to do this themselves due to security restrictions. The monitor had difficulty at times accessing the NIEC to obtain information. An example is in 2019 when it took seven weeks after the introduction of the monitoring team for the NIEC persons to be available for an interview.   It then took two months for them to get a few of the documents they requested.[68] This is not an effective mechanism without partner cooperation. If this was not an isolated incident it needs to be addressed by UNDP and the NIEC.

The 2018 project document used the standard UNDP results framework template, which listed the expected output, indicators, baseline, annual targets, data sources and collection methods. Although it listed no targets for years beyond 2018, it provided the framework for a four-year project to follow and update annually. However, this framework was not reused and each year had its own annual version, indicators and sub-output level results. This left the project without a standard results framework. Although some indicators were re-used across the years, most were event or activity based. Although they provide the number of trainings per year, and the number of participants disaggregated by sex, this does not tell anything about the effectiveness of the support, if the level of skills or knowledge increased, what the participants did with the information or tools to strengthen their institution or the electoral processes and so on. This makes monitoring performance and evaluating the project's efforts extremely difficult.

Weak M&E elements were noted throughout UNDP's portfolio by the ICPE. Its main recommendation that the *office should strengthen its results-based systems and practices. In particular, solid evidence, systematically collected and used for adaptive management and communications with donors and partners…*[69]

The next project should use a standardize results framework that can be used throughout the project and measures more than activity implementation, tracks the indicators annually and provides cumulative results. Baseline data should be collected in the first quarter of that project and

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[68] IDC, *Third Party Monitoring Report on NIEC*
[69] UNDP IEO, OpCit, p 73

annual targets set based on the assumption that the electoral timeline would be respected and what the project would be expected to accomplish during that time. Indicators should track results beyond completion of an activity. This would provide a better indication of the actual level of project effectiveness and the progress made towards the achievement of its intended results.

The effectiveness of project data collection could also be strengthened by ensuring it collected preand post-measurements for its main awareness and capacity building efforts. These could help determine if there was an increase in the level of knowledge and skills of the participants and in the institutional capacity of the NIEC or other institution supported. Short pre-tests should be done before any substantial training effort and the same short test administered at the end to see if there were any change in knowledge, attitude or practices (KAP). A post-event KAP questionnaire a year later could also help determine if the participants still remembered the lessons, if they had been able to use them in their work, and if this had generated any improvements or change for the institution.

Although the project has undertaken some short institutional assessments of NIEC's needs and capacity, such as the recent SWOT exercise, the NIEC is at a good point now in its institutional development to have a full institutional assessment done. As part of this, consideration should be given to developing a baseline type survey for all NIEC staff members and Commissioners that would be completed annually on their perceptions of their institution, of its strengths, and areas for further improvement, including training needs. This would provide needed baseline data as well as being able to show institutional development and capacity improvements over the years as well as its use to target future interventions more effectively. Assessments could be tailored for other institutions that the project might support.

The project should also ensure it has access to good public polling on the electoral processes and related areas. If this polling is not available, the IESG could provide a valued service for its Somali partners, donors and other electoral assistance providers by commissioning a professional poll on a at least an annual basis. This data is an essential tool for targeting programme initiatives, and voter education messages, strengthening outreach, identifying effectiveness and reach of messaging and more. Some of the baseline polling needed could include: % recognition of the NIEC, perceptions on what it does, and its level of independence and trust among those who recognize it; level of public understanding of democratic concepts and elections; attitudes towards voting, vote buying, political parties, MPs, elected offices; and thoughts and understanding about voter registration. Periodic polling can also help identify unintended consequences arising from assistance that might need to be addressed.

At the evaluation level, there was no midterm programme evaluation as outlined in the project document, and the NAM that was expected to monitor the situation and needs of the process annually only occurred in 2018. Although it is doubtful that these would have changed the outcome for the project, the midterm evaluation could have caught the lack of results-based indicators allowing for better capture of the actual programme results, and the NAM could have raised the policy concerns on delays in meeting electoral benchmarks to higher levels, and perhaps helped the international community to deliver a more unified and timely message.

3.4 Sustainability

This section looks at the sustainability prospects for the different elements of the support to universal suffrage project.

The project intended to undertake its activities with a sustainability perspective, defining sustainability as financial independence for the NIEC, and the technical and operational capacity for it to function without assistance in the long run. Since government funding was limited, it noted

Box 9: Best Practices

- Benefit of using a phased electoral cycle approach in a context of uncertainty, political flux, and problematic political will in a country without the fundamental building blocks for an electoral democracy and providing a multi-year framework for the assistance to provide the strategic vision for the programme and enable the longer-term planning necessary for effective and coherent programming and implementation.

- Designing a light, flexible framework focused on the process, that allowed the project to remain flexible and take advantage of opportunities in a difficult and continually changing environment.

- Effective use of local expertise: as national advisers that can ensure the continuous hands-on advisory services needed by nascent partner institutions in a difficult context; as national staff that can help develop context appropriate programme solutions, understand the context, have access, speak the language and can travel where internationals cannot; and as locally recruited NIEC field staff who know their area, its people and officials and who already have the relationships and access needed to work effectively in a clan-based environment.

- Use of an integrated mission approach and a unified team to implement the programme. This leverages the comparative advantages of both institutions, the political perspective of the UN and UNSOM and the development approach of UNDP in support of a common objective. This provides a stronger team, increased flexibility, and a more effective programme.

- Incorporating a systems development and institutional strengthening approach to the capacity development plans, which helps the institution to grow with its staff, and which builds the foundations for a professional, credible, and sustainable institution.

Somali perspectives
Why continue IESG support

The advisors are the reasons we have come so far, we need them.

This is a process, not an event. Now we are midway through preparation. For 2025, if we leave the programme, there would be no one to manage this process and Somalia needs an election.

We went to Parliament. We are ready to hold elections. We have the mandate to hold elections. But we cannot achieve anything without support.

Don't lose your investment in what has already been developed. It is not strategic to leave it, if the international

that continuing donor funding would be essential, however it intended to ensure staffing and operational plans were realistic and sustainable in the long run.[70] The NIEC's current government funding is about USD 3 million a year. The project should assess the NIEC's institutional budget to determine what areas can be covered by that funding beyond personnel and advocate with the NIEC and its donors for increased FGS funding for the institution, to ensure the NIEC's minimum annual operating costs are met by the government. This will also help to determine actual level of need from the donor side for the upcoming years.

community leaves, others will fill it and they are not democratic.

The project's efforts on building the institutional capacity of the NIEC also helped to set up the systems, structures and procedures that are now being used to manage the institution and the limited electoral operations it has undertaken so far. These can be expected to remain in place for the near term.   Most of the capacity is likely built within the persons who received the training. How many will stay while the NIEC prepares for elections in 2025 is an unknown. A few staff have already moved on. The remainder are still there as of June 2021. The institution itself is untested and without practical experience except for the GIS mapping exercise and a few (indirect) by-elections.

The project also contributed to ensuring the NIEC has permanent offices that will continue to house them after the end of the project. Funds for maintenance and running costs without the project are uncertain. Although the government funds cover its staffing costs now, the NIEC has been dependent on IESG funding for some of its field office facilities and on IESG or other partners for its activities. Sustainability is a major concern in the context.

The IESG has documented its work, so a written record exists for institutional memory. However, it is still in the process of integrating these documents to a central electronic archive platform. The NIEC also needs to develop a central registry as its files are now on individual's laptops within each department. The NIEC's current offices lack some basic ICT infrastructure to do this, but these ICT issues may be alleviated somewhat after its instillation at its new headquarters. Ensuring its archive should be a priority as the NIEC moves into its new facilities.

It would be useful to do a lessons learned with the national advisors on their experience and to document their recommendations on mentoring and being a senior advisor in the context of limited institutional capacity. In the near to medium term, the NIEC's dependence on some of its national advisors raises sustainability concerns, as these individuals will not stay without the higher level renumeration provided by projects.

Planning and procedures needed for administering universal elections remain incomplete and are now largely suspended as the IESG focuses on the indirect electoral process, and in which the NIEC has no official role. These political issues around universal elections will need to be resolved for any real sustainability.

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4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

1. *The project was highly relevant within the context and timeframe of the post-2016 electoral process,* focusing its assistance for universal elections in 2020 around supporting the administrative electoral benchmarks in the politically-agreed electoral roadmap at the time.

2. *The IESG was strategically positioned to implement this project* by its UNSOM/UNDP composition, direct reporting lines to the SRSG, existing relationships with MOIFAR and the NIEC, the strong nature of the program design and its phased, electoral cycle approach.

3. *The project provided a trusted and effective platform for electoral support to the legal and administrative elements of the national level processes and played a valuable advisory and coordination role* for services and support to the pertinent partner institutions and processes, most notably the NIEC, MOIFAR and topically to Parliament and other government offices.

4. *The project was able to act effectively and implement its Phase 1 and parts of its 2 Phase activities despite the extremely difficult security context and political challenges.* In partnership with the NIEC and MOIFAR, the programme successfully supported the development of a functioning and equipped independent electoral management body, initial plans for national voter registration, and an electoral law despite the need to revise what Parliament eventually enacted-- all key electoral building blocks.

5. *The results of the 2018 – 2021 project are the cumulative effects of the work of the IESG and its partners since its inception in 2015.* Attribution for impact level results is difficult due to the number of other factors and actors working on these issues, and the lack of results-level data, but major accomplishments include*:*

   ✓ *Strengthened institutional and professional development of the NIEC* through systems development, transfer of skills and knowledge, advisory and financial support. It also helped expand the NIEC presence beyond the capital. This has *created a credible, recognized entity that is able to administer indirect by elections, advise Parliament and the OPM on electoral issues, provide temporary registration for political parties, and with IESG support plan for the first national level voter registration and direct election process in decades.*

   ✓ *Strengthened ability for the NIEC to act independently and to be perceived as independent and nonpartisan* through the design and construction of a NIEC compound that will eliminate the need to operate from the presidential premises, as well as through the provision of funding that enabled the NIEC to undertake its daily activities and outreach to parties, voters, policy makers and others despite its FGS budget deficits.

   ✓ *Ensured a continual focus on the inclusion of women within the legal, institutional and procedural frameworks for direct elections, party registration, NIEC employment,* and with others, on the gender quotas within political parties, and verbal commitments for 30% quota in the indirect elections.

   ✓ *Kept the issue of universal suffrage elections in the forefront of discussions and policy makers* through its continual focus on advancing their technical preparations, consultations and advocacy. This was reinforced at the political levels by UNSOM and the international community. This was not enough in the end, but so far has kept the indirect process to being the deviation and not the norm.

6. *The project's M&E plan and indicators were not sufficiently developed or consistent enough to be able to measure actual programmatic effectiveness or its results.* Results at technical levels may be greater for some of the activities than what was visible during the evaluation.

7. *The lack of a consensus among the FGS and FMS on the fundamental basis for the state eclipsed the project's efforts and its purpose and requires political resolution. The political building blocks need to catch up to the technical ones already built, for technical level projects, such as this one, to succeed.* This needs high level attention, unified messaging, and the effective use of good offices.

8. *It is important not to lose the gains already made while* the political situation is addressed. Somalia's transition is a long term endeavor. The political efforts should eventually result in the actual holding of more inclusive elections that will be administered by an independent EMB. Donors shift of focus towards bottom up models raises questions about the future nature of national led efforts for the project as well as for the NIEC.

4.2. Recommendations

1. *Maintain the technical and institutional progress made towards developing the electoral building blocks for universal elections while the political situation is addressed.* Continue a phased electoral cycle approach that will go through the next cycle that can follow political developments and implementation of a new electoral roadmap towards direct elections, yet not get a head of the political progress((UNDP should take the implementation role)

2. *Ground Joint Programme efforts within the larger reconciliation and state-building processes* working to establish the political building blocks needed for universal suffrage elections, and ensure stronger integration and synergies within the inclusive politics sector. UNDP should support this effort by building a mutually supportive, synergistic portfolio directly targeted at getting the political pieces into place which are needed for its inclusive politics programmes to succeed. Include within this leadership training and capacity building of decision makers on the fundamental structures and processes of government as reflected in the Somali constitution((UNDP should take the implementation role).

3. *Make effective use of the UN's good offices, and donors' interest* in a peaceful and democratic Somalia, *to provide unified messaging and coordinated efforts to advance the policy dialogue* and political agreement on the basic nature of the state as soon as the new national leadership is in place(UNSOM & UNDP).

4. *Develop and continually use a principal level joint UNSOM - UNCT (FGS line ministries and NIEC) - Donor steering committee* to oversee election efforts, ensure needed actions are taken, and to monitor implementation of the electoral roadmap once the new government is established. The frequency of meetings should follow the electoral calendar and become more frequent as the electoral benchmarks approach or as roadblocks are encountered (*NIEC, UNSOM and UNDP).*

5. *Condition funding on the timely achievement of benchmarks* as verified by the steering committee. As noted by the ICPE for UNDP Somalia in regard to effective institutions and inclusive politics, *where political commitment is absence, support should cease.*[71] Use the NAM mechanism to reinforce these efforts and raise the visibility of issues. It should also review programme relevance, effectiveness, and constraints annually or as conditions change (*UNDP should take the implementation role*).

6. *Strengthen the strategic focus of IESG coordination and discussions with donors and partners, and broaden it to include state level processes* if the UNSOM mandate is adapted as expected(*UNSOM with the support of UNDP)*

7. *Assess the scope of electoral assistance efforts underway at state levels*, the capacity of the existing state-level EMBs, gaps, and levels of coordination and harmonization between the different assistance efforts and institutions at state and national level. Develop a long term

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[71] UNDP IEO, OpCit, p 67

vision and strategy for how these diverse efforts can contribute to one electoral system harmonized among the FMS and with the national system taking into consideration the strategic assessments and planning already done by donors *(UNDP should take the implementation role).*

8. *Adopt a gender equality and social inclusion approach for the design and implementation of the next project phase* to strengthen attention on youth, PWD and other marginalized groups, such as minority clans and IDPs. Support efforts for a more socially inclusive electoral administration, enabling legislation, regulations, outreach and participation(*UNDP should take the implementation role).*

9. *Explore relationships with other UNDP country and regional programmes to develop internship opportunities for NIEC professional staff and directors*, to work on a counterpart basis within respected EMBs for hands on election administration experience. Provide professional certifications at the end of the internships(*UNDP and NIEC*)

10. *Increase the analytical and results-based content of project reporting and provide financial expenditure data at output levels*. Include discussions of the political dimensions and how this impacts project implementation and performance, and in donor meetings discuss what they and others can do to help address these issues through their own channels as well as through the project(*UNDP should take the implementation role*).

11. *Develop a complete M&E plan with performance based indicators for the next phase of the programme.* This should be done in the first quarter of the new project and include targets, baselines, tracking tables and the allocation of responsibilities for collecting and aggregating data, monitoring activities, etc. Use the same results framework for the life of the project to ensure consistency in reporting and the ability to track the performance of key indicators over time. Ensure the collection of baseline data at the start and end of the project, and at the start and end of each capacity building effort. Invest in regular public opinion polling for M&E and programmatic use if current donor polling is not continued(*UNDP should take the implementation role).*

Attachment 1: IESG Somalia Organigram 2021

IESG – ORGANOGRAM

01 January 2021

Legend:
- UNSOM International
- UNSOM National
- UNDP International
- UNDP National

Director IESG (D1)

Security Specialist (P4)
- Security Officer (NO-B)

Electoral Reporting Officer (UNV)

Administrative Assistant (FS-5)
- Admin Assistant (GL-4)
- Associate Electoral Officer/Translator (NO-B)
- Driver (GL-4)

Deputy Chief Electoral Advisor (P5)
- Project Manager (P4)
  - Operations Specialist (P3)
  - M & E and Electoral Operations Analyst (UNV)
  - Finance Specialist (UNV)
  - Project Officer (SC-9)
  - Administrative Officer (SC-8)
  - Senior Project Assistant (SC-7)
- Technical Specialist-EDR (P4)
- Legal Advisor (P4)
  - Legal Officer (NO-C)
- Public Outreach Advisor (P4)
  - Public Outreach Officer (NO-B)
- External Relations Advisor (P4)
  - External Relations Officer (NO-B)

Senior Electoral Operations Advisor (P5)
- Electoral IT Advisor (P4)
  - GIS Specialist (UNV)
  - Software Development Specialist (UNV)
- Electoral Logistics Advisor (P4)
  - Logistics Officer (P3)
  - Logistics Planning Specialist (UNV)
  - Logistics Warehouse Specialist (UNV)
  - Logistics Officer (NO-B)
- Capacity Development Advisor (P4)
  - Training Officer (NO-B)
- Procedures Advisor (P4)
- Field Coordination Advisor (P4)
  - Field Coordination Specialist (UNV)
  - Electoral Field Coordinator (P3) Baidoa — Field Logistics Officer (UNV) — Electoral Field Officer (NO-B)
  - Electoral Field Coordinator (P3) Mogadishu — Field Logistics Officer (UNV) — Electoral Field Officer (NO-B)
  - Electoral Field Coordinator (P3) Dhusamareb — Field Logistics Officer (UNV) — Electoral Field Officer (NO-B)
  - Electoral Field Coordinator (P3) Garowe — Field Logistics Officer (UNV) — Electoral Field Officer (NO-B)
  - Electoral Field Coordinator (P3) Jowhar — Field Logistics Officer (UNV) — Electoral Field Officer (NO-B)
  - Electoral Field Coordinator (P3) Kismayo — Field Logistics Officer (UNV) — Electoral Field Officer (NO-B)

Senior Electoral Security Advisor (P5)
- Project Officer (SC-8)

Existing Staff	International	National	Total
UNSOM	27	16	43
UNDP	8	4	12
Total	35	20	55

Vacant	International	National	Total
UNSOM	2	0	2
UNDP	1	0	1
Total	3	0	3

Gender	Male		Female		Total
UNSOM	34	79%	9	21%	43
UNDP	8	67%	4	33%	12
Total	42	76%	13	24%	55

Annex 1: Documents

African Union, European Union, IGAD and United Nations
  Joint Communique on the Situation in Somalia, 20 May 2021

Baker Tilly Merali's
  UNDP Somalia, Micro Assessment Report, Commissioned by UNDP, Implementing Partner: National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), 3 August 2018

Bertelsmann Transformation Index
   BTI 2020 Country Report, Somalia

Data Grid
  Poll Report, Summary Report on the Opinion Poll Survey of the February 2017 for the Somalia Presidential Elections, February 2017

Deloitte
  Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) Audit, Implementing Partner: National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), April 2020 and March 2021
  Report on Financial Spot Check for Programmes Implementation by Ministry of Interior Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, Federal Government of Somalia, by UNDP Somalia Country Office, January 2020

EC-UNDP Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance
  EC-UNDP Electoral Assistance Project Updates, 1 – 20 September 2020

European Commission
  National Indicative Programme for Federal Republic of Somalia, 2014 – 2020, 19 June 2014

European Union
  Somalia 2016-2017 Limited Election Process, EU Election Expert Mission, Final Report, February 2017

Federal Government of Somalia
   National Development Plan 2017 – 2019, Final – October 2017
   Somalia National Development Plan, 2020 to 2024, 2020

Federal Government of Somalia, Office of the Auditor General
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IDC, *Third Party Monitoring Report on the NIEC*

International Idea
  Global State of Democracy Index Country Profile: Somalia (Covid-19), July 2021

K4D
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National Independent Electoral Commission

A Memorandum of Understanding and Collaboration between the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism and National Election Commission (NIEC) of Federal Republic of Somalia, (unsigned draft) , April 2019

Address by Chairperson of the National Independent Election Commission, Federal Republic of Somalia to the Security Council, New York, November 2019

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Speech by the NIEC Chair to Parliament, 27 May 2020

Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021, Revised December 2019, 2019

The NIEC Self Reflection Retreat Report, January 2021

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Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Country of Origin Information Report on South and Central Somalia, March 2019

Peoples Under Threat

People's Under Threat Index 2020 Peoples Under Threat - An annual ranking of countries according to the risk of mass violence faced by communities

Safterworld

Final report on Somalia's 2016-2017 electoral process, June 2017

Transparency International

Corruption Perception Index 2020

United Kingdom

Somalia Forward: Fair Power and Stable Settlements, Annual Reviews, October 2019 and October 2020

Somalia Forward: Stable Settlement and Fair Power, Business Case Summary Sheet, Undated

UK Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UKaid, European Union Danida, Sweden and Germany

Puntland District Council Elections: Conflict Risk Assessment, 2020

Somalia Stability Fund II, Annual Review Template, September 2020

Somalia Stability Fund, District Council Formation: Lessons Learned Study, Final Report, July 2020

United Nations

UN Strategic Framework, Somalia, 2017 - 2020

United Nations Electoral Assistance Division

United Nations Electoral Needs Assessment Mission to Somalia, March 2017 and May 2018

United Nations Security Council

Situation in Somalia, Report of the Secretary General, 19 May 2021, S/2021/485

UNDP, Independent Evaluation Office

Independent Country Programme Evaluation Somalia, March 2020
Independent Country Programme Evaluation Somalia, Annexes, March 2020

UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations
Audit of UNDP Somalia, Electoral Support Project, Report No. 20144, 9 August 2019

UNDP/UNSOM Joint Programme for Support to Universal Suffrage in the Federal Republic of Somalia
Activity Reports sample including *Graphic Design Training (March and May 2021), Communications Strategies Workshop (November 2018), Judge Kiegler with Civil Society Minutes (December 2019), Building Partnerships for Elections (October 2018), Record Management Working Session (October 2019)*
Activity Schedule for 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021
Annual Workplans for 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021
Atlas Financial Report January 2018 to 30 June 2021
BRIDGE Train the Facilitator Report, March and April 2019, Course in Electoral Processes
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Gender Budgeting, 2019
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Letters of Agreement with the National Independent Electoral Commission and amendments for 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021
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NIEC Institutional Governance Report, 15-18 October 2018, Updated 19 March 2019, July 2021
NIEC: Institutional Observations PowerPoint, 2nd Quarter 2020
Procurement Plans for 2019 and 2020
Programme Annual and Semi-Annual Reports 2018, 2019, 2020 and Semi-Annual Report 2021
Project Board Meeting Minutes, sample 2018, 2019, and 2020
Project Documents, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021
Purchase Order, Toyota Gibraltar Stockholdings Limited, March 2019
Sample of monthly reports from NIEC and MOIFAR National Advisors, 2018 – 2021
Summary of Large Value Contracts, June 2021
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Annex 2: Persons interviewed

JOINT PROGRAMME Integrated Electoral Support Group

Deryck Fritz, IESG Director (UNSOM)

Mary Cummins, IESG Deputy Director (Joint Programme)

Marc Dickinson, Senior Electoral Officer- Operations (UNSOM)

Annetta Flanigan, Electoral Procedures Advisor (UNSOM) Anthony
Howe, Senior Security Advisor (UNSOM

Bujar Ismail, Public Outreach Advisor (UNSOM)

Carla Salvetti, External Relations Advisor (UNSOM)

Emmanuel Igohe, Logistics Advisor (Joint Programme)

Abdifatah Yussuf, Project Officer (Joint Programme)

Abubakar Abdi Hussein, Associate Electoral Officer (UNSOM)

Fausto Mwangi, M&E and Operations Specialist (Joint Programme)

Getu Alemu, GIS Specialist (Joint Programme)

Ismail Abdullahi Mohamed, Procurement Officer (Joint Programme)

Jean Jerry Cadet, IT Advisor (Joint Programme)

Joyce Ladu, Operations Specialist (Joint Programme)

Stefan Scheer, Legal Adviser (UNSOM)

Tomsie Dhlamini, Capacity Development Specialist (Joint Programme)

Arlyn Recla, Electoral Officer Puntland (UNSOM)

Anne Marie Ndihokubwayo, Electoral Officer Jowher (UNSOM) Gerald
Mitchell, Former IESG Director 2015 -2018 (UNSOM)

Hiroko Miyamura, Former IESG Director 2019 – 2020 (UNSOM)

Filip Warrants, Former Joint Programme Project Manager (Joint Programme) Irfan
Mahmood, Former Project Manager (Joint Programme)

Celestine Wamiru, Former Illustrator (Joint Programme) by Email

Immaculate Njenge-Kassait, Former BRIDGE Facilitator (Joint Programme) by Email

Kare Vollan, Former Electoral Advisor (Joint Programme) by Email

Kiye Mwakawago, Former Project Operations Management Specialist (Joint Programme) by Email

Mihloti Masuluke, Former BRIDGE Cascade Trainer Facilitator (Joint Programme) by Email

National Independent Electoral Commission

Halima Ismail Ibrahim, Chairperson

Khadija Osoble Ali, Commissioner

Abdirizak Bashir Mohamed, Secretary General

Ismail Yassin, Director of Operations

Zuheira Abdiwahab, Director of Administration and Finance Mohamoud
Ali, Outreach Director a.i.

Mohamed Omar Haydara, Political Party Registrar

Ali Mohamed Mohamud, Senior Policy Advisor on Electoral Legislation (Joint Programme)
Hassan Ibrahim, Governance and Strategy Advisor (Joint Programme) Mostafa Hassan
Moalim, Legal Advisor (Joint Programme)

Abdinasir Mohamed Abdullahi, Logistics Officer, Hirshabelle Field Office

Abdishakur Mursal, Head of Office, Jubaland Field Office

Ahmed Sheikh Hamza, Head of Office, SWS Field Office

Mahdi Abdisamad Igal, Training and Public Outreach Officer, Galmudug Field Office

Noor Mohamed Noor, Head of Office, Puntland Field Office

Sabrin Hassan Gesey, Head of Office, BRA Field Office. Former Advisor in OPPR (Joint Programme)

Ministry of Interior and Foreign Affairs

Ali Mohamed Mohamud, Former Advisor (Joint Programme)
Arafat Mohamed Ali, Former Legal Advisor (Joint Programme)
Mohamed Abdulkadir Mohamud, Former Operations Advisor (Joint Programme)

European Union
Maria Groeneveld, Governance Programme Manager, EU Delegation to Somalia

Germany
Sascha Kienzle, Deputy Ambassador to Somalia, German Embassy, Nairobi

Norway
Kristina Svedbert, Programme Manager Somalia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norwegian Embassy, Nairobi

Sweden
Petra Smitmanis Dry, Head of Development Cooperation, Swedish Embassy, Nairobi
Wacheke Michuki, National Programme Officer, Democracy and Governance, Swedish Embassy, Nairobi

United Kingdom
Micol Martini, Political Governance Advisor, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, Nairobi
Oliver Chevreau, Head, Somalia Stability Fund Secretariat Office, Nairobi

United States International Development Agency
Eli Groner, Director a.i., Deputy Director, Democracy, Stabilization and Governance Office, USAID/Somalia
Victoria Ayer, Former Senior Governance and Anticorruption Advisor and Agreement Officer for the BUILD project, USAID/Somalia

CIVIL SOCIETY Marginalized Community Advocates Network
Ibrahim Hassan Mohamed, Director

Somali Disability Empowerment Network
Mohamed Abdullahi

OTHER ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

Creative Associates, Inc.
Terence Hoverter, Chief of Party, BUILD
Tihana Bartulac Blanc, Creative, Senior Program Director, Democracy, Governance and Electoral Integrity Practice Area

Governance Partnership Facility
Megham Brown, Electoral Advisor, Governance Partnership Facility (UNOPS)

International Republican Institute
Bojan Ristic, Former Chief Technical Advisor, BUILD Project

PARLIAMENT AND POLITICAL PARTIES

Hon, Dr. Elmi Nur, Member of Parliament, Finance, Planning and Oversight Committee

Hon. Abdirizak Omer Mohamed, Member of Parliament
Hon Fowsiay Yussuf Haji Adam, Member of Parliament, Chair National Democratic Party

Hon. Zakariye Mohamud Haji Abdi, Member of Parliament and Justice Party Leader

UNITED NATIONS United Nations, Electoral Assistance Department

Serge Gakwandi Kubwimana, Head Needs Assessment Missions for Somalia, 2017, 2018 and Team Leader, Country Support Cluster

United Nations Development Programme

Jocelyn Mason, Resident Representative

Jacqueline Saline Olweya, Deputy Resident Representative Programme Dragan Popovic, Portfolio Manager Inclusive Politics

Abdihakim Farah, Programme Management Specialist, Program Oversight & Quality Assurance Unit

Garikai Mabeza, M&E Specialist, Program Oversight & Quality Assurance Unit

Gloria Kiondo, Head of Program Oversight & Quality Assurance Unit

UNSOM

Tariq Chaudhry, Director Political Affairs & Mediation Group

Tomoko Kubota, Political Affairs Advisor

Annex 3: Evaluation Methodology

1. Purpose for the Project Evaluation

The purpose for this project evaluation is to provide UNDP, project partners and stakeholders with an independent assessment of the Joint Programme, its performance and contribution to its anticipated development results. The Joint Programme is a four year USD 23.5 million project[86] intended to support the institutional development of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) and its preparations for and holding of universal national elections and constitutional referendum if held.

Specifically, this evaluation will:

9. Assess the relevance, coherency, and responsiveness of the Joint Programme to national needs and priorities, as well as to the objectives of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), UNDP and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG);

10. Analyze the project's effectiveness, extent of project outputs, and factors affecting the achievement of project outcomes;

11. Review the extent of project contributions towards gender equality, women's empowerment and other cross-cutting issues addressed during project planning and implementation;

12. Assess the quality of partnerships, national ownership, and sustainability vis-à-vis the project strategy, identify gaps and document lessons for future reference;

13. Assess the efficiency of project implementation, use of resources and management structure;

14. Review project coordination with UNSOM, development partners (DP), stakeholders and other relevant UNDP and election-related projects;

15. Review the oversight, reporting and monitoring structures designed to support the project strategies and implementation;

16. Extract lessons learned and best practices that can be considered in planning and design of a future phase, and provide recommendations that can be applied to projects of similar nature.

2. Scope of the Project Evaluation This

independent evaluation will:

- Undertake a review of relevant documents, including the project documents and reporting, Board Meeting minutes, Letters of Agreement, project and project-funded products, and available monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data.

- Undertake discussions with the IESG, UNDP, UNSOM, NIEC. development partners, Government and non-governmental agencies, and others working on the electoral processes and framework on the project's design, implementation, performance, challenges, lessons learned, best practices and results.

- Assess the relevance/coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and inclusiveness of the project interventions taking into consideration the project objectives as well as the

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[86] Data provided by JP, June 2021

progress made towards achieving its intended results along with the project's management and implementation. It will also look at the impact of Covid 19 on the programme and its implementation.

- Assess the qualitative and quantitative data available on the results achieved and progress made, especially in terms of its contribution to supporting the establishment of the institutional and operational building blocks and framework for universal national elections.

- Identify the factors that facilitated or hindered the achievement of results and the lessons learned/best practices of the project.

- Validate preliminary evaluation findings through discussion, interviews, and the evaluation debriefing of initial findings.

- Provide a report on the evaluation's main findings and recommendations that can inform a future programme on areas or forms of assistance to the NIEC.

The evaluation will cover the project from its start in January 2018 to June 2021.

3. Methodology

3.1 Evaluation criteria and questions

With the evaluations scope detailed in Section 1.3 in mind, the evaluator will seek to answer the following questions in addition to the questions provided in the TOR on relevance, coherency, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact.

3.2 Evaluation approach

The evaluation methodology employs a mixed-methods approach, appropriate to evaluating gender equality and empowerment of women considerations. Further a diverse range of data sources and processes are employed (i.e. triangulation, validation) to guarantee inclusion, accuracy and credibility. The evaluation methods and sampling frame address the diversity of stakeholders affected by the intervention, particularly the most vulnerable, where appropriate

Outputs	Main Questions	Sub- Questions
NIEC equipped with necessary capacities and structures to prepare for and conduct credible and inclusive elections	• Was NIEC technical capacity built as a result of JP support? In what areas? Which ones were the strongest? Which ones still need further support? Why? • Was the NIEC's organizational & operational management strengthened as a result of JP? If yes, in what ways? How did this impact its institutional development, credibility, independence, accountability and the electoral process? If not, why not? Is the capacity developed sustainable? • Was NIEC input & advocacy into the legal framework and policy level decisions strengthened as a result of JP? • What were the factors that facilitated or hindered NIEC's development & project support to it? Were these adequately factored into the project design and during implementation? • How is the NIEC situated to manage the upcoming universal elections anticipated for 2024/25? What are its main strengths and challenges? • Is the NIEC perceived as an independent, credible and potentially effective institution? • How did Covid 19 affect capacity building and advisory efforts by JP?	• How strategic was JP support to the needs of the NIEC? • What were the main constraints to achieving the stated output? Was the JP able to address these areas? Why or why not? • What was the quality of technical assistance provided to the NIEC for its institutional, operational and technical capacity development? (both for project TA and embedded experts). Was it timely? Issues or lessons learned? • How were staff targeted for training? Are they still with the NIEC? Was there a gender balance in training? • How sustainable is the institutional capacity built within the NIEC? • How did the JP support the NIEC to implement its strategic plan? Was this assistance successful? Why or why not? • What are the perceptions of the NIEC's management capacity and performance by other electoral stakeholders such as political parties, media, CSOs and civil society? • How well organized is the NEC to manage the conduct of elections including procurement, voter information, etc today? How does this compare to 2017?

| NIEC supported to enhance public awareness of electoral processes, including promotion of women's participation | • What was the NIEC's role in voter education during the project's timeframe? How was this supported? Was this successful? Why or why not?

• In what ways did the project support NIEC engagement with national and sub-national stakeholders? How effective was this assistance? What were the results?

• Was the NIEC able to engage with the range of electoral stakeholders (political parties, government agencies, media, CSOs, parliament, traditional leaders, etc) envisioned in the project documents? Why or why not? How effective were these consultations? Why? Results?

• How effective was JP support to strengthen NIEC advocacy for | • Were institutional systems developed for outreach & consultations?

• How inclusive and participatory were the consultation processes? Did they reach women, persons with disabilities (PWD) vulnerable and marginalized groups? Factors? What were the results of these consultations?

• What was the reach of the voter education efforts undertaken? Did they reach sub-national groups, women, youth, PWD, vulnerable and marginalized groups? Why or why not?

• Did JP & the NIEC mainstream gender in trainings, activities & staffing? Did it have any activities targeting women's political participation and empowerment? What were the challenges and |

Outputs	Main Questions	Sub- Questions
	more inclusive electoral processes (women, marginalized groups, youth, etc)? Why? Results?	results?
Support to the NIEC's electoral operations, including preparations for voter registration (VR)	• What is the status of VR preparations and planning undertaken so far by the NIEC? How useful was JP support to this process? • Will these preparations be able to be maintained until needed for the anticipated universal elections in 2024/25? • What are the perceptions among stakeholders on the VR system adopted? Is it a system that Somalia will be able to sustain in the future?	• Were voter information efforts around voter registration undertaken? What was their quality? Did they make a difference? • How effective was JP support to help the NIEC to develop a VR system, identify VR sites and plan operations for a nation-wide VR effort? Why? • What were the main constraints to supporting NIEC's electoral operations and preparations for VR? Which ones were within control of the project and which

		ones were not? Was the project able to successfully address those that were within its control? How did it mitigate issues for those that were not?
Establishment of permanent NIEC office facilities	• Were the procurements cost-effective, timely, and appropriate? • Was the construction well done, durable, able to be maintained? • Are the new facilities equipped? Did the project support development of inventory management, maintenance systems, etc for the facilities and equipment?	• Are the new facilities expected to be used for the intended purposes? • Have the facilitates helped the NIEC strengthen its position and ability to undertake its mandate? In what ways?
Development of an enabling electoral legal framework supported	• How did the lack of an enabling framework affect JP support to the NIEC and to supporting universal elections? Lessons learned? • What support did JP provide to MOIFAR and others in drafting, review & interpretation of electoral legislation? • Was legislation and electoral policy strengthened as a result of this assistance? Why or why not? Did meet expected standards and include provisions for more inclusive representation? • What were the main lessons learned?	• What was the quality of the TA provided by JP for this output? • What factors were within control of the project and how did it manage those? • How effective was NIEC advocacy and lobbying related to the legal framework for elections? Factors?

Outputs	Main Questions	Sub- Questions
Project design and management	• How was the project designed? Was there NIEC participation and ownership in the design? • Are there design issues? If so, did this affect the project? In what way(s)? • How relevant and appropriate was the JP and its implementation? Was the timing of assistance appropriate for the needs? Was	• How coordinated were JP efforts with other related national/international assistance efforts? What were the key factors for coordination? Impact of coordination? • Was synergistic programming developed with other relevant political/electoral processes and democratic governance projects

there NIEC ownership in project implementation? • What were the main constraints to project implementation? Was the project able to address/mitigate these constraints? • How effective was project management in delivering an efficient, responsive and effective project? What were the factors that helped or hindered this? • What were the lessons learned and best practices? Were there any lost opportunities or unintended consequences? • Were project resources used effectively and were they adequate for the needs? • What was the level of national ownership in JP? What were the factors for this? • How visible was the project/donors and was this level of visibility appropriate? • How effective were UNDP and UNSOM in providing their respective backstop support, quality assurance and policy-level support for this joint project? • Did the project design and implementation incorporate a human rights based approach and a gender equality perspective? Did it also have an inclusive focus, especially in terms of women, youth, internally displaced persons, marginalized groups, PWD, etc.?	and efforts? • What was the theory of change? Was it well grounded in the context and did it prove to be effective? Was there an exit strategy and is this possible in the context? • Were the underlying project assumptions valid? • Were the risks adequately identified and addressed by the project? • Was the project adequately monitored by project staff and was reporting adequate for the needs? • Did the project staff and experts hired have the level of expertise and experience needed for the job and post-conflict context? • What impact did the input of the CEA/IESG have through on the larger policy environment of UN support for universal elections? Did the direct reporting line to the SRSG help this? • Did the programme have an adequate M&E plan and indicators that could capture its performance and outputs? Was this plan implemented and data systematically collected, aggregated, reported and used to improved project efforts? • What was the quality of reporting? Was it sufficient for DP and implementer's needs? Did the reporting reflect project efforts for gender equality/women's political participation, PWD, marginalized groups and other inclusion/equality issues?

		• How did Covid 19 affect project implementation and management? Was it able to cope effectively? Were there any unforeseen consequences from this situation?

3.2. Approach

In answering the evaluation questions, the evaluator will use mixed methods for analysis, synthesis and drawing conclusions. These include: trend analysis of key outcomes, analysis of associations between observed outcome and project supported efforts, assessment of the relevance, coherency, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and results of JP assistance and validation through triangulation (validation discussions with UNDP, IESG, NIEC, development partners, project staff and other partners/beneficiaries, and by information provided in the documents reviewed. As a result, based on the information available and stakeholder perceptions, the evaluator will make judgments on their value and the extent that these outputs contributed towards the achievement of the Joint Programme's intended outcomes.

The questions outlined in Section 2.1 are specific yet general enough to allow for flexibility in questioning as well as to allow for flexibility in responses. This will enable the responders to voice their own issues and concerns. The evaluator will start by asking brief general questions before going into the specific evaluation questions. Sensitive questions will be asked at the end of the interview after a rapport has developed between the interviewer and person(s) being interviewed. Issues identified in discussions will be followed up with additional questions to that individual/group, as well as by questions to other informants to corroborate the information as needed.

Evaluation questions will be tailored to the different institutions, their mandate and role in the project and/or sector. Particular attention will be given to the country context and its effect on the project, implementation challenges, political constraints, programmatic content and value, timeliness of assistance, changing context and sustainability of efforts. The evaluator will interview IESG members/project staff, UNDP, NIEC, DPs and stakeholders. An initial list of key informants to be contacted is provided in Annex 1.

The evaluator is an international expert directly recruited by UNDP. The evaluator will maintain an impartial and professional view towards developing her findings, and will base them on the evidence found and against the anticipated results listed in the project documents. The evaluator is responsible for the delivery of the Inception Report, Preliminary Findings, and the Draft and Final Reports, and will report to the Joint Programme Evaluation Reference Group (ERG). UNDP will ensure the delivery of project and related documents and will assist with the scheduling of interviews and any translations needed.

3.3 Data sources, processing and measuring results

The evaluation will use both primary and secondary data and a variety of data collection methods to gather the information needed to conduct the work. This is expected to include:

- Desk study and review of IESG/JP, NIEC, UNDP documents/reporting, as well as available secondary data. Key project documents will be provided by UNDP. These are expected to include the project documents, JP/IESG products, letters of agreement with implementing partners and their reporting, IESG newsletters, Board minutes, NIEC documentation and plans, the UNDP Country Programme, and available project M&E data and progress reporting, among others.

- Interviews with project staff, experts, development partners, NIEC and other stakeholders. A preliminary list of key informants is provided in Annex 1. Given the limitations on travel due to Covid 19, all interviews will be done virtually. In addition to those reached through video conferencing, some informants may be contacted directly by email and asked to respond to a few questions to ensure a good representation of the different project elements are included in the data collection process.

- Analysis of the data collected with the main findings extrapolated by the project outcome and six output areas. The evaluator will synthesize these findings into the main points that will be discussed in the evaluation's debriefing and Evaluation Report. An illustrative table of contents is provided in Annex 2.

The evaluator will use her professional judgment to assess the information collected and to answer the evaluation questions. Findings will be based on the evidence found and results will be measured in terms of the expected results outlined in the project documents, results and resources frameworks and M&E plans, as well as by the participants' perceptions of the project and the evaluator's assessment of the results found. Attribution of results directly to the JP may not be possible in some cases due to the integrated nature of the assistance and international efforts in support of the electoral and political processes which may have contributed to some of the same outcomes. However, where direct correlations seem evident, this will be noted in the Evaluation Report.

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

3.4 Evaluability analysis

The results framework for the Joint Programme is outlined in the project documents and provides the outputs and illustrative activities for how the project intended to achieve those outputs. The theory of change is inherent in the design, and focuses in Phase 1 on developing the fundamental electoral building blocks needed to develop the institutional and legal foundations for the successful holding of a universal election in a post-conflict country that has not had direct elections for decades, and in Phases 2 and 3 on supporting the operations for voter registration and the implementation of universal elections. The project document also provides clear rationale for the selection of its six outputs and for the project approach adopted. Project reporting also follows the results framework and reports by outputs. All of these facilitate project evaluation.

The sub-results and indicators however are not consistent across the results frameworks outlined in the project document and amendments and many of the indicators are measured by a yes or no or number of activities completed. This is insufficient to be able to measure project performance. It is not yet clear from the initial review of documents how much M&E data the project has collected and aggregated which could help demonstrate project performance and provide a quantifiable evidence base. This increases the importance of the interviews and qualitative data that the evaluation will be able to collect. Assuming the key informants are available and willing to be interviewed, there should not be any issues with the interview part of the process.

4. Programme of Work

4.1 Phases and calendar of work

Time Frame	Tasks
Phase 1: Review of background documents and draft Inception Report: 6 – 20 June 2021	
6 – 20 June interviews 14 June 17 June ⬚	⬚ Desk review of relevant program documents ⬚ Planning and scheduling of ⬚ Submission of draft Inception Report Receive ERG comments on draft Inception Report

18 – 20 June ▢	Finalize Inception Report
20 June	▢ Submission of final Inception Report
Phase 2: Data Collection and Initial Analysis : 20 June – 5 July 2021	
20 June – 1 July	▢ Conduct virtual interviews
3 -4 July	▢ Analyze data collected and develop preliminary findings
5 July	▢ Virtual debriefing on preliminary findings, main recommendations & discussions of findings with ERG
Phase 3: Report Writing and Delivery: 6 July - 31 July 2021	
6 July – 18 July	▢ Draft report
19 July	▢ Submit draft evaluation report to UNDP/ERG
26 July – 30 July	▢ Receive UNDP feedback and incorporate feedback into report
31 July	▢ Finalize and submit evaluation final report
TBD	▢ Presentation of Evaluation Report to ERG and key stakeholders

4.2. Evaluation deliverables

The main outputs of the Joint Programme Project Evaluation are:

- This *Evaluation Inception Report* which describes the overall approach to the evaluation, including methodology, work plan and proposed structure of the Evaluation Report. The Evaluation Inception Report will be submitted electronically.

- *Preliminary findings* to be presented during a debriefing meeting at the end of the interview phase. The overview of preliminary findings will be submitted electronically.

- *Draft Evaluation Report* of not more than 60 pages including an executive summary, that presents the Evaluation's main findings on the project, conclusions, and recommendations. This report will follow UNDP's standard guidelines for independent project evaluation reports. It will include a stand-alone Executive Summary of not more than 5 pages. A draft table of contents is provided in Annex 2 to this Inception Report. This draft Evaluation Report will be submitted electronically.

- *Final Evaluation Report* of not more than 60 pages, excluding annexes. The final report will present the evaluation's overall findings, practical and relevant recommendations, lessons learned and conclusions. The report and its main findings will be presented virtually to the ERG, UNDP, IESG, UNSOM, donors and other key stakeholders as organized by UNDP.

Evaluation Consultant

Project Title: Joint Programme for Support to Universal Suffrage Elections in the Federal Republic of Somalia

Project Description

While a multiple-year horizon is envisaged to assist the Federal Republic of Somalia with the preparation of the first universal nation-wide multi-party parliamentary elections since 1969, the "Joint Programme for Support to Universal Suffrage Elections in the Federal Republic of Somalia" has focused on the crucial electoral preparatory steps to be taken in 2018-21, in particular the development of the Electoral Law, the capacity building and institutional development of the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC), and support to pre-election operations such as preparations for voter registration, public awareness, political party registration, assessment of voting catchment areas, (sub-)national stakeholder engagement and outreach, as well as the development of electoral procedures and regulations. In February 2020, the Somalia Federal Parliament adopted the national electoral bill, which was signed into Law by the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia. The current legislative term for both houses of parliament expired in December 2020.

In the run-up to the planned 2020/21 elections, the Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) provided the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) with capacity building and training on electoral management for the Board of Commissioners and Secretariat on information technology, logistics, operations, administration & finance, public outreach as well as the provision of technical support to the Political Parties Registrar Office. IESG and NIEC legal teams collaborated on reviewing the electoral legislation including supporting the Joint Parliamentary Ad Hoc Committees on the Electoral Law.

Following the 17 September 2020 political agreement to hold indirect elections, and the exclusion of the NIEC and political parties from the indirect process, the UN and donor principals have consistently engaged with the Somali leaders throughout the evolution of the electoral process on the need for a more participatory and inclusive electoral process and that the consensual commitments made in the Mogadishu agreement are kept.

The UNSOM/UNDP 'Joint Programme for Support to Universal Suffrage Elections in the Federal Republic of Somalia' (2018-2021) is funded by EU, UK (FCDO), Germany, Norway, Sweden (SIDA), USA (USAID) and UNDP. The project will end in December 2021.

The Project's outputs are defined as:

> Output 1: The institutional capacity of the NIEC is strengthened.
> Output 2: NIEC supported to enhance public awareness of electoral processes, including promotion of women's participation;
> Output 3: Support to the NIEC's operational planning & management functions;
> Output 4 : Establishment of permanent NIEC office facilities;
> Output 5: Development of an enabling electoral legal framework supported; Output
> 6: Project Management Support.

UNDP intends to hire an individual consultant to undertake an evaluation of the project. The objective of the evaluation is to assess the impact of the project so far (results, achievements, constraints), to provide information on the effectiveness, relevance and value added of the support provided to NIEC since 2018, and to receive recommendations for the design of a follow up project for the period 2022-2025. The evaluation will also provide project donors with an assessment of the use of their resources.

Scope of Work

The evaluation consultant will conduct an independent evaluation exercise of the "Joint Programme for Support to Universal Suffrage Elections in the Federal Republic of Somalia" with regard to its support to the NIEC in collaboration with the key stakeholders (UNDP, NIEC, UNSOM and donors).

Purpose

The project has been implemented from January 2018 to the present and the evaluation will focus on the entire implementation period. UNDP commissions evaluations to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of its contributions to development results. This evaluation is carried out under the UNDP Evaluation Policy[72] and the UNDP evaluation guidelines[73]. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide UNDP, project partners and stakeholders with an overall independent assessment of the performance of the electoral support project. This will provide evaluative evidence of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of current programme, which can be used by UNDP and its partners to strengthen existing programmes and to set the stage for new initiatives. The evaluation serves an important accountability function, providing national stakeholders and partners in Somalia with an impartial assessment of the results of UNDP governance support in line with national priorities, corporate strategies, and UN electoral assistance policies.

In assessing the degree to which the project met its intended outcomes and results, the evaluation will provide key lessons about successful implementation approaches and operational practices, as well as highlight areas where the project performed less effectively than anticipated.

The results of the evaluation will draw lessons that will inform the Somali Federal Government-NIEC, donors, UNDP and UNSOM as the key stakeholders of this evaluation. The evaluation will generate knowledge from the implementation of the project and reflect on challenges and lessons learnt. It will also propose actionable recommendations for future programming related to the next phase of the electoral support project.

The evaluation will specifically focus on the following:

- An in-depth review of implementation of various project outcomes and outputs outlined in the project document with a view to identifying the level of achievement as well as an analysis of factors in case the set benchmarks were not fulfilled.
- Review the extent by which the project has contributed to gender equality and women's empowerment and other cross-cutting issues addressed during project planning and implementation.
- Assess the quality of partnerships, national ownership, and sustainability vis-à-vis the strategy in the project document, identify if they were gaps and document a lesson for future referencing.
- Extent of intended and unintended changes in development (condition/outcome) between the completion of outputs and achievement of impacts
- Review the oversight, reporting and monitoring structures designed to support the project strategies

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[72] http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml
[73] https://www.undp.org/accountability/evaluation

- Extract the lessons learned and best practices that can be considered in planning and design of future project phase and recommendations that can be applied projects with the same nature.

Evaluation criteria and key questions

The evaluation questions are based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) evaluation criteria, which have been adapted to the context. The following key questions will guide the end of project evaluation: **i.Relevance**

- To what extent was the project in line with the national development priorities, the country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?
- To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country programme outcome?
- To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant projects considered in the project's design?
- To what extent were perspectives of those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, taken into account during the project design processes?
- To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?
- To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country?

ii. **Coherence**
- To what extent did the project contribute to the country programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities?
- How well does the intervention fit?
- How compatible was the project to other interventions in the country?
- To what extent did the intervention support or undermine policies?
- What synergies or interlinkages benefitted from this project within UNDP and externally? This includes complementarity, harmonization and co-ordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

iii.Effectiveness

- To what extent were the project outputs achieved?
- What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving intended country programme outputs and outcomes?
- To what extent has the UNDP partnership strategy been appropriate and effective?
- What factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?
- In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
- In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?
- What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project's objectives?

- Are the projects objectives and outputs clear, practical, and feasible within its frame?
- To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
- To what extent are project management and implementation participatory and is this participation contributing towards achievement of the project objectives?
- To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents and changing partner priorities?
- To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?

iv. Efficiency

- To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?
- To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?
- To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
- To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?
- To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?

v. Sustainability

- Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs?
- To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?
- Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
- To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs?
- What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?
- To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights, and human development?
- To what extent do stakeholders support the project's long-term objectives?
- To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?
- To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies?
- What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability?

vi. Impact

- Evaluate the extent to which the project generated positive or negative, intended, and unintended effects on its wider peacebuilding and democratic governance and its contribution towards the wider objectives outlined in the project document.

Methodology

The project evaluation will be conducted by an independent evaluator procured by UNDP under an individual consultancy contract. The Project Evaluation Reference group including project stakeholders (executive, supplier, and beneficiary) shall guide and oversee the overall direction of the consultancy. The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable, and useful. The evaluation will provide quantitative and qualitative data through but not limited to the following methods:

- Desk study and review of all relevant project documentation including project documents, annual work- plans, project progress reports, project monitoring reports (from third party monitors) annual project reports, minutes of project board meetings, reports of consultancies and events.
- In depth interviews to gather primary data from key stakeholders using a structured methodology.
- Considering the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual focus group discussions with project beneficiaries and other stakeholders will be conducted.
- Interviews with relevant key informants.

Evaluation products (deliverables)

The following deliverables are expected:

1. **Evaluation inception report (10-15 pages).** The inception report should be carried out following and based on preliminary discussions with UNDP Programme Oversight and Quality Assurance Unit (POQA), Inclusive Politics Portfolio, UN IESG, UNSOM (PAMG), NIEC and donors after the desk review, and should be produced before the evaluation starts (before any formal evaluation interviews, survey distribution or field visits).
2. **Evaluation debriefings.** Immediately following an evaluation, the evaluator will provide a debriefing to the same stakeholders, focusing on the main results and recommendations of the evaluation
3. **Draft evaluation report** (40 to 60 pages including executive summary). The evaluation manager, the reference group, UNDP, UN IESG, and key stakeholders in the evaluation should review the draft evaluation report and provide an amalgamated set of comments to the evaluator within one week, addressing the content required and quality criteria.
4. **Evaluation report audit trail.** Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft report should be retained by the evaluator to show how they have addressed comments.
5. **Final evaluation report.** The evaluator will send the final evaluation report to the evaluation manager, the reference group, UNDP, UN IESG and UNSOM (PAMG) team after having received the consolidated comments on the draft report. The international consultant will be overall responsible for the preparation of the final report.
6. **Presentations to** the evaluation manager, the reference group, UNDP, UN IESG and UNSOM (PAMG), donors and other key stakeholders.