**final report**

**FINAL PROJECT EVALUATION**

Kyrgyzstan Electoral Support Programme (KESP), 2020-2022

United Nations Development Programme

Lawrence Robertson

Independent Contractor/Evaluator

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The author’s views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of UNDP.

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS ii

[acknowledgements iii](#_Toc108970039)

[Acronyms List iv](#_Toc108970040)

[EXECUTIVE SUMMARY v](#_Toc108970041)

[1. INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION 8](#_Toc108970042)

[*BACKGROUND FOR THE EVALUATION* 8](#_Toc108970043)

[*PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION* 8](#_Toc108970044)

[2. POLITICAL AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT FOR KESP 9](#_Toc108970045)

[3. DESCRIPTION OF KESP 10](#_Toc108970046)

[4. EVALUATION METHODS 11](#_Toc108970047)

[5. KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS 12](#_Toc108970048)

[***RELEVANCE*** 12](#_Toc108970049)

[***EFFECTIVENESS*** 14](#_Toc108970050)

[***EFFICIENCY*** 26](#_Toc108970051)

[***SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT*** 28](#_Toc108970052)

[***NATIONAL OWNERSHIP*** 30](#_Toc108970053)

[6. LESSONS LEARNED 31](#_Toc108970054)

[7. RECOMMENDATIONS 31](#_Toc108970055)

[ANNEX 1: TOR FOR THE FINAL PROJECT EVALUATION 34](#_Toc108970056)

[ANNEX 2: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED 45](#_Toc108970057)

[ANNEX 3: LIST OF INTERVIEWS 48](#_Toc108970058)

[ANNEX 4: EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS 50](#_Toc108970059)

[ANNEX 5: FINAL EVALUATION CONSULTANT 54](#_Toc108970060)

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**Acronyms List**

AWP Annual Work Plan

CE Civic Education

CEC Central Elections Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic

CGRR Coordination Group for Rapid Response

CPD Country Programme Document

CSO civil society organisation

CTA Chief Technical Advisor

DAC Development Assistance Committee

DIM Direct implementation

DPPA Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

EDR Electoral Dispute Resolution

EOM Election Observation Mission

EMB Electoral Management Body

ESP electoral support project

EWER Early Warning/Early Response

ICT information and communications technology

IOM International Organization for Migration

IP Implementing Partner

KESP Kyrgyzstan Election Support Programme

KESP II Kyrgyzstan Election Support Project II

KR Kyrgyz Republic

MP Member of Parliament

NAM Needs Assessment Mission

ODIHR Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OSCE Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PPE personal protective equipment

ProDoc Project Document

PSU Procurement Support Unit

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

SRS State Registration Service

TA Technical Assistance

ToC Theory of Change

ToR Terms of Reference

UN United Nations

UNDAF United Nations Development Assistance Framework

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNEG United Nations Evaluation Group

USAID United States Agency for International Development

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*Introduction*

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed and implemented the “Kyrgyzstan Election Support Programme” (KESP) to support the efforts of the Kyrgyz Republic (KR) to strengthen the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of electoral processes for the 2020-2021 local and parliamentary elections. UNDP sought to evaluate the programme to analyze KESP’s progress and results, identify problems and constraints in implementation, and support learning from the experience of the programme for future project development and implementation, including for potential future electoral support programming in Kyrgyzstan.

*Political and developmental context for the project*

While the KR enjoyed the reputation as the most democratic country in Central Asia for many years, Kyrgyzstan has suffered from periodic political instability and violence. Participation in elections, as measured by voter turnout, has been on the decline. UNDP has provided technical assistance and support to the Central Election Commission (CEC) and other electoral stakeholders through donor-supported electoral support projects (ESPs) for the last several electoral cycles. KESP was developed following a request of the country and a needs assessment mission by the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA). The political trajectory of the country in 2020 and 2021 during KESP implementation was tumultuous. Two elections were planned for these years, starting with Parliamentary elections in October 2020 which were to be followed by local elections in 2021. Instead. four elections plus a referendum were held by the CEC over this period: the 4 October 2020 parliamentary elections (which were annulled following violent protests), the extraordinary 10 January 2021 presidential election, the regular 11 April 2021 local elections, the 11 April 2021 constitutional referendum, and the repeat 28 November 2021 parliamentary elections. And in February 2022, the CEC managed byelections in two constituencies as well as April local elections. This changing context contributed to many challenges and adjustments in KESP.

*Description of the project*

KESP was designed as a 22-month programme from February 2020 to December 2021 funded by the governments of Japan, Switzerland and Germany. The programme was extended for six months through June 2022. The project, as December 2021, had expended USD 5,082,021.65 and planned to expend another USD 1,211,468.38 through KESP in the first half of 2022. KESP was designed with three components and had three outputs:

1. Enhancing the inclusion, integrity and transparency of the electoral operations, including sustained upgrade and modernization of equipment;
2. Enhancing the capacity of the key national partners in conducting public outreach and external communication, including engagement with civil society, media and other key electoral stakeholders, and empowerment of women as voters and eligible candidates; and
3. Enhancing the capacity of the CEC and other key stakeholders to identify, manage and respond to electoral violence, through systems dedicated to early warning and early response mechanisms.

The project was designed and implemented in close consultation with the CEC and other electoral stakeholders as needed to adjust to the evolving challenges and opportunities in the KR.

*Evaluation methods*

The Final Project Evaluation was conducted in March and April with revisions in June and July 2022 through transparent and participatory processes by an IC working remotely by engaging UNDP, project partners, donor partners, and stakeholders. The evaluator developed and revised an inception report that responded to the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluator and developed plans for conducting the evaluation for UNDP approval. After approval, the IC implemented these plans and produced a draft and then final evaluation report responding to comments on the draft. Methods used were document review and interviews with UNDP KESP, the CEC, donor partners, implementing partners (IPs), and other stakeholders.

*Key findings and conclusions*

*Relevance*: KESP was highly relevant for UNDP, the CEC, and other electoral stakeholders in Kyrgyzstan. Both written and interview sources made the case and provided evidence that increasing the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of electoral processes were relevant goals for the country and for UNDP and donor partners to support, including through evidence for KESP’s fit with the UNDAF, CPD, SDGs and UNDP Strategic Plan. The approach of KESP was relevant and appropriate to achieve the Programme’s objectives and the programme developed coherent ways of working with other partners on electoral support, including in adjusting to the tumultuous context for elections.

*Effectiveness*: KESP achieved or exceeded its output targets for 17 of the 25 enumerated activities, with another six likely achieved or close to achieved as some activity level targets were not clear in the ProDoc or activities and indicators were changed in implementation. The remaining two activities were implemented by other partners instead of being delivered through KESP; KESP thus did not duplicate these efforts. KESP was able to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic conditions in its operations and provided important personal protective equipment (PPE) support to help the CEC respond to COVID-19.

Key factors that contributed to the Programme’s performance identified above included working closely with and through the CEC, not working only with the CEC but also bringing CSOs in as IPs, addressing important needs in the context of a changing and changed electoral system, working successfully through remote methods with COVID-19, the flexibility of KESP staff and their willingness to work intensively when needed, and KESP supporting critical electoral events and reaching large marginalized populations (such as the large number of Kyrgyzstani migrants abroad that are not registered to vote).

Factors that hindered Programme’s performance were also identified, including the short time period for programme operations before elections, the rapid and changing pace of electoral events and their unexpected nature, changes to the electoral system, challenges maintaining relationships with the CEC as donor decisions changed, challenges adapting to COVID-19 realities and using more remote methods, and issues in working with the CEC, including limited planning by the CEC, centralized CEC decision making and late CEC decision making.

*Efficiency*: KESP developed and used workplans and allocated and used programme funds per agreed plans; changed plans in the context of changed electoral events and schedules were accommodated. KESP support was seen as efficient though KESP’s work with the key institution for the administration of elections, the CEC; however the rapidly changing context for elections and the CEC’s own internal issues with planning led to KESP having to adjust and act rapidly to support activity delivery in ways that sometimes led to higher costs and reaching fewer beneficiaries, which thus impeded efficiency. KESP had high staff turnover in implementation which may have had additional efficiency costs. The mix of remote and in-person activities of KESP was viewed as effective, efficient, and relevant under COVID conditions.

*Sustainability & Impact:* Supporting the CEC was recognized as building sustainability, as was working with a range of CSOs in the KR active in civic education (CE). Other factors hindered the sustainability of KESP results, such as expectations that a successor ESP would be forthcoming to support the CEC going forward, the limited time before elections for KESP to support capacity building and new technology in electoral institutions, the change of these institutions and the electoral system during KESP implementation, and the limited amount of time to support the development of the CEC’s CE Center. Although KESP almost met, met or exceeded all of its output targets, the measurement of the programme’s outcomes suggests less impact from the programme. The three outcomes designed to measure the effects of the programme through election observation mission reports, appear not to have been attained. Solid delivery on KESP activities and stronger capacity based on programme outputs at the CEC and among other electoral stakeholders is notable and clear. However these outputs were overwhelmed by what many observer reports note as the overall negative trajectory of the political transformations in the country with and since the annulled 2020 parliamentary elections.

*National Ownership*: KESP’s partnering with the CEC, the organization responsible for the administration of elections in the KR, as well as CSOs supported national ownership of the programme and its results.

*Lessons learned*

Key lessons learned from the KESP experience include:

* Electoral support should be provided substantially before key electoral processes.
* Electoral support should be implemented in time periods between elections.
* Electoral support can productively pursue many different approaches and disperse efforts to spread information and raise awareness.
* Monitoring and evaluation efforts are needed to assess the efficacy of different approaches.

*Recommendations*

Recommendations that follow from the conclusions of the evaluation and lessons learned include:

* Kyrgyzstan needs substantial support towards expanding and revitalizing democratic practices.
* Continued support for the CEC remains important to maintain and strengthen strong capacity in transparent electoral administration and make electoral events more inclusive.
* Electoral support should be provided substantially before key electoral processes and build capacity between elections.
* ESP support should prioritize developing the capacity of electoral stakeholders to plan and build capacity in advance of elections.
* Future ESP support should focus on inclusion by building trust and confidence in elections among the population as well as the capacity of the CEC and other electoral stakeholders.
* Strategic planning and a needs assessment with the CEC should precede programme development.
* UNDP should consider developing, agreeing on, and using rules to strengthen work with the CEC.
* UNDP should consider supporting the development of civil society expertise on election administration to complement CEC expertise.
* UNDP should consider developing approaches in governance support to support Kyrgyzstani partners to address broader issues of trust and confidence in the political system.

# INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed and implemented the “Kyrgyzstan Election Support Programme” (KESP) to support the efforts of the Kyrgyz Republic (KR) to strengthen the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of electoral processes for the 2020-2021 local and parliamentary elections. UNDP sought to evaluate the programme to analyse KESP’s progress and results, identify problems and constraints in implementation, and support learning from the experience of the programme for future project development and implementation, including for potential future electoral support programming in Kyrgyzstan.

*BACKGROUND FOR THE EVALUATION*

UNDP/Kyrgyzstan sought an evaluation as KESP approaches closure to learn from project processes and results. With the project, operating through an extension, close to conclusion, the time was seen as right to evaluate what had gone well in the design, implementation, and results of the project as well as what had not gone as well.

*PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION*

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the international evaluator, attached as Annex 1, noted that the objectives of the final project evaluation are to:

* analyse KESP’s progress and achieved results;
* identify problems and constraints that have encountered in the implementation;
* identify best practices and lessons to be learned from the implementation of KESP;
* provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful to make forward looking, preliminary recommendations for the future design and implementation of electoral assistance programmes;
* provide advice on forthcoming strategic directions and priorities; and
* provide options for future delivery and the implementation of programmes that promote ownership, sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness.

The TOR further notes that the evaluation should:

• Assess the relevance of the programme with respect to its consistency, ownership, technical adequacy and complementarity of the programme with other similar initiatives;

• Determine the effectiveness of the programme in the achievement of results, highlighting reasons and factors for achievement/non-achievement;

• Determine the efficiency of the programme concerning the value for money principle, use of funding staff and other resources in the achievement of results;

• Evaluate the potential impact on enhancing the inclusiveness and transparency of electoral processes;

• Determine the level of coordination of the programme with UN agencies, relevant development partners, donors, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders;

• Evaluate the sustainability of the programme, including the participation of institutional beneficiaries/partners in the planning and implementation of activities, as well as measures taken to ensure that activities initiated by the programme will be completed/continued beyond the programme cycle;

• Evaluate the contribution of the programme to the gender and human rights aspects;

• Capture the best practices and lessons learned from the implementation of the programme;

• Provide concrete recommendations that are useful for the future programming and measure the impact of the project towards strengthening the capacity of electoral authorities to ensure that electoral processes are credible, transparent and accepted by the electorate.

The evaluation was tasked with addressing four main questions:

1. Was the approach to achieve what the UNDP Programme intended to achieve appropriate?
2. To what extent has the Programme achieved its intended objectives?
3. To what extent has the Programme been able to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic and support country’s preparedness, response and recovery process?
4. What factors contributed to or hindered Programme’s performance and eventually, to the sustainability of results?

The evaluation has focused on answering these four main questions and the purposes of the evaluation above as well as answering a set of specific evaluation questions also included in the TOR.

# POLITICAL AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT FOR KESP

The KR enjoyed the reputation as the most democratic country in Central Asia for many years. However, Kyrgyzstan has suffered from periodic political instability and violence that has led to undemocratic transitions of political power, with Presidents overthrown in 2005 and 2010, as well as episodes of interethnic violence, including in 2010. Political leadership in the KR has been unstable since 2010, with 14 governments since that time. A few key personalities appear to have become increasingly important in political and social life through their leadership of political parties and state posts. Analysts have noted that power was becoming more centralized, with the population increasingly dissatisfied and participating less in political life. One of the ways this withdrawal from political life was notable is in declining turnout for elections. This fact was noted in the ProDoc as one of the reason for KESP support for elections in the country. Due to the political turmoil and change of the electoral system during KESP, the turnout problems worsened during the period of KESP implementation. While 56% of the registered electorate voted in the October 2020 parliamentary elections, turnout declined to only 34.6% of registered voters for the 2021 parliamentary elections.

The main partner in KESP is the election management body (EMB) in the country, the Central Elections Commission (CEC), is in charge of administering all elections and referenda in the KR. The CEC is a permanent state body with its own budget taxed with these responsibilities. The Chair and commissioners are renewed every five years; the professional staff are civil servants.

UNDP supported electoral processes in the KR for several successive electoral cycles. UNDP has provided technical assistance and support to the EMB and other electoral stakeholders through donor-supported projects. UNDP supported the previous electoral cycle through the Kyrgyz Election Support Project Phase II (KESP-II) over the period December 2014 to June 2018. Project support focused assisting the CEC, State Registration Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (SRS), law-enforcement, and judges. Other stakeholders, including NGOs and the media, also benefited from project activities. The project supported Electoral Dispute Resolution (EDR) and electoral security training involving the Ministry of Interior, Prosecutor’s General Office, and Supreme Court. While KESP-II reported mostly succeeded in attaining its primary goals in support of critical electoral events over 2015-2017 and helping Kyrgyzstan reach national and international standards, additional support was still seen as needed for the next electoral cycle by the CEC, government of the KR, and UNDP.

Despite the recognized development of the EMBs electoral experience and technical knowledge, the KR was still seen as facing important challenges in its efforts to ensure the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of elections. This led to a request from the KR to the UN for electoral support. In the wake of this request, per United Nations procedures, a Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) was conducted to validate the need and utility of an electoral support project for the country. The DPPA NAM found that an electoral support project (ESP) was warranted and recommended a focus on inclusion, integrity, and transparency – in electoral operations, through support for outreach and communications to civil society and the public (particularly to reach women) and addressing risks of electoral violence. These areas were similar to the three components where KESP II focused: Advancement of information and communications technology (ICT) introduction into electoral management process; Institutional communication, Civic and voter education campaigns; and Electoral dispute resolution and electoral security training.

The political trajectory of the country in 2020 and 2021 during KESP implementation was tumultuous. Two elections were planned for these years, starting with Parliamentary elections in October 2020 which were to be followed by local elections in 2021. The plan and schedule were upended by the violent protests that led to the annulment of the October 2020 elections by the CEC. This change resulted instead to a total of four elections plus a referendum being held by the CEC over this period: the planned 4 October 2020 parliamentary elections, the extraordinary 10 January 2021 presidential election, the regular 11 April 2021 local elections, the 11 April 2021 constitutional referendum, and the repeat 28 November 2021 parliamentary elections. Plus in 2022, the CEC managed byelections in two constituencies in February as well as April local elections.

Kyrgyzstan held Parliamentary Elections on 4 October 2020. Public protests in Bishkek followed the announcement of preliminary results for the *Jogorku Kenesh*, in which many parties did not win representation. After some demonstrators attacked Parliament, law enforcement attempts to disperse the crowds grew increasingly violent but did not disperse the crowd. Protestors attacked government facilities, including breaking out of jail the former President Almazbek Atambayev and a prominent former Member of Parliament (MP) Sadyr Japarov. Protests increasingly took on an organized character and appeared influenced by organized crime groups. Facing these protests, the Prime Minister as well as the speaker of parliament resigned under pressure. Different political party leaders attempted to appoint themselves leaders of key ministries and state agencies to take control of the situation without success. The CEC met and invalidated the results 6 October “to prevent the increase of tensions in the society, promote stability, civil peace and accord”. President Jeenbekov declared a state of emergency in Bishkek and the situation on the streets cooled; however political tensions remained high, with Parliament eventually proposing and electing Japarov as PM. Then President Jeenbekov resigned, and Japarov became acting President.

These changes forced snap Presidential elections, which were held 10 January 2021 along with a referendum in April 2021 on changing to a presidential system, which passed. The authorities hastily revised electoral laws to fit the system approved in the referendum. Between late June and August, the Parliament changed the system of selecting CEC commissioners and the commissioners and amended constitutional laws on parliamentary and presidential elections in a rushed process. Finally, President Japarov called the parliamentary elections on 30 August for 28 November – a mere 3 months away. This process and the change of the electoral system left the CEC and KESP with little time before the elections to support civic education on the changes to a mixed electoral system that combined proportional representation with single member districts (SMDs), conduct boundary delimitation, support voter registration, and prepare for and hold the Parliamentary elections themselves under this new system. The CEC was able to hold these parliamentary elections 28 November 2021.

# DESCRIPTION OF KESP

KESP was designed as a 22-month programme to run from February 2020 to December 2021. The Programme was funded by the governments of Japan, Switzerland and Germany. The programme was extended for six months through June 2022, making the total programme duration 28 months. KESP was designed with three components:

1. Enhancing the inclusion, integrity and transparency of the electoral operations, including sustained upgrade and modernization of equipment;
2. Enhancing the capacity of the key national partners in conducting public outreach and external communication, including engagement with civil society, media and other key electoral stakeholders, and empowerment of women as voters and eligible candidates; and
3. Enhancing the capacity of the CEC and other key stakeholders to identify, manage and respond to electoral violence, through systems dedicated to early warning and early response mechanisms.

Although the draft ProDoc designed KESP at the level of USD 12.778.070, less funding was made available by development partners. The project, as December 2021, had expended USD 5,082,021.65 towards these components. The Annual Work Plan (AWP) for 2022 planned to expend another USD 1,211,468.38 through KESP in the 2022 6-month extension.

With three components, KESP was designed to have three outputs:

Output 1: The integrity, efficiency and inclusiveness of the electoral operations are enhanced;

Output 2: The capacity of the key counterparts in conducting public outreach and external communication, including engagement with civil society, media and other key electoral stakeholders, is enhanced; and

Output 3: The capacity of the CEC and other key stakeholders to identify, manage and respond to electoral violence is enhanced.

A fourth Output was added in reporting in 2021 to reflect the contributions of the project to conducting elections during the COVID-19 pandemic through the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE). A wide range of project activities were organized under these outputs and sub-outputs for implementation.

Some of the sub-outputs and activities under them envisioned in the draft Project Document were not funded by development partners. Based on identified needs and priorities, and UNDP corporate capabilities as confirmed by the NAM, KESP originally sought to implement additional activities towards two additional sub-outputs and another activity:

1.3 Post-electoral support provided to assess integrity, efficiency and gender equality of the process; and

2.1.4 (activity) Providing technical assistance and advisory support to the CEC in building and maintaining relations with electoral stakeholders.

As unfunded, these sub-outputs and activities not funded in the signed 16 April 2020 ProDoc and were removed and not reported on.

Activities 3.3.2 (Training on hate speech for criminal justice actors, specifically tailored to election contexts) and 3.3.3. (Development of specific guidance documents on hate speech prevention) were cancelled as unnecessary as they overlapped activities offered by USAID to CEC. As USAID was funding these activities, UNDP did not pursue them as duplicative of other donor efforts.

And Activity 2.1.3, Conducting workshops for the CEC staff, civil society, media and political parties’ representatives, implemented in 2022 is similar to 2.1.4 above.

# EVALUATION METHODS

The Final Project Evaluation was conducted in March and April 2022, with revisions in June and July 2022. The evaluation process was conducted by an IC who used transparent and participatory processes with UNDP and project partners and stakeholders in accordance with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluations in the UN System.

The evaluator first became familiar with KESP from the project’s ProDoc and work plans, as well as reporting documents. A comprehensive draft inception report was developed with evaluation matrix that explained plans to collect and analyze data on the programme through document review and key informant interviews to address and answer the key questions of the evaluation and meet the purpose of the evaluation. After comments from UNDP, the evaluator finalized the inception report, including interview questions, which were then used for the fieldwork. Fieldwork consisted of systematic document review of project planning and reporting materials and remote interviews over Zoom. Remote interviews were conducted in English or Russian with 38 interviewees from UNDP, the CEC, donor partners, implementing partners (IPs), and other stakeholders mid-to late March. Some interviewees were met with more than once.

The evaluator analysed this interview data and triangulated findings from interviews with that from programme documents to produce a draft Evaluation Report. After comments and discussion with the KESP and UNDP country office teams, the evaluator revised the draft evaluation report to address all comments and concerns and finalized the Evaluation Report for UNDP approval. A briefing was provided with PowerPoint presentation to the Resident Representative. This briefing led to a further round of interviews and edits to this Evaluation Report that brought out more of the complex context for elections and electoral support in the KR 2020 to 2021.

Conventional limitations to the methodologies, data collection plan, and analysis plan for this evaluation were relevant and managed. The evaluator noted limitations of limited resources, limited data collection, limited ability to make causal inferences and challenges with attribution, recall bias, acquiescence bias, which led to focusing the evaluation on the contributions of the project to outputs. These limitations were managed successfully. Remote interviews in English and Russian set up with logistical support from the programme team were sufficient to reach key staff, stakeholders, and partners with the limited time, resolving this issue as well as limited data collection. Instead of assessing causation, the evaluation focuses on assessing the contributions of the programme to observed outputs and outcomes. Recall biases appeared to be few, as staff, partners, and stakeholders had and displayed clear knowledge of older as well as more recent elections and their administration. Enough valid and reliable data has been gathered and analysed to compile solid findings, draw conclusions, and make recommendations that target the purposes of the evaluation. A mix of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to gather evidence through purposive sampling as well as the triangulation of data from different methods and organisations has given the evaluator a sufficient understanding of how the project has been implemented and KESP’s achievements as needed to respond comprehensively to the purposes of the evaluation. The qualitative data gathered and used has been the numerical measures taken by the CEC, KESP, and electoral observers to assess their activities – as well as the aggregate electoral behaviour of the electorate.

The evaluator used Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) election observation mission (EOM) reports towards measuring KESP’s outcome statements and targets, which the ProDoc notes are meant to be measured by EOM reporting. OSCE ODIHR reports were selected as the most used across Europe and Eurasia and since ODIHIR monitored almost all of the electoral events over the period of programme implementation through similar methodologies for each mission and reports. This makes the findings of ODIHR more comparable, available, and more widely understood than the alternatives, including those from local observer organizations like the Krygyzstani CSO Common Cause. The long process of evaluating the KESP was adequate for the OSCE to deliver the final report for all of the electoral events observed 2020-2021.

# KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

***RELEVANCE***

Relevanceis the extent to which the project objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, regional, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.[[1]](#footnote-1) This category is where the first of the four main evaluation questions fits: Was the approach to achieve what the UNDP Programme intended to achieve appropriate?

The ProDoc, programme reporting, and other documents as well as interviews with UNDP country office and project management and staff, CEC management and staff, donor partners, and implementing partners and stakeholders explained and provided evidence that KESP was highly relevant for UNDP, the CEC, and other electoral stakeholders in Kyrgyzstan. Both written and interview sources made the case and provided evidence that increasing the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of electoral processes were relevant goals for the country and for UNDP and donor partners to support.

The programme was seen as highly relevant to the country as people have limited awareness of civic rights and responsibilities as well as governance; this left civic education (CE) much needed, and KESP focused in this direction. However, UNDP country office staff, KESP project staff, and CSO interviewees emphasized that a short-term ESP was not enough to address these problems in Kyrgyzstan, particularly for what was an increasingly polarized society with large numbers of people getting limited information in rural areas. Interviews with CEC management and consultants emphasized that the 2021 changes to the constitution created huge needs for additional civic education (CE) as people did not know or understand the new system, and there was little time to educate them prior to the 2021 Parliamentary elections.

KESP was seen by UNDP interviewees as fully in line with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and Country Programme Document (CPD), as well as aligned with the SDGs and UNDP Strategic Plan. The ProDoc linked the project to all four of these frameworks. The link emphasized was to the UNDAF Outcome “By 2022, institutions at all levels are more accountable and inclusive ensuring justice, human rights, gender equality and sustainable peace for all.” UNDP support for electoral cycle programming was recognized as central to the UN’s efforts to strengthen inclusive and accountable governance in the country by UNDP and KESP project staff interviewed.

KESP project staffs and CEC interviewees and one UNDP country office interviewee did not identify opportunities to further contribute to the goals of the UNDAF and CP through increasing the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of electoral processes that the programme had missed in design or implementation. On the other hand, other UNDP country office interviewees noted that it was fortuitous that the programme was in place as Kyrgyzstan had so many more elections than anticipated over 2020-2021. The programme thus could be seen as having made more contributions than had been expected to the UNDAF outcome. And KESP was seen as contributing to the CPD output on the provision of services and increasing government capacity to provide inclusive and participatory service delivery.

Another UNDP country office interviewee thought that the agency’s not linking the ESP to the approaches and activities of UNDP’s peacebuilding initiatives was “maybe” a missed opportunity. Peacebuilding, like elections, however has been a sensitive area and it was thus difficult for UNDP to link together these two sensitive issues, although UNDP tried to in its work with the government. And UNDP’s and the project’s approaches on hate speech and misinformation were seen as one of the things that could potentially have been amplified.

The timing of the programme was however seen as a missed opportunity by some UNDP country office, KESP project, and CEC interviewees, who noted that the programme began operations and implementation too close in time to the October Parliamentary elections to be able to deliver completely on the technological upgrades the CEC sought. And by 2022, the timing was suboptimal for providing equipment upgrades to the CEC as the next electoral events (the 2026 Parliamentary election) was too far off to provide equipment in advance at this time.

CEC interviewees valued and appreciated the partnership with UNDP through KESP and how the project helped meet country priorities. National priorities cited that KESP supported were from the National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic 2018-2040 included a task of “improving competitive election mechanisms;” KESP fit exactly into the strategy’s recognition that “There is a need to increase importance of election programs and responsibility for their implementation.”

The ProDoc, programme reporting, and other documents as well as interviews with KESP project and UNDP country office management and staff, CEC management and staff, donor partners, and IPs and stakeholders explained and provided evidence that KESP was designed with attention to the other donor and national government support provided for elections and implemented in ways that sought and strengthened coherence among partners supporting elections in Kyrgyzstan. KESP was seen as aligned with and cooperating with the right partner for electoral administration – the CEC – and to have established and used coordination platforms with other donors and their IPs in elections. Coherence was seen as challenged by the country having four elections and a referendum over 2020-2021 rather than the two originally planned.

Having a large project with linked components was seen as boosting coherence (as well as effectiveness and efficiency) by UNDP country office and KESP project staff interviewees.

Interviews with UNDP and other stakeholders identified ways that the programme could have been implemented with more coherence, particularly in 2020. KESP management was seen by some interviewees as having not been transparent and cooperative enough with other electoral support providers in what were turbulent times. These weaknesses in transparency and cooperation between the programme and the OSCE and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as well as with its IP IFES reportedly made the development and implementation of their support for electoral activities more challenging for these organizations. UNDP management noted that they had identified and addressed these issues with the programme and that transparency and cooperation had improved as a consequence. OSCE and USAID also noted that UNDP had addressed these issues with KESP; coherence was seen as stronger in support for the 2021 parliamentary elections and afterwards with better communications among electoral support providers.

In conclusion, the analysis of these findings suggests that the approach of KESP was relevant and appropriate to achieve the Programme’s objectives.

***EFFECTIVENESS***

Effectivenessis the extent to which the project achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups. This category is where the second of the four main evaluation questions fits: to what extent has the Programme achieved its intended objectives? In addition, the third main question, to what extent has the Programme been able to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic and support country’s preparedness, response and recovery process, is about a particular type of effectiveness. And part of the fourth main question, factors that contributed to or hindered Programme’s performance, address effectiveness as well.

Programme reporting and other documents as well as interviews with KESP project staff and UNDP country office management and staff, CEC management and staff, donor partners, and IPs and stakeholders explained and provided evidence that KESP had worked towards and reached activity-level results across the three original outputs of the programme and the added output 4 for PPE.

Table 1 below characterizes KESP achievements by indicators. Annual project reporting for 2020 and 2021 covers results activity by activity under the outputs and does not discuss the targets from the results framework in the ProDoc or whether they have been achieved. UNDP also did not develop indicators for KESP sub-outputs. Indicators for outputs are discussed in the impact section below. These activity-level data suggest that KESP achieved or exceeded its output targets for 17 of the 25 enumerated activities, with another six likely achieved or close to achieved since some activity level targets were not clear in the ProDoc or activities and indicators changed. As KESP adapted to the changing realities in Kyrgyzstan over 2020 and 2021, the ways the programme developed and implemented activities under these categories were sometimes changed in ways that were no longer measured towards meeting the targets set in the ProDoc. And KESP did not implement some activities in 2021 as implemented by USAID partners instead. Not meeting these targets was warranted as not necessary since the CEC and electoral stakeholders were supported by other providers. The evidence presented in this table thus suggests KESP effectiveness was solid, with all outputs thus exceeded or achieved, close to/likely achieved, or were implemented by other providers rather than KESP.

INSERT TABLE 1

**Table 1: KESP Indicators and Evaluator’s Assessment**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **EXPECTED OUTPUTS** | **ACTIVITIES** | **INDICATORS** | **DATA SOURCES** | **REPORTED** | **TARGET** | **ASSESSMENT** |
| **Output 1:** The integrity, efficiency and inclusiveness of the electoral operations are enhanced | | **Indicator 1:** Election observer reports concluded elections were transparent and inclusive | OSCE ODIHR reports, statements | Not clearly stated | Yes | **Not achieved** |
|  | **Sub-output 1: Support the process of the transfer of responsibilities from the SRS to the CEC** | | | | | |
| 1.1.1: Conduct inventory analysis of IT Electoral Equipment and develop a Sustainability Strategy for the use of this equipment | Inventory analysis of IT Electoral Equipment conducted and Sustainability Strategy for the use of equipment developed | KESP Consolidated Progress Report December 2020 | Yes | Yes | **Achieved** |
| 1.1.2: Training of CEC staff on increased inclusiveness of the voters’ list (2020), Capacity building for CEC to improve the inclusiveness of the voters’ list (2021) | Number of trained CEC staff on increased inclusiveness of voter list  Reported on mobile campaign 2021 | 2020, 2021 KESP reports | 6491 Sep 2020 | 9,000 | **Close to achieved** (difficult to measure as changed) |
| 1.1.3: Support the deployment of mobile voter registration teams to Eurasian Economic Union countries and studying additional opportunities for organization of out-of-country voting | Number of voters registered in Russian Federation and Kazakhstan  2021 mobile campaign could fit here (but not used by KESP) | 2020 KESP report | 49479 Jan 2021 | 1000 | **Exceeded** |
| 1.1.4: Procurement of elections equipment | Electoral equipment procured, installed and operational | 2020 KESP report | 2020 more than 5500, but not combo devices  2021/22 procurement not successful | 2375 | **Close to achieved** (# high although different types, less done than planned) |
| 1.1.5: Training on equipment use | Number of trained CEC staff on equipment procured | 2020 KESP report | 6491 Sep 2020 | 9,000 | **Close to achieved** |
| 1.1.6 Strengthening Capacity of the CEC on Cybersecurity | Number of trained CEC staff on Cybersecurity and Cyberhygine | 2020 KESP report | 20,500 2020 | 9,000 | **Exceeded** |
| **Sub-output 1.2 Support to enhance the integrity of the elections through transparency of campaign finance** | | | | | |
| 1.2.1: Public dialogue on electoral integrity and transparency of campaign finance | Number of participants of roundtables on electoral integrity | 2020 KESP report | 125 2020  161 2022 | 300 | **Exceeded** |
| 1.2.2. Development of the electronic platform on campaign finance reporting | Electronic platform on campaign finance reporting is developed, installed and functional | 2020 KESP report | Yes 2020 | yes | **Achieved** |
| 1.2.3 Training of political parties on campaign finance regulations and reporting | Number of political parties’ representatives trained on campaign finance regulations and reporting | 2020 KESP report | 249 2020 | 300 | **Close to achieved** |
| 1.2.4: Training of CSOs and conducting awareness-raising seminars for media representatives on monitoring of electoral campaign finance | Number of CSOs activists trained on monitoring of electoral campaign finance | 2020 KESP report | 550 | 100 | **Exceeded** |
| 1.2.5 Providing technical assistance and advisory support to the CEC in strengthening capacity on overseeing campaign finance | Number campaign finance procedures improved | 2020 KESP report, Project staff | Developed system, no # reported 2020 | 5 | **Achieved** |
| **Output 2: The capacity of the key counterparts in conducting public outreach and external communication, including engagement with civil society, media and other key electoral stakeholders, is enhanced** | | **Election observer reports concluded participation of socially vulnerable groups increased** | OSCE ODIHR | Not clearly stated | Yes | **Not achieved** |
| **Sub-Output 2.1 - Support to the Civic Education Center to ensure that all electoral stakeholders are informed and trained** | | | | | | |
| **Output 3: The capacity of the CEC and other key stakeholders to identify, manage and respond to electoral violence is enhanced** | 2.1.1: Facilitate the implementation of the action plan for the Civic Education Centre | Number of training materials developed | 2020, 2021 KESP reports, 2022 interviews | Not counted, 2020 support; used for CE but not counted 2021 | 10 | **Likely achieved** (not precise) |
| 2.1.2: Develop e-learnings for enhanced training capacity | Number of e-learning courses developed | 2020 KESP report  2022 interviews | Produced many on-line trainings | 5 | **Exceeded** |
| 2.1.3: Conducting workshops for the CEC staff, civil society, media and political parties’ representatives | Number of stakeholders trained | 2021 KESP report, 2022 interviews | 70 2021 BRIDGE trainees + 2022 | 100 | **Exceeded** |
| **Sub-Output 2.1 Support to the Civic Education Centre to ensure that all electoral stakeholders are informed and trained** | | | | | |
| 2.2.1: Develop and support implementation of a national campaign on inclusiveness and women’s participation & representation | Number of educational materials developed and disseminated | 2020 KESP report | 2020 drafted strategy, public outreach. 9 online talks | 10 | **Exceeded** |
| 2.2.2: Develop a CEC Hotline for female candidates & voters | CEC hotline for female candidates and voters installed and operational | 2020, 2021 KESP reports | 2020, 2021 (for migrants too) | yes | **Achieved** |
| 2.2.3: Develop and support implementation of a national campaign on the prevention and suppression of violations of the citizen’s electoral rights and electoral law | Number of educational materials developed and disseminated | 2020, 2021 KESP reports | Pursued activity differently  2020, 2021 social media approach | 10 | **Likely exceeded,** Done differently |
| 2.2.4: Develop and support implementation of a voter education campaign on election dispute resolution | Number of educational materials developed and disseminated | 2020 KESP report | Pursued activity differently  2020 10 trainings | 10 | **Achieved** |
| 2.2.5: Develop and implement an information campaign regarding registration for migrants in Eurasian Economic Union countries | Number of educational materials developed and disseminated | 2020, 2021 KESP reports | Pursued activity differently 2020  2020 hotline, mobile teams | 10 | **Likely exceeded** based on 2020 coverage |
|  | **Election observer reports concluded elections were peaceful.** | OSCE ODIHR | Not clearly stated | Yes | **Not achieved** |
| **Sub-output 3.1 The capacity of the CEC and its partners to prevent electoral violence through a monitoring and early warning early response system (EWER)** | | | | | |
| 3.1.1 Enhance capacity of CEC and its partners to prevent electoral violence through a monitoring and early warning and response system (EWER) | *Sub-output different from ProDoc; indicator not developed* | 2021 KESP report | Managed complaints through CGRR | Not clear | **Achieved** |
| **Sub-Output 3.3: Enhance the security of electoral process** | | | | | |
| 3.3.1 Training on human rights and electoral security for Security Forces | Number of Security Forces officers trained | 2020, 2021 KESP Reports | 2020 557  2021 690 | 1000 | **Exceeded** |
| 3.3.2 Training on hate speech for criminal justice actors, specifically tailored to election contexts | Number of law enforcement officials trained | 2020 KESP report | 2020 240 | 1000 | **Not achieved** as USAID supported for 2021 |
| 3.3.3 Development of specific guidance documents on hate speech prevention | Specific guidance documents on hate speech prevention developed and disseminated among public officials | 2020 KESP report | Through Kyrgyz Association of Women Judges | Yes | **Achieved** 2020, for 2021 supported by USAID |
| **Outcome 4 (Added 2021) – COVID-19 Mitigation Measures** | | | | | | |
|  | 4 Procurement of PPE | Indicator not developed | 2021 KESP report | 892 k masks |  | **Likely achieved** |

Even with these achievements, however, the electoral environment and system were widely seen as troubled and worsening. While KESP activities were successfully carried out, these activities did not reach the impact sought in some areas – and the environment for transparent, inclusive elections around activities deteriorated significantly. For example. political finance training for political parties was seen as important and carried out to meet the needs of parties to comply with new CEC-implemented regulations. However, the training did not address vote buying. The content of the training did cover the use of administrative resources. However, problem related to the misuse of administrative resources continued to blight elections, although fewer violations were noted relative to the past in 2021.[[2]](#footnote-2) Activity-level successes were seen as insufficient to address systemic problems in Kyrgyzstan.

Some activities implemented in 2021 were seen as particularly relevant as well as effective based on the problems that led to the annulment of the 2020 Parliamentary elections. CEC interviews praised the KESP work with law enforcement organs as helping address the problems that existed then through the courts in 2021. And the February 2022 bi elections were observed to have fewer problems, with the one complaint registered managed by law enforcement organs on their own in the wake of this KESP training and support.

KESP requested that IOM develop a proposal for potential support to reach Kyrgyzstani migrants abroad. IOM developed a proposal which was reviewed by KESP prior to endorsement. IOM worked closely with the CEC, particularly the chair, to develop strong on-line and social media ways to communicate with the diaspora towards increasing voter registration. Support for voter registration for Kygyzstanis abroad was notable for increasing the number of registered voters dramatically, far more than anticipated in the target set in the ProDoc. The number of overseas voters registered to vote quadrupled from 18,580 to 84,128 in the period between October 2017 to November 2021 with the support of the project. This expansion continued to support greater participation of this large. marginalised group in elections to almost 90,000. IOM reported strong results in its reports to KESP. KESP captured this trend in its final report.

Table 2: Number of overseas voters registered to vote

Chart, line chart

Description automatically generated

Source: UNDP Kyrgyzstan Electoral Support Programme Annual Report 2021, p. 20.

Other activities were seen as particularly important because of the pace of change in electoral law and the electoral system, which led to the need to educate key electoral participants and stakeholders in the new practices and systems prior to elections. For instance, KESP supported trainings conducted in 8 different regions before the parliamentary election in November 2021 that reached in total 690 participants from political parties and for civil society organizations (CSOs) on the changed electoral system, laws and regulations. CSO, political party, CEC and KESP staff interviews noted that the wide-ranging trainings reached large numbers of key actors through on and off-line efforts providing them with accurate information that they needed to meet their legal obligations, compete in elections, and report on and spread correct information about elections.

Project partners, the CEC, and KESP reported working well together to assure that unified, correct CE content was disseminated, with CEC approval of all CE materials and messaging. Some partners noted however that the short-time period for dissemination and close timing of elections made dissemination less effective.

A major change in the programme in both 2020 and under the extension in 2022 has been with the procurement and modernization of technology and equipment for registration and voting. As KESP began implementation, KESP took an inventory and conducted an assessment of the CEC’s existing technology, noting also that there was only a short time remaining before the October 2020 parliamentary elections. KESP determined based on this assessment and timing that there was not enough time to implement the CEC’s preferred option of procuring and training in new combination devices with custom software for biometric registration as well as that updating and adding to the CEC’s existing technology was feasible instead. While a disappointment to the CEC, the assessment and discussions around international best practices of not introducing new technologies just prior to election events was understood by CEC management. With CEC approval, KESP thus procured and supported training in additional discrete technology (laptops, printers, scanners, and more) to expand the CEC’s existing technical capacity to conduct biometric voter registration and voting instead of pursuing the original plan to provide different technology to the CEC. While KESP was successful in meeting its activity targets, the results in the upgrading of the CEC’s ICT were thus less than planned in the ProDoc and less than the extent anticipated by the CEC. However. this solution also served the rest of the government of the KR and was seen as more effective in this respect by UNDP country office staff and KESP staff.

ICT provision work of the programme in 2021 was also challenging. KESP staff, recognizing the needs of the CE Centre, proposed to use these resources towards equipping the Centre. This required engagement with donors to reallocate resources. While the Embassy of Japan in Kyrgyzstan initially agreed to reallocate budget from equipment to civic education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan declined to support the change. This sequence of events led to dissatisfaction from CEC, which negatively impacted KESP’s relationships with CEC and project delivery.

In 2022 with the extension of KESP, the CEC hoped for project support to upgrade electoral technology. But as in 2020, the time available for UNDP to assess needs and possibilities and reach a consensus with the CEC and donor (the Government of Japan) – plus now the long time period before the next electoral event – mitigated against large-scale project procurement of new technology for the CEC. As UNDP country office and KESP project staff interviews noted, the changing pace of IT meant that a system procured in spring 2022 would likely be obsolete by the time the next electoral cycle in the country gathers momentum towards Parliamentary elections in 2026 and presidential elections in 2027. Thus UNDP CO staff and KESP project staff determined that new IT was not warranted at this time, a decision that the CEC reluctantly agreed with. UNDP is thus in the process of returning the unexpended funds for this equipment to the Government of Japan. The plans for KESP to deliver more modern technology to support the CEC were thus again not met to the extent planned in the ProDoc or anticipated by the CEC and donors.

Some other activities were perceived as coming too late in the electoral cycle or too close to election day to be as effective or have as big an impact as intended. One interviewee noted video courses through in 2021 came too late to really be successful towards these elections. Reportedly the challenges of obtaining CEC approval for the content for multiple steps in course development, when decision making was too centralized in the CEC as well as during an intense working time in their preparations for elections left decisions not made in a timely way by the CEC. This delayed production and the courses. The project reported having developed a procedure that was followed after this experience to not need multiple meetings with the CEC Chair to develop videos in an effort to speed up the process. Instead the CEC agreed with KESP that courses could be developed, vetted, and approved by the CEC Advisor and CE Center to expedite production. However this adaptation was not successful as these staff and the centre were not able to engage in a timely way as they were fully engaged in preparations for the November 2021 elections. And some interviewees noted ways that dissemination of information on-line was less successful, as on-line methods were sometimes argued to “not be much use” or “not get much of an audience.” Interviewees noted however, that methods of using multiple methods for information dissemination – through both on-line and in-person methods as well as multiple CSOs and the CEC – were important as multiple different ways were needed to support successful information dissemination.

Interviews with the CEC, IPs, and KESP consultants noted ways the assistance of the programme was able to meet activity objectives and spread information to the public and targeted audiences in a wide range of areas. These areas were notably campaign finance regulation, training and outreach, out of country registration and voting, electoral security and hate speech (2020). The programme’s ways of working with a variety of IPs, each with a different set of ways to encourage the independent production and sharing of social media context (like the Youth Laboratory), was viewed as a good way to reach citizens, particularly young people, in a range of different ways.

UNDP country office and KESP project staff as well as donor, CEC, and electoral stakeholders interviewed emphasized that the situation in Kyrgyzstan had been challenging over 2020 and 2021, with the unexpected changes made to the electoral system and unanticipated electoral processes after the annulment of the October 2020 parliamentary elections. These changes required that UNDP adapt and change rapidly, which KESP project staff worked hard to do without time to prepare and plan for a new system. More than one interviewee noted that the October 2020 parliamentary elections, despite provoking the uprising and being then annulled, were “perhaps” the best organized and well-prepared elections that the CEC had ever done and that these elections had been the most capably administered in the country’s history. Yet the turmoil after the elections and annulment resulted in EOMs substantially overlooking the strength of electoral administration.

Partnering with the CEC was seen as posing challenges for programme effectiveness with frequent, late or last minute needs or changes sought by the CEC to planned KESP activities. Interviewees noted ways that these changes and needs either negatively affected activity achievements by affecting how activities were planned and implemented, the number and particular participants in activities, and the ability of the programme to focus with partners on sustaining results of activities.

KESP management used the programme board for accountability and reported to the board. Changes were requested and made to the programme with board concurrence, often through electronic correspondence. This procedure was effective, for example in obtaining approval to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic and obtain PPE for the presidential elections and in a larger scale for the 2021 Parliamentary elections. Donor partners appreciated board meetings as an opportunity to ask the CEC chair questions directly and valued the clear ways the chair discussed and addressed issues. The instability in the country led to postponements and rescheduling of board meetings. Donors noted that they already collaborated on electoral assistance with or without the programme.

UNDP CO interviewees noted monitoring and managing risks through CO staff and through engagement with KESP project staff. Meetings were held as often as weekly as a UN group on electoral assistance and at UNDP in the time periods that electoral risks were seen as most sensitive, such as the periods immediately before elections. These weekly meetings were seen as a good practice to replicate in the future for UN agencies. The donor coordination platform, particularly the working group on electoral assistance, was used to meet regularly with development partners; the full engagement of the CEC chair and her briefings were seen as particularly useful to share information and progress.

Donors noted and praised the KESP project team’s flexibility in adapting to the changed context of elections in Kyrgyzstan 2020-2021. One of the key adaptations was to support elections through the provision of PPE for the CEC to reduce the potential spread of COVID through electoral processes. KESP provided some PPE for the January 2021 Presidential election and procured almost USD 900 thousand worth of masks for the 2021 Parliamentary elections. Donor partners were also flexible in supporting these changes as needed under COVID-19 conditions. These items were particularly difficult for KESP to procure and deliver in the context of closed borders and pandemic-driven global shortages, particularly of PPE. UNDP country office and project procurement and management were praised for managing all the necessary processes, including at the highest levels, to succeed in getting these items through international border blockages. In adapting, some interviewees noted that objectives of the programme were minimized or “got lost a bit.” The need to support CEC delivery of elections led to KESP focusing on this area, sometimes some interviewees felt, to the cost of further work that was needed on inclusion.

It is not clear that project staff or management used the Results Framework in the ProDoc to manage for results in the dynamic, changing conditions for elections in the KR. Donor reporting focused on activities; donors noted reporting was on time, but focused on activity-level rather than output-level reporting. Some donors noted that analysis and assessment of outcomes and bigger picture results would have improved reporting. KESP did not develop ways to monitor or report on outputs and sub-outputs.

KESP activities were recognized to have addressed gender issues, although some partners and stakeholders noted that gender was not the “most prominent aspect” of KESP. KESP activities that supported PECs and TECs worked extensively with women as the preponderance of electoral staff at these levels of electoral administration. The leadership of women in electoral administration, from the Chair of the CEC herself to lower-level electoral commissions, was noted by in reporting and interviews. The electoral frameworks used in Kyrgyzstan, as in other countries, can mandate quotas for women that are proven to work to increase the representation of women in elected office. For instance, the result of the local elections held in April was successful in increasing number of women deputies from 9% to 38%, compared to the previous local elections. The proportion of women MPs only increased 3% (from 17% to 20%) in the parliamentary elections over 2017 to 2021. Local election legislation included a quota for women, while the new parliamentary election legislation did not, with predictable effects. This increase in representation of women in the national parliament was still progress for gender equality. And gender equality aligned with SDG 5 was identified as one of the KR’s national priority goals.

KESP partnered with UN Women towards increasing women’s leadership and political empowerment. UN Women also had their own initiatives in this area but reported in interviews that UNDP’s efforts through KESP had more funding during this period for women’s empowerment beyond the activities under KESP implemented by UN Women. UN Women reported that the entity contributed some of its own funds to the activity funded by KESP through UN Women towards understanding the importance of having and using a gender quota towards electing more women to parliament. UN Women interviews noted that the activity was “very loud” and “very successful” as the attention the forum on gender quotas drew was substantial and raised the profile of this idea as well as understanding of the importance of a quota substantially. UN Women reported that coming together with UNDP through KESP, work with the CEC (and particularly the chair) as well as through work with other partners was successful in raising awareness of the importance of the gender quota. A gender quota was adopted and used for local elections to good effect. On the other hand, UN Women recognized that the electoral system changes made outside of the scope of the KESP project inhibited the effective use of a gender quota to raise the number of women MPs at the national level. Nevertheless, from a low in 2020, the number of women in parliament grew slightly in 2021 (although remained substantially below the targeted 30% level).

Graph 1: Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%) in the KR

Chart, line chart

Description automatically generated

Source: World Bank 2022.

The main challenges the programme faced were the short time period between the start of the programme and the first 2020 Parliamentary elections, the rapid pace of political change and electoral events afterwards, the limitations of the CEC as the main partner in planning, and COVID-19. KESP worked to overcome these challenges by adjusting what could be delivered in equipment for the CEC under these conditions, adjusting programme delivery to work with some but not all of the new electoral processes that accompanied the turmoil in politics, rapid, intense staff work to try to work with these limitations in CEC operations, working hard to maintain communication and engagement with the CEC, donors, and electoral stakeholders, and by doing more activities remotely as well as providing PPE to support critical electoral activities. UNDP, while supporting key partner CEC, was not willing to support electoral events that were seen by the UN and key international partners as not conducted in sufficiently democratic manner such as the referendum and the 2021 Presidential election. KESP project management and UNDP CO management were able to not provide support for these electoral events but nevertheless capable of maintaining their partnership with the CEC, demonstrating the strength of the relationship.

In conclusion, the analysis of these findings suggests that KESP achieved most of its outputs; however the overall trajectory of the country 2020-2021 and electoral events had a larger effect on the electoral system and processes that went against KESP goals in important ways. The findings demonstrate that the Programme was able to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic conditions in its operations and provided important PPE support to enable elections to be held during the pandemic, thus providing critical support to the country’s response to COVID-19 at this critical time for elections.

Key factors that contributed to the Programme’s performance identified above included working with and through the CEC, not working only with the CEC but also bringing CSOs in as IPs, addressing important needs in the context of a changing and changed electoral system, working successfully through remote methods, the flexibility of KESP project staff and their willingness to work intensively when needed, and KESP supporting critical electoral events and reaching large marginalized populations (such as the large number of migrants that are not registered to vote).

Factors that hindered Programme’s performance were also identified, including the short time period for programme operations before elections, the pace of electoral events and their unexpected nature, changes to the electoral system, challenges maintaining relationships with the CEC as donor decisions changed, adapting to COVID-19 realities and using more remote methods, and challenges in working with the CEC, including limited planning by the CEC, centralized CEC decision making and late decision making.

***EFFICIENCY***

Efficiency is the extent to which the project delivers or is likely to deliver results in an economic and timely way.

KESP project staff developed and used workplans and reportedly allocated and used programme funds per these agreed plans. KESP support was seen as efficient though its work with the key institution for the administration of elections, the CEC. However to have more efficiency in its reach to citizens, some donors noted that the programme needed more ways to work to effectively and efficiently reach citizens. This was one of the reasons that the project also implemented activities with CSOs. The political turmoil in the country was seen as having impeded efficiency, as it was sometimes not clear how the main partner the CEC would operate and be managed. One IP had their contract cancelled in one of these periods to their dismay, as they reportedly continued to work while KESP had instructed the partner to halt activities during uncertain times. The IP saw this as inefficient, and as a cost to the reputation of their CSO. KESP project management noted that this was an example of good management, as activities needed to be paused under those conditions.

Donors noted that the KESP project staff “changed completely” or had “high turnover.” While donors expressed no issues with KESP project staff, this level of turnover led to concerns about efficiency as donors expected that the staff time needed to learn the programme and understand how to adapt KESP to the rapidly changing context must have been extensive. The CEC was seen as posing challenges for efficiency with frequent, late or last minute needs or changes to planned activities. These changes, for example, led to less and different participation and participants than planned, which then increased the cost of activities per participants (which was less efficient – as well as less effective as the activity reached a smaller number of participants at or near the cost planned to reach a larger number of participants). KESP project staff were able to manage these difficulties, but as an efficiency cost – and with frustrations among KESP team members. Late or inadequate planning from the CEC led to extra time pressure on KESP project staff, which some felt the CEC did not appreciate. KESP managed relationships with the CEC by funneling contacts through programme management, to leave finance, procurement, and other staff better able to use regular UNDP programme operations and procedures even under time pressure from CEC. Programme staff appreciated the management efforts of the UNDP CO and KESP project managers in this regard. Programme staff still had to sometimes act extremely quickly, after working hours or on holidays, or for intense prolonged periods of time to deliver on KESP activities.

The KESP team reported working well together with strict management under the stress of frequent elections. This was seen as especially important while working remotely under COVID conditions when extra effort and stronger communications were needed to work well together while not in the same office. Periods without elections did not have a strict a schedule or procedures for teamwork. This sometimes reportedly reduced the level of programme coordination, including the extent of supervision by KESP of consultants.

KESP modalities of supporting national consultants to provide key expertise to the CEC was seen as an efficient as well as effective way to deliver support by these consultants, the CEC, and KESP in interviews.

KESP was seen by UN partners in interviews as having been strong in coordination and collaboration with UN partners in the implementation of UN Women and IOM activities. UN Women and IOM reported using their own systems and processes in efficient ways in implementation.

Program support was seen as efficient in reaching the CEC when there were not elections; at these times, the activities of the CEC were limited by the lack of CEC funds. This the CEC noted made it challenging to regulate parties and do CE when there were not elections. Project support was thus seen as particularly efficient by helping the CEC in these periods when the institution lacked resources of its own.

KESP activities used a range of technologies to reach people. This was seen as an efficient way to proceed, for example on making it possible for citizens to report violations of electoral laws and regulations. Having ways that were more modern and not on paper were seen by the CEC and consultants as more efficient. Information technologies were also seen as the way to communicate from the CEC to law enforcement organs on these violations.

Some KESP-supported trainings were singled out as excellent by interviewee beneficiaries. Political finance training for political parties was seen for example by participants as really well done. Activity 1.2.3 (training of political parties on campaign finance regulations and reporting) before the elections in April and in 2021 reached in 514 training participants between February and March, and then 722 participants from September to October 2021. Some other events were seen as particularly efficient as done with more time, such as mock elections at universities.

Some activities reached dramatically more beneficiaries than anticipated and were thus highly efficient at reaching beneficiaries. IOM targeted increasing the number of migrants abroad registered to vote by 5,000; instead IOM’s efforts contributed to an increase in Kyrgyzstani migrants abroad being registered to vote that approached 90,000 people.

The limited gender quota for the 2021 parliamentary elections, which was utilized only for the party-list candidates but not the single-member district candidates, impeded the election of women to Parliament and the efficiency of KESP efforts to promote the inclusion of women. On the other hand, with a proportional system and the gender quota in place for local elections, women did much better in winning elections and project assistance to them was more efficient (as well as effective) as there was more time to prepare and the electoral legislation was not changed before the election (leaving candidates and prospective candidates little time to adjust, as was the case with the 2021 parliamentary elections).

UNDP country office and KESP project management and staff felt the program had adjusted well to the changed environment. Donor partners and stakeholders noted that it was difficult to assess how well KESP had reacted to the changed circumstances after the annulment of the October 2020 parliamentary elections and change of electoral system and electoral processes.

Donors expressed some concerns about whether coordination had been strong enough to support efficient delivery when KESP worked in areas that other UN agencies and donor partners were working, such as capacity building for women candidates for the local elections. However the effectiveness of KESP and other partners was seen in this area, as many women were capacitated and mentored – and since many women were elected with the support of the quota for local *keneshes*. The Programme board was used more to support effectiveness and for donor coordination than towards more efficient delivery. This was seen as especially important for an ESP as inherently sensitive and political, with lots of coordination with Embassies required.

Programme monitoring was one of the main tasks of the management of KESP management and staff; The CTA and KESP project staff reportedly did substantial monitoring to validate activities and collect data.

Some activities were perceived as having limited effectiveness and were thus seen as not very efficient by donors. Some donors and partners were skeptical of the value of the hotlines, as the volume of calls was viewed as too few in number to have made the activity worthwhile in the eyes of some donors. KESP 2020 and 2021 reporting notes reaching thousands of people through the hotlines however, far more than were recognized by the donor or noted in the interview.

***SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT***

Sustainabilityis the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue after completion of the project. This category is the place to address the last part of the fourth main question from the ToR, factors that contributed to or hindered the sustainability of results.

KESP support for the CEC was recognized as supporting an institution and capacity building approach towards sustainability. The CEC was recognized to have institutionalized key changes supported by the previous KESP II support and KESP to support the whole electoral process – from registration to the dissemination of election results. KESP, UNDP, and CEC interviews emphasized that Kyrgyzstan now had a well-designed transparent electoral process with substantial support from UNDP through successive ESPs. However the expectation of partners, donors, the CEC, and UNDP was that Kyrgyzstan and the CEC would benefit from a successor ESP and that such a project was likely for the next electoral cycle. An exit strategy for support to the CEC and inclusive, transparent electoral processes in the KR was not seen as warranted as both the institution and country need further support.

Donors recognized issues with the sustainability of programme results. Donors noted that the late launch of the CE Centre, despite the fact that it had been included in KESP from the outset, hampered sustainability of efforts in inclusion and CE. Donor staff noted that ESP activities could be designed towards greater sustainability through a focus on working with existing CSOs rather than developing new institutions like the CE Centre within the CEC. The Centre was recognized as an important step to ensure consistent CEC engagement with and ownership of CE. Donors thought continued engagement with the CEC remained important to strengthen sustainability of CEC’s improved capacity. KESP support for the Centre through national consultants was seen as important in start up, but not as a sustainable modality for the Centre. Having the Centre direction and consultants working only through salaries supported by KESP was recognized as not being sustainable by the Centre.

The CEC and some electoral stakeholders noted that now, in between electoral events (as no national elections were anticipated at this point in the cycle until 2025), there was space to work more extensively, inclusively, and sustainably on CE without the press of impending scheduled elections.

Impact is the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. Evaluating impact in March 2022 is challenging as there has been little time for KESP activities and outputs to generate outcomes and larger impacts.

KESP set out an indicator for each of its three expected outputs in the ProDoc. These outputs are not really long-term however but instead were within the two-year time period of KESP implementation. The targets for these indicators established what impact was sought from KESP at the time of signature. Each was to be measured by election observer reports for specific elections. The ProDoc anticipated the KR would hold two elections during implementation, a parliamentary election and elections for local *keneshes*. Observation reports from these two elections which be used for these measurements. Instead, the 2020-2021 electoral cycle wound up having two parliamentary, one presidential, one local election plus a referendum.

The evaluation has used the assessments of the OSCE ODIHR missions as the most credible, standard observer group with the widest coverage of elections in the KR as noted in the methodology section. However, ODIHR had limited coverage of these electoral events; the OSCE did not observe the referendum, reportedly due to lacking funding for this unanticipated election with such a brief lead time from announcement to referendum balloting. And KESP did not support this referendum as the processes behind calling and holding the referendum did not meet global standards and good practices in democratic elections. KESP did not support the pre-term presidential election for similar reasons. Although KESP supported the local elections, the OSCE by mandate does not observe local elections. Thus there is no OSCE report to use to assess the 2021 local election. OSCE reports on the two parliamentary elections in 2020 and 2021 are thus used to assess the three expected output-level indicators from the ProDoc for the evaluation. For 2020, the final report was used throughout the evaluation; for 2021, the evaluation used the Interim Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions until the 26 May 2022 publication of the Final Report.

For *Output 1, integrity, efficiency and inclusiveness of the electoral operations enhanced*, the indicator suggested was “election observer reports concluded elections were transparent and inclusive.” The Final Report for the October 2020 elections noted that “the elections were efficiently administered” (1) while noting ways that the elections were administered more transparently – such as on changing addresses of voters (8), there were also areas where transparency was noted to have been insufficient - such as on the key decision to annul the election results (7) and campaign financing (12-13). The ODIHR report on the October 2020 elections noted efforts to increase the inclusivity of the voter register, but that almost half a million citizens working abroad had not been registered biometrically which therefore disenfranchised them as a problem for inclusion (which led “the CEC introduced additional transparency mechanisms in administering voter registration, and 441,000 voters used the right to temporarily change their voting address. Parties and candidates expressed serious concerns about the misuse of this mechanism alleging a vote buying scheme. (1). For 2021, ODIHR concluded that the “technical aspects of the elections were handled by the election administration in an efficient way (3).” But the elections were not seen as transparent enough in terms of the CEC making public its decisions and electoral regulations fast enough or in campaign finance where issues were noted. And “The vote count was assessed negatively in over one third of observations” which the ODIHR report summarized as “of serious concern” (3). “Despite continuous efforts made by the authorities, some 290,000 voters mostly living abroad, not undergone biometric registration and remain disenfranchised (4).” This is seen as a limitation on the inclusivity of the voter register. ODIHR reports are not as clear as is ideal in assessing the indicator. But on balance, while noting efficiency, issues are written up in terms of the transparency and inclusiveness of the elections. It appears that the target and output are thus **not achieved.**

*Output 2, capacity of the key counterparts in conducting public outreach and external communication, including engagement with civil society, media and other key electoral stakeholders, enhanced*, had an indicator of “election observer reports concluded participation of socially vulnerable groups increased.” ODIHR focused on the participation of national minorities in reports; KESP did not have an explicit focus on ethnic minorities in its activities (although activities against hate speech and supporting civic education center are related). The Final Report for the October 2020 elections did not make an authoritative statement about whether the participation of socially vulnerable groups had increased. The overall turnout for the 2020 parliamentary election was 56%. For 2021, ODIHR noted the underrepresentation of women and national minorities in electoral administration at the DEC level and the underrepresentation of minorities at the PEC level (which was some 70% women). The turn to single-member districts was recognized as having reduced the participation of women and minorities as candidates for these seats. In 2021, the CEC published materials in the Uzbek language in the areas of concentrated settlement of the Uzbek community (18). Overall 2021 parliamentary election turnout as announced by the CEC of 34.6% of registered voters was seen as disappointing. OSCE ODIHR reports are not as clear as is ideal in assessing the indicator “participation of socially vulnerable groups increased”. But on balance, the substantial decline in voter turn out suggests that the indicator is thus **not achieved**. Disappointing output level measures however may masque solid delivery on KESP activities and stronger capacity based on programme outputs at the CEC and among other electoral stakeholders. However these effects were overwhelmed by the overall negative trajectory of the political transformation of the country with and since the annulled 2020 parliamentary elections, including the changes to the political and electoral systems, as noted by EOM reports.

*Output 3, capacity of the CEC and other key stakeholders to identify, manage and respond to electoral violence enhanced*, had an indicator of “election observer reports concluded elections were peaceful.” Despite the activity-level successes discussed in the effectiveness section above, some violence was noted in electoral campaigns and then the riots and unrest after the October 2020 Parliamentary elections led observer reports to note the 2020 elections were not peaceful. The interim OSCE ODIHIR report for the 2021 election noted that “election day was peaceful” and did not note violence in the campaign period or after the election (19) although threats and intimidation were noted. With the 2020 elections annulled after post-election violence, the output must be considered **not achieved**.

Although these output measures from the ProDoc are difficult to use with precision, these measures suggest limited KESP impact irrespective of successfully reaching almost all output targets and having high effectiveness. Interviews with donors, UNDP CO staff, KESP project staff, and implementing partners suggested that the activities of KESP under these three outputs had substantial results as discussed in effectiveness towards the three outputs of the programme and through the provision of PPE in the effectiveness section above. However, the overall political trajectory of the country and the ways the electoral system was changed by the forces in power after the annulled 2020 Parliamentary elections appear to be far more consequential for the overall development of the electoral system and elections that the activities of the programme. Although the KESP activities were implemented successfully towards goals that were key areas for improvement in the system in the KR, the political changes that followed the annulment of the 2020 Parliamentary elections led to larger changes in the electoral system electoral processes of the KR that degraded democratic practice and the effects of KESP. Although the CEC has become more open, inclusive and transparent, the overall political system has not.

In conclusion, the findings identified factors that contributed to the sustainability of KESP results, notably national ownership and KESP working closely with and supporting the CEC as the institution that will continue to administer elections plus engagement with a range of CSOs active in CE.

Other factors hindered the sustainability of KESP results, such as expectations that a successor ESP would be forthcoming, the limited time before elections for KESP to support electoral institutions, the change of these institutions and the electoral system during KESP implementation, and the limited amount of time to support the development of the CE Center.

***NATIONAL OWNERSHIP***

National ownership is the extent that project objectives and processes are considered to be a part of the objectives and processes of institutions or organizations of the host country.

UNDP designed the KESP to partner with the CEC, the organization responsible for the administration of elections in the KR, towards supporting national ownership of the programme and its results. UNDP country office and KESP project management and staff interviewed recognised and worked towards strengthening national ownership of activities beyond the design in how the programme was implemented through work with the CEC and CSOs. CEC interviewees valued and appreciated the partnership with UNDP through KESP and the support of the donors, which they saw as helping meet the priorities of the country as expressed in the National Development Strategy and the mission of their organisation. KESP project and UNDP CO management and staff interviews noted the strong leadership and helpful approaches of the CEC, particularly the chair, which strengthened how KESP and the CEC engaged with and partnered with CSOs and other electoral stakeholders. Frequent, active engagement by CSOs with UNDP and the CEC were also seen as fostering broad national ownership of KESP-supported processes and the goals as well as outputs of these activities.

KESP was seen as aligned with the priorities of local governments in Kyrgyzstan, which were also undergoing changes after the revisions of the Constitution as approved by the referendum. The presidentially appointed heads of local governments were made responsible for elections and thus benefitted from support of KESP in 2021 towards meeting this new mandate.

# LESSONS LEARNED

Project reporting identified lessons learned and KESP staff were engaged in an exercise developing lessons learned during the evaluation. Interviews also suggested lessons learned. Finally, some lessons learned come from the analysis of the conclusions above.

*Electoral support should be provided substantially before key electoral processes*

KESP was funded and signed with less than a year to go before the key parliamentary election that the programme was designed to support. This was not enough time to support key aspects of the plan to support the CEC specified in the ProDoc, particularly specifying, procuring, installing, and training CEC staff in new modern electoral system technologies. ESPs need to be developed, approved, funded, and implemented with sufficient time for national counterparts to take up new technology, training and capacity long before critical electoral events.

*Electoral support should be implemented in time periods between elections*

Key electoral partners and stakeholders like the CEC are better able to focus on and implement key capacity building needs when not involved in elections. CEC and other stakeholders’ skills and capacities also may degrade rather than improve over five years if there are not practices developed to use these skills and capacities between elections.

*Electoral support can productively pursue many different approaches and disperse efforts to spread information and raise awareness*

KESP developed and implemented many different initiatives with different modalities to get information across to different constituencies to encourage inclusion in electoral processes. This approach of trying many different partners, different approaches to new and old media, and supporting state actors that still have important roles to play appears to have had merit in that different approaches appear to have reached different audiences. Coordination with the CEC remained important to make sure that the content spread was accurate.

*Monitoring and evaluation efforts are needed to assess the efficacy of different approaches*

KESP worked well with many different activities and partners that used different approaches to support KESP’s goals. While the outputs of these activities are clear and measured, it is not clear what the outcomes for some activities were in the longer-term effort to support transparent, inclusive, peaceful electoral events in the country. Programmes should develop methods to monitor the longer-term effects of different initiatives and assess the merits of different ways to provide support to boost effectiveness and efficiency. For example, the project supported numerous on-line initiatives to reach young people. But which ones reached more people? Why were they more successful? Answers to these questions are not clear.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Per the TOR, the recommendations of the evaluation target identifying and formulating ideas that are potentially useful for future ESP programming to strengthen the capacity of electoral authorities to ensure that electoral processes are credible, transparent and accepted by the electorate. Recommendations come from the analysis of project reporting and materials, as well as interviewees that provided recommendations that fit with findings and conclusions based on the evaluation’s analysis. Other recommendations follow from the analysis of the conclusions above.

1. *Kyrgyzstan needs substantial support towards expanding and revitalizing democratic practices*

Political competition and the inclusive participation of the population in democratic practices has been perceived to be in decline in the country by many observers and participants in Kyrgyz politics over recent electoral cycles. Perceptions that the political system is corrupt encourage apathy and degrade the participation of candidates, organized in interests in civil society, and voters in elections and governance more broadly. Voter turnout has declined sharply from an already low 56% turnout rate in the October 2020 parliamentary elections. Only 34.6% of registered voters turned out for the 2021 parliamentary elections. EOM and other analytic reports note that the political system and contestation between candidates has become less competitive. UNDP should assess what can be done to support transparent political competition and prioritise feasible democracy building activities can be funded and implemented to help turn political development in the KR in directions that encourage more transparent, competitive processes and wider participation, particularly of women and youth as well as disadvantages groups (such as Kyrgyzstani migrants abroad). `

1. *Continued support for the CEC remains important to maintain and strengthen the CEC’s capacity in transparent electoral administration and make electoral events more inclusive*

The CEC, with the support of UNDP through KESP and prior ESPs, had developed substantial capacity in the administration of elections. However, CE in general and the CEC’s own efforts towards making this electoral capacity apparent to people across Kyrgyzstan has not been sufficient to avoid protests against elections and criticism of the fairness and inclusiveness of elections. More needs to be done towards demonstrating to citizens through CE that the CEC has the capacity to transparently and fairly administer elections, particularly for the next elections.

UNDP should consider the following specific areas and modes of delivery in developing potential future support to the CEC and implementing a future ESP with the CEC and other partners:

1. *Electoral support should be provided substantially before key electoral processes and build capacity between elections*

Electoral support needs to be developed at the right time in the electoral cycle and be implemented over a long term well in advance of actual elections to provide Kyrgyzstan with the substantial support needed to strengthen the technology and capacity building to improve the transparency and inclusiveness of elections. ESPs need to be well funded from the beginning of the programme to be efficient. Donors cannot just provide the funding for programmes on the eve of elections without subverting the long-term development of elections and UNDP’s partnerships with electoral institutions.

1. *ESP support should prioritize developing the capacity of electoral stakeholders to plan and build capacity in advance of elections*

To develop a more effective and efficient ESP, UNDP should consider working closely with the CEC and other electoral stakeholders to plan and then implement their responsibilities. Then ESP project assistance has the potential to be less affected by unexpected needs and last minute requests that impede programme efficiency and hamper effectiveness of assistance programmes. Support for the development and implementation of a strategic plan and a culture of planning at the CEC appears needed.

1. *Future ESP support should focus on inclusion by building trust and confidence in elections among the population as well as the capacity of the CEC and other electoral stakeholders*

Kyrgyzstan needs to build confidence among citizens that electoral institutions are not only accurate but also that they are open towards encouraging the participation of all citizens particularly the youth, women, and vulnerable populations. A future ESP should continue to use multiple methods to support CE, through the CE Centre at the CEC, the media, and CSOs. These separate components, while sharing content, should develop separate modes for delivery. A future ESP should also analyse and try different approaches to reach particular difficult, marginalized populations. The rural population and ethnic minorities present difficult contexts for CE but are critical to reach to expand participation.

1. *Strategic planning and a needs assessment with the CEC should precede programme development.*

Potential ESP support should start with support for a strategic planning process for the CEC to support the EMB meeting its roles under the new system, followed by participatory needs assessment of the CEC to identify current capacity, gaps, and needs to cost-efficiently meet the requirements of a new strategic plan. While there is no substitute for a participatory strategic planning process and needs assessment, the findings of the evaluation suggest some needs and ways to meet them, including:

* Developing job descriptions and organizational charts that link key personnel and departments (including for staffing the CE Centre)
* Obtaining government funding commitments to cover these core staff costs rather than having them unfunded and sometimes met by donors.
* Developing analytical skills and data for each department of the CEC to support results-based management for the CEC and wider availability of more comprehensive data on electoral events and processes.

1. *UNDP should consider developing, agreeing on, and using clear rules to strengthen work with the CEC*

UNDP should consider developing a memorandum of understanding to guide work between a future ESP and the CEC by regularizing and building in timelines for activity development, approval, and implementation in their partnerships. Specifying clear rules in the relationship could be a route to strengthen the CEC’s planning and avoid last-minute challenges in activities, which has impeded effectiveness and efficiency in some activities under KESP.

1. *M&E efforts should focus on outcomes as well as outputs*

A next potential ESP should develop M&E methods and systems to report on sub-outcomes and outcomes to better measure programme performance at these levels above the activities themselves.

1. *UNDP should consider supporting the development of civil society expertise on election administration to complement CEC expertise*

Building expertise and working relationships in civil society and among non-CEC experts on elections is also needed to create an expert community around transparent, inclusive elections for the whole election cycle. As the experience of the KESP suggests, multiple efforts to reach voters with CE for example appears to be more effective than efforts that are one sided (only through the CEC or CSOs). Independent CSO expertise on elections administration, including for CE, is needed to work effectively on elections, complement the work of the CEC and the CE Centre, and provide checks and balance to their activities.

1. *UNDP should consider developing approaches in governance support to support Kyrgyzstani partners to address broader issues of trust and confidence in the political* *system*

To make substantial progress with building trust and confidence in the elections, Kyrgyzstan may need to address broadly held perceptions of political corruption and perceptions that the system of governance only works for a few elites in the country. The system for campaign finance regulation, as improved by KESP, is seen as quite good. But citizens need to be shown that this system works well for it to have the kind of positive effects on the political system needed in Kyrgyzstan. And other steps and regulation/enforcement beyond campaign finance– as well as outreach to demonstrate to citizens that these measures exist, are effective, and are applied to all political actors – is needed to demonstrate to the public that political competition is not manipulated and distorted by the flow of money in politics.

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# ANNEX 1: TOR FOR THE FINAL PROJECT EVALUATION

Logo

Description automatically generated with medium confidence**TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)**

**FOR**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **international consultant FOR EVALUATION OF**  **“KYRGYZ ELECTION SUPPORT PROGRAMME”** | |
| Programme Name: | Kyrgyz Election Support Programme |
| Title of assignment: | Programme evaluation |
| Contract type: | International Individual contract |
| Supervised by: |  |
| Duty station: | Home based |
| Duration of Contract: | 25 working days between April – June 2022 |
|  | |
| **BACKGROUND**  The UN in Kyrgyzstan through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been supporting the efforts of the Kyrgyz Republic in strengthening the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of the electoral processes starting from the 2010. As in the UNDP’s country programme document for Kyrgyzstan (2018-2022), the Kyrgyzstan Election Support Programme (KESP) covers one of the national priorities: Good governance, rule of law, human rights, gender equality (SDGs 5 and 16).  The current KESP prodoc was created in response to a formal request from the Central Elections Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic (CEC) and is based on the UNDPPA Needs Assessment recommendations. This programme is implemented under UNDAF OUTCOME 2: By 2022, institutions at all levels are more accountable and inclusive ensuring justice, human rights, gender equality and sustainable peace for all and Country Programme Output 2.1: Core functions and capacity of Parliament, key government institutions and local authorities strengthened for accountable, transparent and inclusive policy making and implementation, as well as quality public services delivery.  The aim of this Programme is to assist the CEC to develop its capacity to support the 2020-2021 local and parliamentary elections with technologies to ensure sustained use of the biometrics-based voter identification model and to support other enabling factors for realizing free, fair, credible and transparent parliamentary elections. The programme will also lay the groundwork for improvement of current and future electoral processes in the Kyrgyz Republic by developing sustainable capacity to manage elections through strong digital processes.  The 22-month programme (from February 2020 to December 2021) consists of three components:   * Enhancing the inclusion, integrity and transparency of the electoral operations, including sustained upgrade and modernization of equipment; * Enhancing the capacity of the key national partners in conducting public outreach and external communication, including engagement with civil society, media and other key electoral stakeholders, and empowerment of women as voters and eligible candidates; * Enhancing the capacity of the CEC and other key stakeholders to identify, manage and respond to electoral violence, through systems dedicated to early warning and early response mechanisms.   The Programme is funded with contributions form the governments of Germany, Japan and Switzerland. The project value at the time of evaluation is USD1,772,215 (as of November 2021).   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **№** | **Donors** | **Budget 2020-2021** | **Balance (as of Nov 2021)** | | 1 | Japan | $ 4,210,526 | $ 1,136,515 | | 2 | Switzerland | $1,499,309 | $ 479,411 | | 3 | Germany | $ 564,698 | $ 156,289 | |  | **Total** | $ 6,274,533 | $ 1,772,215 |   **SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES**   1. **Objectives**   This final evaluation is intended to analyze KESP’s progress and achieved results, and identify problems and constraints that have been encountered in the implementation. To this end, the evaluation aims to formulate important best practices and lessons to be learned from the implementation of KESP. The evaluation should provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. This should also be forward looking and provide preliminary recommendations for the future design and implementation of electoral assistance programmes, advice on forthcoming strategic directions and priorities in the relevant area. The evaluation will consider options for future delivery and the implementation of the programmes which promote ownership, sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness.   1. **Scope**   The evaluation should be able to:   * Assess the relevance of the programme with respect to its consistency, ownership, technical adequacy and complementarity of the programme with other similar initiatives; * Determine the effectiveness of the programme in the achievement of results, highlighting reasons and factors for achievement/non-achievement; * Determine the efficiency of the programme concerning the value for money principle, use of funding staff and other resources in the achievement of results; * Evaluate the potential impact on enhancing the inclusiveness and transparency of electoral processes; * Determine the level of coordination of the programme with UN agencies, relevant development partners, donors, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders; * Evaluate the sustainability of the programme, including the participation of institutional beneficiaries/partners in the planning and implementation of activities, as well as measures taken to ensure that activities initiated by the programme will be completed/continued beyond the programme cycle; * Evaluate the contribution of the programme to the gender and human rights aspects; * Capture the best practices and lessons learned from the implementation of the programme; * Provide concrete recommendations that is useful for the future programming.   The evaluation will assess the programme according to the standard evaluation criteria, as elaborated below, in line with the United Nations Evaluations Group (UNEG) norms and principles. The evaluation will address the following four main questions:   1. Was the approach to achieve what the UNDP Programme intended to achieve appropriate? 2. To what extent has the Programme achieved its intended objectives? 3. To what extent has the Programme been able to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic and support country’s preparedness, response and recovery process? 4. What factors contributed to or hindered Programme’s performance and eventually, to the sustainability of results?   To address Question 1, a Theory of change (ToC) approach will be used in consultation with stakeholders as appropriate to better understand how and under what conditions the Programme's interventions are expected to lead to accountable institutions, justice and peace, and gender equality.  Question 2 will include as assessment of achieved results and the extent to which these results have contributed to the Programme objectives. It will be important to examine how the Programme has been able to introduce innovation and agility as specific factors for Programme effectiveness.  Question 3 will examine Programme’s support to COVID-19 preparedness, response and recovery at the Country level. This will include an assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of the support to the needs of country and its effectiveness in preventing loss of lives and livelihoods.  The sustainability of overall outcomes will be examined in response to the Question 4.  In addition to the above questions, the evaluation is expected to answer the evaluation questions related to the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and impact, which are in line with the definition provided by the OECD-DAC as in the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results: <https://commdev.org/publications/handbook-on-planning-monitoring-and-evaluating-for-results/.The> evaluation will be carried out based on the integrated results and resource framework (IRRF) distinguishing between project-level outcomes and outputs. This evaluation also assesses the extent to which the programme’s implementation sought to strengthen the application of the rights-based approach and address gender issues.  **Evaluation Questions and Methodology**   1. **Evaluation Questions**   Based on the standard criteria defined by OECD-DAC, below are the criteria to be considered for the evaluation process:   * Relevance   + Did the project miss any critical issues that should have been tackled? Did the project mis any critical opportunities that were needed to be addressed to contribute to the UNDAF and CP?   + Did the activities and strategies fit the objectives, i.e., is there any internal coherence between programme activities and programme purposes?   + To what extent were the interventions relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries?   + To what extent have gender and human rights considerations been integrated into the programme design and implementation?   + Has the Programme been able to effectively adapt its activities to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Kyrgyz Republic?   + To what extent was the programme in line with the national development priorities, the country programme’s outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025, and SDGs? * Effectiveness   + To assess the degree to which envisaged outputs and outcomes have been achieved and reported achievements, and whether the programme has contributed to inclusiveness and transparency of the electoral processes and increased citizens’ participation in this process.   + Was the theory of change based on valid assumptions?   + Assess the effectiveness of coordination among different UN agencies and organizations   + Assess the degree of coordination and collaboration with the government authorities   + Assess the degree to which programme implementation was flexible and adaptive to the context.   + To what extend did the programme mainstream a gender dimension?   + To what extent did the programme complement work with different entities?   + How have stakeholders been involved in the programme’s design and implementation?   + What have been the main challenges faced by the programme and how has the programme overcomed them? * Efficiency   + Assess whether the programme has utilized programme funding as per the agreed work plan to achieve the programmed targets.   + Assess the timeline and quality of the reporting followed by the programme.   + Analyze the performance of the M&E mechanism of the programme and the use of various M&E tools (any socio-economic data available to the programme etc.).   + Assess the qualitative and quantitative aspects of management and other inputs (such as equipment, monitoring and review and further technical assistance and budgetary inputs) provided by the programme vis-à-vis achievement of outputs and targets.   + Identify factors and constraints that have affected programme implementation including technical, managerial, organizational, institutional and socio-economic policy issues and other external factors unforeseen during the programme design.   + To what extent did programme support achieve the results in its proposed timeline?   + How efficient was the overall staffing, planning and coordination within the programme (including between the two implementing agencies and stakeholders)? Have programme funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?   + How efficient and successful was the programme’s implementation approach, including procurement and other activities?   + How efficiently did the programme use the programme board?   + How well did the programme collect and use data to monitor results? How well did it communicate with stakeholders and programme beneficiaries on its progress? Did it use data to inform its implementation strategy?   + How well did the programme share its implementation and results?   + Overall, did the programme ensure cost-efficiency? Have resources been used efficiently? * Sustainability and Impact   + Assess preliminary indications of the degree to which the programme results are likely to be sustainable beyond the programme’s lifetime (both at the community and government level), and provide recommendations for strengthening sustainability.   + Did the intervention design include appropriate sustainability and exit strategy?   + How strong is the commitment of the Government and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of KESP?   + How has the programme enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity of elections?   + Are there any financial risks that might affect the sustainability of the programme output? * National ownership   + Assess the degree of involvement of national partners and aligning to existing priorities of the local governments in targeted areas * Lessons learned/ Conclusions   + An analysis of the main lessons learned concerning the effectiveness of foreseen strategies and theories of change to achieve impact   + An analysis of the main lessons learned concerning the effectiveness of implementation modalities   The review will cover the entire period the programme has been operational.   1. **Methodology**   The evaluation will be summative and employ a participatory approach whereby discussions with and surveys of key stakeholders provide and verify the substance of the findings. The evaluation will be based on gender and human rights principles and adhere to the UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Code of Conduct. Proposals submitted by prospective consultants should outline a robust mixed-method approach to data collection and analysis, clearly noting how various forms of evidence will be employed vis-à-vis each other to triangulate gathered information.    Proposals should be clear on the specific role each of the various methodological approaches plays in helping to address each of the evaluation questions. The methodologies for data collection may include but not necessarily be limited to:   * Rigorous desk review of documentation provided by the KESP team, including: Programme documents, previous evaluations, programme reports, key intervention reports and policies, financial reports etc. Where possible and relevant, more detailed monitoring information will be analyzed, such as community monitoring data and activity reporting;[[3]](#footnote-3) * Survey of key stakeholders (online). * *Stakeholder Analysis:* A participatory and transparent process will be followed to engage with multiple stakeholders at all stages of the evaluation process. During the initial phase a stakeholder analysis will be conducted to identify all relevant Programme partners. This stakeholder analysis will serve to identify key informants for interviews during the main data collection phase of the evaluation, and to examine any potential partnerships that could further improve Programme's contribution to the country. * Key informant interviews and focus group discussions, as appropriate, with major stakeholders (Interviews will be conducted in person or online tools such as Teams and Zoom). Stakeholders will be selected in close coordination with the KESP, and will at minimum include: Government authorities with a key responsibility towards the programme, including – primarily - relevant authorities at district level; Relevant UN agencies; Other implementing agencies, such as local NGOs; Programme beneficiaries, Central Elections Commission officials, voters of different categories (women, youth, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, migrants) and donors; * Validation: The evaluation will triangulate information collected from different sources and/or by different methods to enhance validity of findings. The review findings will be presented to the Project Board to collect feedback on these main findings and serve as a validation exercise.   Products expected from the evaluation:  1) Inception report with finalized and agreed terms of reference, evaluation matrix, workplan, questionnaires and agreed methodology of evaluation;  2) Comprehensive evaluation report with findings, recommendations, and lessons learned  The Report should be logically structured, contain evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations. The Report should respond in detail to the crucial focus areas described above. Specifically, the Evaluation Report should include the following standard elements:  • Executive summary (maximum 3 pages) and introduction  • Description of the contents of evaluation and reasons  • Stakeholder Analysis  • Needs assessment of the target groups of the population and their challenges  • Gender aspects imbedded throughout the evaluation.  • Description of methodology to approach the evaluation questions.  • Findings supported by credible evidence in response to the questions  • Limitations and constraints in undertaking the evaluation  • Conclusions including evaluation findings and analysis based on the evidence-based information  • Concrete and usable recommendations derived from conclusions  • Lessons learned  The final deliverable should comply with the UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports which are available here: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/607>.  3) Presentation  Final Evaluation Report will be presented to key stakeholders, including UNDP staff, representatives of the beneficiary institutions, Programme donors, and NGO/CSO implementing partners and other relevant stakeholders.  **KEY DELIVERABLES AND TENTATIVE TIMETABLE**   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | # | key DELIBERABLES | deadline | payment  structure | | | 1. | **Deliverable #1.**   * A debriefing meeting is conducted on the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. * Detailed inception report (maximum 15 pages) – developed and approved. The Inception Report shall be based on a detailed analysis of the programme documentation and complementary information and shall include (but not limited to)  1. The complete work plan and timeline 2. Proposed methodology 3. Proposed questionary and data collection and analysis tools | By 20 April,  2022 | 20 % | | | 2. | **Deliverable #2**:   * Discussions and interviews with the management, donor representatives and programme stakeholders are conducted. * Online meetings: preparing the list and profile of respondents, collecting data, conducting KIIs with the relevant stakeholders (UNDP, government partners, implementing partners, other partners and beneficiaries) * Analysis of the data. Preparing draft evaluation report. Presentation to KESP, partners and receiving feedback. | By 20 May,  2022 | | 40% | |  | | 4. | **Deliverable #3.**   * Preparing final version of the evaluation report considering comments received from the relevant partners. * Presentation of the evaluation findings to the Project Board | By 20 June, 2022 | | 40% | | | |
| **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**  During the assignment, the consultant shall submit a final report prepared in accordance with the achieved outputs according to the above schedule as per table of deliverables in the agreed format, describing activities undertaken during the task fulfillment. The report should be submitted after each product achieved and approved by the Project Coordinator and SDG-16 Team Leader on electoral assistance that will serve as basis for payments.  **QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**  The review will be conducted by an international consultant. The international consultant should meet the following professional expertise criteria:   * Master’s degree in law, political science, development studies or related field; * Proven experience at least 5 years in conducting evaluations of strategies, policies and/or development programmes/programmes in the area of electoral assistance; * Technical knowledge and experience in UNDP thematic areas, specifically in cross cutting issues such as gender and human rights-based approaches to programming and capacity development is an asset; * Sound knowledge of UN procedures, results-based management (especially results-based monitoring and evaluation), and evaluation strategies will be an additional asset; * Excellent analytical and report writing skills; * Strong interpersonal skills; * Ability to work in a multicultural environment; * Fluency in English, knowledge of Russian is an asset.   The international consultant will be responsible for the assessment methodology, coordination within the team and with the UNCTs, and the overall quality and timely submission of all the deliverables. Additional translators will be provided by the Kyrgyzstan UNDP Offices.  The consultant will ensure inclusive process of evaluation and work in close coordination with UNDP and all relevant UN agencies as well as other partners. The UNDP KESP will help facilitate contacts and set up online meetings. The participation of the UN staff in the review is required, as this will provide an instant opportunity for validating the findings and will assist in internalizing the learning. However, the reviewer team does reserve the right to have some meetings without staff from the UN or implementing agencies present.  **Evaluation ethics.**  This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’ which are available here: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102. The consultants must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultants must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.  **TRAVEL** | |
| |  | | --- | | This assignment does not require travel. | | **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RECOMMENDED CONTRACTOR** |   **Statement of Medical Fitness for Work.**  For an Individual Contractor who is of 62 years of age or older and on an assignment requiring travel, be it for the purpose of arriving at the duty station or as an integral duty required under the TOR, a full medical examination and statement of fitness to work must be provided. However, this is not a requirement for individuals on RLA contracts  Where there is no UN office nor a UN Medical Doctor present in the location of the Individual Contractor prior to commencing the travel, either for repatriation or duty travel, the Individual Contractor may choose his/her own preferred physician to obtain the required medical clearance.  **Inoculations/Vaccinations**  Individual consultants/contractors are required to have vaccinations/inoculations when travelling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director. The cost of required vaccinations/inoculations, when foreseeable, must be included in the financial proposal. Any unforeseeable vaccination/inoculation cost will be reimbursed by UNDP.  **Security Clearance.**  The consultant should undertake the Basic Security in the Field (BSIF) training and Advanced Security in the Field (ASIF) tests prior to travelling. These requirements apply for all consultants, attracted individually or through the employer.   |  | | --- | | **SCOPE OF PRICE PROPOSAL AND SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS** |   **Contracts based on lump-sum**  The financial proposal shall specify instalments and payment terms around specific and measurable (qualitative and quantitative) deliverables. Payments are based upon output, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the TOR. In order to assist the requesting unit in the comparison of financial proposals, the financial proposal will include a breakdown of each of the five instalments’ amounts.  **Preferred Currency of Offer**: United State Dollars (USD)  For local contractors in Kyrgyzstan UNDP shall effect payment in Kyrgyz Som based on the prevailing UN operational rate of exchange on the month of payment. The prevailing UN operational rate of exchange is available for public from the following link: <http://treasury.un.org/operationalrates/OperationalRates.aspx>   |  | | --- | | **UNDP CONTRIBUTION** |  1. Arranging online meetings with local counterparts and beneficiaries; 2. Programme related documents such as Programme Document, Annual Work Plans and/or Progress Reports; 3. Project cost and funding data including annual expenditure, revision of budget, and financial report for the purpose of assessing cost-efficiency. | |

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# ANNEX 2: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

**UN Documents**

Quality Checklist for Evaluation TOR and Inception Report. New York: United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), June 2010.<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/608>

Norms and Standards for Evaluation. New York: UNEG, June 2016. <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the Kyrgyz Republic 2018-2022. New York: UN,2017. <https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/UNDAF%2018052017%20eng%20fin.pdf>

UNEG Handbook for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Perspectives in Evaluations. New York: UNEG, August 2014.<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616>

UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports. New York: UNEG, June 2010.<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/608>

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Documents**

UNDP Strategic Plan. 2018-2021. New York: UNDP, October 2017. <https://undocs.org/DP/2017/38>

Independent Evaluation Office. UNDP Evaluation Guidelines: Revised June 2021.. New York: UNDP, June 2021. <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf>

Country programme document for the Kyrgyz Republic (2018-2022). DP/DCP/KGZ/3. New York: UNDP, 2017. <https://www.kg.undp.org/content/dam/kyrgyzstan/docs/communications-unit/Country%20programme%20document%20for%20Kyrgyzstan%20(2018-2022).pdf>

**KESP Documents (Project Id 00085433 Kyrgyz Election Support Project**

Project Document: Kyrgyzstan Electoral Support Programme, Project Award Number: 00121518. <https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/KGZ/ProDoc%20Kyrgyzstan%20Elections%20Programme%20April%202020.docx.pdf>

UNDP “Kyrgyzstan Electoral Support Programme”, Annual Report 2021, January– December 2021

Kyrgyzstan Electoral Support Programme April 2020 – December 2021, Consolidated Progress Report December 2020

<https://www.kg.undp.org/content/kyrgyzstan/en/home/democratic-governance-and-peacebuilding/sample-tier-2/kesp0.html>

<https://www.kg.undp.org/content/kyrgyzstan/en/home/projects/kyrgyzstan-electoral-support-programme.html>

<https://open.undp.org/projects/00121518>

2020 Annual Work Plan (AWP)

2021 AWP

Annual Progress Reports

Newsletters

Factsheets

2010

<https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/KGZ/00060022_00075340_ProDoc_KESP_ENG.pdf>

**IOM Documents**

Final Report to UN Development Programme (UNDP), Facilitating Participation of Diaspora and Migrant Communities in Electoral Processes of the Kyrgyz Republic

Annex II, Final report, Diaspora Coordinator

Final report, Media Campaign

Safe Migration: report on work on social media

**OECD-DAC Documents**

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

**Government of the Kyrgyz Republic Documents**

The National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2040. Bishkek: 2018. <http://donors.kg/images/National_Development_Strategy_of_KR_2018-2040_final_ENG.docx>

**Election Observation Reports**

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Kyrgyz Republic: Parliamentary Elections, 28 November 2021: Final Report. Warsaw: OSCE ODIHR 26 May 2022. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/2/f/519087.pdf>

OSCE ODIHR. Kyrgyz Republic: Parliamentary Elections, 28 November 2021: Interim Report. Warsaw: OSCE ODIHR 12 November 2021. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/4/5/504136.pdf>

OSCE ODIHR. Kyrgyz Republic: Parliamentary Elections, 28 November 2021: Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. Warsaw: OSCE ODIHR 12 November 2021. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/6/5/505840_0.pdf>

OSCE ODIHR. Kyrgyz Republic: Early Presidential Election and Referendum 10 January 2021. ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission Final Report. Warsaw: OSCE ODIHR 4 June 2021. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/7/0/488587_1.pdf>

OSCE ODIHR. Kyrgyz Republic: Parliamentary Elections 28 November 2020. ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. Warsaw: OSCE ODIHR 3 December 2020. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/6/5/505840_0.pdf>

OSCE ODIHR. Kyrgyz Republic: Parliamentary Elections 4 October 2020. ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission Final Report. Warsaw: OSCE ODIHR 3 December 2020. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/7/a/472461_0.pdf>

**Independent analyses**

Andrea Schmitz. Revolution Again in Kyrgyzstan: Forward to the Past?. Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2021. <https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2021C08_RevolutionKyrgyzstan.pdf>

World Bank. Data: Kyrgyz Republic. 2022. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/Kyrgyz-Republic>

# ANNEX 3: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

**UNDP Country Office**

Louise Chamberlain, Resident Representative

Erkina Urabaeva, Team Leader, Accountable Institutions, Justice and Peace Cluster

Kurtmolla Abdulganiyev, Peace and Development Advisor

**UNDP KESP Project**

Risa Arai

Sanzharbek Alimzhanov, Coordinator

Aichurek Kurmanbekova, Consultant

Kimiko Kuga

Medina Zhumakadyrova, Procurement Consultant

Olga Petrova, Finance

Sarvar Salimov, Consultant

Yulia Shypilova. former Chief Technical Advisor

Cholpon Tentieva, Procurement

**UN Agency Partners**

Natalya Seitmuratova, Human Rights Officer, Early Warning and Prevention Team Leader, OHCHR

Sagipa Djusaeva, UN Women

Nazgul Chubarova, IOM

**Donors**

Elena Zakirova, Embassy of Switzerland

David Westenfelder, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Germany

**CEC Management, Staff, and Consultants**

Nurjan Shaildabekova, Chair

Ulan Murzaev, Position?

Aisuluu Bukambaeva, expert, Civic Education Center

Muzaffar Kazakov, IT specialist

Chynarbek Andarbekov, Legal expert to provide support on consideration of complaints and applications under the Rapid Response Coordination Group of CEC (RRCG)

Kanyshai Mamytova, Campaign Finance

Kanykei Nazarova, Rapid Response Coordination Group of CEC (RRCG)

**Political Parties**

Kaldan Spabekovna Ernazarova, Chair of the Political Council, Political Party ""Power to the people""

**Other project stakeholders**

Тatuu Mambetalieva, Civil Initiative for Internet Policy

Ainura Usupbekova, Civil Platform Public Foundation

Zulfiya Turumbekova, Kyrgyz Association of Women Judges

Jamal Frontbek, Mutakalim CSO

Baken Dosalieva, Women Support Centre (WSC)

Cholpon Askerovna, Public Foundation Eagl

Meerim Abdyrahmanova, Education Initiatives foundation

Rita Abdyldaeva, Chief Specialist, Marketing Department, Infocom

Muzaffar Kazakov, IT specialist, BOT

**Other Partners**

Nicholas Mazak, Director Human Dimension, OSCE

Jannat Soronnbaeva, Elections Project Manager, OSCE

Olga Kuitishcheva, Senior prog assistant, OSCE

Tara Neal, Senior Democratic Development Specialist, USAID

Nazgul Mokeev, USAID

# ANNEX 4: EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

INTRODUCTION AND INFORMED CONSENT

The introduction and consent note introduced the evaluator, the evaluation, and methods to participants in the evaluation to gather the explicit consent of people that participated in the evaluation. The evaluator recited the following to all prospective interviewees and obtained their explicit oral consent to participate*.*

**Introduction and Informed Consent**

Thank you for talking with me today.

My name is Lawrence Robertson. I am working independently for the United Nations to conduct an evaluation of the work conducted by UNDP and its partners through the KESP project. The goal of the review is to learn about what has been accomplished through the project, what has worked well, and what has not worked as well. Lessons from this review will used to help UNDP and its partners in future work here and around the world.

The information collected today will only be used for the review. I will not use this information in a way that identifies you as an individual in the report. I will not record the interview or use any of your personal identifying information including your name or names. I will use the information you provide us to generate a report and recommendations for UNDP regarding potential future strategic investments to better support communities and Kyrgyzstan.

I would also like to clarify that this interview is entirely voluntary and that you have the right **to withdraw** from interview at any point without consequence.

I hope to learn from you from your knowledge and experience with the project and its activities. Are you willing to participate in this study? [Ensure that participant(s) verbally agree to participate]

Do you have any questions for me before I begin with a short list of questions to learn about the ways that you or your organisation have worked with the project?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Not all questions were asked to all interviewees; interviews focused on the areas and questions most relevant to each informant’s knowledge of and engagement with the programme.

**Relevance**

Did KESP focus on the right issues for increasing the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of electoral processes in Kyrgyzstan 2020-2021?

Did KESP miss opportunities to further contribute to the goals of the UNDAF and CP through increasing the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of electoral processes?

In your view, did KESP’s activities fit with the goals of the programme?

Do you see KESP technical assistance as relevant to the needs and priorities of the CEC? What demonstrates relevance?

Do you see KESP technical assistance as relevant to the needs and priorities of other electoral stakeholders? What demonstrates relevance?

How did the Programme adapt its activities to the effects of the COVID-19?

To what extent do you see KESP as in line with national development priorities?

To what extent do you see KESP as in line with the UNDP CPD?

To what extent do you see KESP as in line with the UNDP Strategic Plan?

To what extent do you see KESP as in line with the SDGs?

**Effectiveness**

What is the evidence for KESP delivering its planned outputs and reaching desired outcomes?

How effective has the project been in contributing to the inclusiveness and transparency of electoral processes?

How effective has the project been in contributing to increased citizens’ participation?

Do you think the theory of change for the project was based on valid assumptions?

How effective was coordination among different UN agencies and organizations?

How well did the programme coordinate and collaborate with government authorities?

In your experience, was programme implementation was flexible and adaptive enough to the context?

To what extent did the programme mainstream a gender?

To what extent were programme activities complementary with those of different entities?

How were stakeholders involved in programme design and implementation?

What have been the main challenges faced by the programme and how has the programme overcome them?

**Efficiency**

What do you see as evidence that programme funds have been used per the agreed work plan?

Did the programme report on time or was it late with reporting?

How do you assess of the quality of programme reporting?

How did the programme use M&E mechanisms and tools?

How do you assess the appropriateness of programme inputs (such as equipment, monitoring and review and further technical assistance and budgetary inputs) relative to achieving outputs and targets?

What factors and constraints do you identify as having affected programme implementation (including technical, managerial, organizational, institutional and socio-economic policy issues and other external factors unforeseen in programme design.

To what extent did programme achieve the results in its proposed timeline?

How efficient do you see programme staffing, planning and coordination as having been?

Do you see programme funds and activities as having been delivered in a timely manner?

Do you see the programme’s implementation approach, including procurement and other activities, as having been efficient and successful? Why or why not?

In your view, did the programme use the programme board efficiently?

How well would you say the programme collected and used data to monitor results?

How well would you say the programme communicated with stakeholders and beneficiaries on progress?

Did the programme use data to inform its implementation strategy?

How well would you say the programme shared its implementation and results?

How did the programme ensure cost-efficiency?

Would you say that resources have been used efficiently? Why or why not?

What do you see as evidence of cost-efficiency in the programme?

**Sustainability and Impact**

What is the evidence for the sustainability of programme results?

What are your expectations of future sustainability?

What should be done to strengthen sustainability?

Do you see the design as having paid appropriate attention to sustainability?

How strong do you think the commitment of the Government and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of KESP is?

How do you assess the overall effects of the programme on enhancing the development of national capacity in elections?

Are there financial risks that may affect the sustainability of programme outputs?

**National Ownership**

How do you see the degree of involvement of national partners with the programme?

How do you see the alignment of the project with the priorities of the local governments in targeted areas

**Lessons Learned/Conclusions**

What do you identify as lessons learned – things that have worked particularly well or that did not work and should not be tried again in the project?

Can do identify any other Lessons Learned from the project’s design, activities, or results?

**Recommendations**

What would you recommend for priority actions to support the next electoral cycle?

**Anything else**

Is there anything else I should know about the KESP and its work that we have not talked about to add to our interview?

Thank you again for your work for elections in Kyrgyzstan and for sharing your experience with me today.

# ANNEX 5: FINAL EVALUATION CONSULTANT

Lawrence Robertson has been an independent contractor since 2006 leading evaluations, assessments and studies for United Nations and other development organisations in elections, democratic governance, stabilization, peacebuilding, and gender equality.

He earned a Ph.D. from UCLA in Political Science in 1994 and taught international studies to M.A. and Ph.D. students at the University of Miami before eight years of government service with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In the Bureau for Europe and Eurasia, he led the development of monitoring and evaluation methods and systems for the 27 countries and entities of the region 1999 to 2003. From 2004-2006, he led USAID’s Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation global engagement on women and conflict and the Office’s work across Africa and Asia.

He has conducted evaluations of UNDP electoral cycle projects in Afghanistan, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Timor Leste, the Solomon Islands, Mozambique, and Moldova (three times). He has also been the international gender and elections advisor for the UNDP Solomon Islands ESP, the elections and conflict analyst and programme designer for the UNDP Tanzania ESP, and supported the design of an ESP for UNDP Sierra Leone.

1. OECD-DAC definitions are used for all categories from “Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria” as used in the “UNDP Evaluation guidelines” (June 2021). The guidelines replaced those in the “UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results.” See “Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria - Definitions and Principles for Use.” Paris: OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, December 2019. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf> (accessed 24 March 2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. KESP focus groups conducted by M-Vector in March 2022 found that voters and candidates were widely aware of vote-buying and technical errors made by the CEC, although the issues of vote-buying were mitigated in 2021 parliamentary election compared to the previous elections. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This data will only be included in the desk research when it is in a format that is accessible and relatively easily digestible for the reviewer. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)