

Final Evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme
Election Support Project.

ID: 00105005

Duration: 01 October 2017 – 15 August 2021¹

August 2022

Charlemagne Gomez
Fazl Menallah Amin

The information and views set out in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of UNDP. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the consultant and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of UNDP.

¹ Please note that the project ceased all activities in mid august 2021, after the collapse of the GoIRA. The project was due to run till December 2022.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	I
TABLE OF FIGURES	II
LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	III
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	V
PART ONE.BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	1
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW.....	1
THE PROJECT HAD TWO OVERALL OBJECTIVES:.....	2
PART THREE: EVALUATION OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE, AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION	2
3.1 PURPOSE.....	2
PART FOUR: METHODOLOGY.....	3
4.1. EVALUATION APPROACH.....	3
4.2. EVALUATION QUESTIONS.....	3
4.3. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	3
4.4. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTS	1
4.5. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS	1
4.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	5
4.7. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON EVALUATORS.....	5
4.8. MAJOR LIMITATIONS.....	6
PART SIX. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	6
6.1. RELEVANCE	6
6.2. COHERENCE	13
6.3. EFFICIENCY.....	14
6.4. EFFECTIVENESS	18
Output Two: Credible Electoral Dispute Resolution (EDR) is provided by the ECC	25
Output 3 – Afghan public and political stakeholders are informed of the electoral process and committed to participating in the next electoral cycle in accordance with the law.	31
Output 4: A polling center specific voter list for the next election is produced by the IEC.....	33
3.1 OUTPUT 5 THE IEC AND IECC PROVIDE CREDIBLE ADMINISTRATION OF AN ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION FOR THE WOLESI JIRGA AND DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS, RESPECTIVELY.....	35
3.2 OUTPUT 6 THE IEC AND ECC ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE CREDIBLE ADMINISTRATION OF, AND ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION FOR THE 2019 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.	37
3.3 OUTPUT 7 ELECTORAL LAWS AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AMENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROPOSED ELECTORAL REFORMS.	41
3.4 OUTPUT 8 IEC AND ECC ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE CREDIBLE ADMINISTRATION OF, AND ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION, FOR THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS AND OTHER RELATED ELECTORAL EVENTS.	41
6.5. IMPACT.....	41
6.6. SUSTAINABILITY.....	49
6.7. GENDER AND HUMAN RIGHTS	52
6.8. CONCLUSIONS.....	55
6.9. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	57
ANNEXES	62
ANNEX I – EVALUATION MATRIX.....	63
ANNEX II – OVERALL RESULTS FRAMEWORK	75
Output 4: A polling centre specific voter list for the next election is produced by the IEC.....	78
OUTPUT 5 THE IEC AND ECC PROVIDE CREDIBLE ADMINISTRATION OF AN ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION FOR THE WOLESI JIRGA AND DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS, RESPECTIVELY.	79
OUTPUT 6 THE IEC AND ECC ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE CREDIBLE ADMINISTRATION OF, AND ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION FOR THE 2019 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.	80
3.5 OUTPUT 7 ELECTORAL LAWS AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AMENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROPOSED ELECTORAL REFORMS.	81
3.6	82
3.7 OUTPUT 8 THE IEC AND ECC ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE CREDIBLE ADMINISTRATION OF, AND ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION, FOR THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS AND OTHER RELATED ELECTORAL EVENTS.	82
ANNEX III – LIST OF IEC ELECTORAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT 2018 AND 2019	84
ANNEX IV– LIST OF REGULATIONS, CODES AND PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES	87

ANNEX V – INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS	95
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DIRECT BENEFICIARIES	95
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS	98
ANNEX VI– ONLINE SURVEY FOR IEC AND ECC STAFF	100
ANNEX VII – ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS.....	103
ANNEX VIII – LIST OF DOCUMENTS CONSULTED	113
ANNEX IX– LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED	114

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Summary of Evaluation Criteria	3
Figure 2: Analytical Framework for the project UNESP	3
Figure 3: Outline of the evaluation phase.....	1
Figure 4: Scoring of project performance	5
Figure 5: Financial commitments of donors to UNESP 2017-2022	15
Figure 6: Table of expenditures for 2018-2021	1
Figure 7: Expenditures on Outputs from Outputs 1-8	1
Figure 8: total number of persons employed in the tashkeel System for IEC	20
Figure 9: Overview of the Tashkeel at the ECC from 2017-2021	27
Figure 10: Number of trainings for ECC during the tenure of the Project	28
Figure 11: Complaints received and adjudicated by ECC in 2018 as shown by electoral phase	30
Figure 12: No of complaints during the 2018 WJ elections	30
Figure 14: No of complaints during the 2019 presidential elections	31
Figure 15: Confidence in the Independent Election Commission	32
Figure 16: VR Centers open/closed during VR phases 2018	34
Figure 17: No of voter registrations opened.....	35
Figure 18: Registered voters for the 2018 Wolesi Jirga Elections	35
Figure 19: Output Five Results.....	36
Figure 20: number of polling centers open on election day 2005-2019	37
Figure 21: Results of Output Six.....	37
Figure 22: Outline of cascade training for polling staff.....	39
Figure 23: summary of the type of complaints received by the Media Committee	39
Figure 24: Breakdown of accredited individuals for 2018 and 2019 elections	40
Figure 25: Breakdown of accredited individuals for 2019 Presidential Elections	40
Figure 26: Floods and Droughts of Electoral Assistance in Afghanistan	46
Figure 27: Comparative turnout from 2004 to 2019	48
Figure 28: Gender At Work Framework.....	53
Figure 29: number of female candidates in the elections since 2004	53

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DAC	Development Assistance Criteria
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
EMBs	Election Management Bodies
EQ	Evaluation Questions
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
IL	Intervention Logic
IEC	Independent Election Commission
IECC	Independent Election Complaints Commission
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LNOB	Leave no one behind
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIECC	Provincial Independent Election Complaints Commissioner
NAM	Needs Assessment Mission
NIM	National Implementation
RACER	Robust, accepted, credible, easy to monitor and robust against manipulation
RBA	Rights Based Approach
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SERC	Special Election Reform Commission
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Available at an Acceptable Cost, Relevant and Time bound
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESP	United Nations Election Support Project
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Project Name:	United Nations Election Support Programme			
Atlas Number	ID: 00105005			
Corporate Output and Outcome	<p>Outcome 1: Improved legitimate, transparent and inclusive governance at all levels that enables progressive realization of human rights</p> <p>UNDP Strategic Plan Outcome:</p> <p>Outcome 2: Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development. Output 2.2.2: Constitution - making, electoral and parliamentary processes and institutions strengthened to promote inclusion, transparency and accountability.</p>			
Donor(s):	Australia, Denmark, EU, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, Sweden, UK, USA			
Implementing agency/Agencies:	UNDP and UNAMA			
Key Project Partners:	Independent Election Commission and Independent Election Complaints commission			
Initial Project Document Signed:	25 th July 2018			
Date of final revision:	April 2021			
Project Duration	from	Dec 2017	To	August 2021 ²
Total Budget	USD 156,594,921			
Total Budget spent at time of Evaluation	USD 113,105,334.00			

Project Name:	United Nations Election Support Programme			
Atlas Number	ID: 00105005			
Key Project Partners:	Independent Election Commission and Independent Election Complaints commission			
Period under evaluation	from	Dec 2017	To	August 2021
Type of Evaluation	Final			
Names of Evaluators	Charlemagne Gomez and Fazl Menallah Amin			
E: Mails of evaluators	charlemagnegomez@hotmail.com ; fazlamin17@gmail.com			
Evaluation Timeline	From April 2022 – August 2022			

² All activities were ceased when the GoIRA was taken over by the current de facto regime.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project under evaluation, the United Nations Election Support Project had two overall objectives:

Objective One: to build the capacity of the Afghan electoral institutions (the Independent Elections Commission (IEC) and the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) to implement elections in line with the national electoral legal framework and Afghanistan's international commitments; and
Objective Two: To allow a programming mechanism for the international community to partially finance the elections as per the request of the Government of Afghanistan.

In total the project had eight key outputs:

October 2017 to December 2020:- Output One: Administration of credible elections if facilitated by the meeting of key IEC structural and planning milestones (11 output indicators); Output Two: Credible electoral dispute resolution (EDR) is provided by the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) (10 output indicators); Output Three: Afghan public and political stakeholders are informed of the electoral process and committed to participating in the next electoral cycle in accordance with the law (8 total output indicators); Output Four: A polling center specific voter list for the upcoming elections is produced by the IEC (4 output activities); Output Five: The IEC and ECC provide credible administration of and electoral dispute resolution for the Wolesi Jirga and District Council elections, respectively. (6 total output indicators); Output Six: The IEC and ECC are assisted in the formulation of a comprehensive registration process supporting the 2019 Presidential election (6 output indicators);³ January 2021 to June 2022 - Output Seven: Electoral laws and legal frameworks amended in accordance with proposed electoral reforms. (Six output indicators); Output Eight: The IEC and ECC can provide credible administration of, and electoral dispute resolution, for the Provincial Council elections and other related electoral events. (8 output indicators). (It should be noted that at the time of writing this report, both Election Commissions have been dissolved due to the Taliban takeover of the country in mid-August 2021 and therefore Outputs 7 and 8 could not be implemented. It should be noted that all activities ceased after the takeover by the de-facto regime

and this evaluation only covers activities until August 2021.

In April 2022, a UNDP Commissioned a final evaluation of the project, and an international and national consultant were hired to carry out the evaluation.

The evaluation adopted the principles of a Utilization-Focused Evaluation - which entailed collecting and analyzing suggestions and recommendations based on the key stakeholders' opinions to inform future Project design and the way forward for future election support projects under the auspices of UNDP. To ensure that issues of gender equality, disability, vulnerability, and social inclusion were addressed in the evaluation, specific evaluation questions were included to cover these issues. Furthermore, every effort was made to ensure that a wide range of persons were consulted, including representatives from different civil society organizations, and women's organizations. Where possible data was disaggregated and furthermore, each evaluation criterion endeavored to cover issues of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) as well as human rights.

The evaluation examined the six DAC Criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability and included an additional criterion of gender and human rights.

The evaluation examined over 75 documents and consulted with 39 persons (7 females and 32 males), as well as referred to previous interviews in July 2021 for background information and to triangulate information. The evaluation endeavored to approach a wide range of stakeholders and did not limit itself to the beneficiary institutions and the United Nations, but looked towards think tanks, CSOs and domestic observation experts as well as international election experts and international organizations to get a broad range of viewpoints on the attainment of the results of the project.

The evaluation did suffer from several limitations, mostly the availability and ability to locate IEC and ECC staff. Given the present circumstances, many Afghans belonging to the election circuit

³ Please note that the number of output indicators varied according to the year of implementation, as various indicators were added to align with added activities

according to the type of election.

and civil society find themselves at risk and were either in hiding or transiting to a new country for resettlement. Furthermore, it needs to be acknowledged that as of late 2021 both EMBs have been disbanded therefore there was also a sense of defeatism by some stakeholders as to the relevance and usefulness of the evaluation. While every effort was taken to identify and talk to female stakeholders, the evaluation struggled to talk to many women as many of them had either left the country or were not available for comment. While this was a challenge, the evaluators knowledge of Afghanistan and previous work on recent elections in the country, enabled the evaluation to analyze the gender perspective of the project, focusing more on a comprehensive desk review, and utilizing data and information gathered from previous interviews undertaken in 2020 and 2021 on the electoral process in order to triangulate the information obtained during this final evaluation.

Relevance

The evaluation finds that the project was considered an essential vehicle to provide support to the electoral process in 2018 and 2019. Despite the political, security and cultural context, the results emanating from the project and the support provided were a significant achievement.

The long and consistent engagement of UNDP in the electoral process over the last 18 years has promoted a profound understanding of the needs of the beneficiaries and the institutions which oversee the electoral process. Nonetheless the establishment of the Special Elections Reforms Commission (SERC) meant that until reforms were agreed upon, the IEC and IECC were not active. This resulted in many persons employed by the election commissions previously, leaving the institutions prior to the reactivation of the EMBs. In addition, the Civil Service Commission Requirements and the change in the UNDP top up salaries had an impact on how many persons with prior experience in the EMBs remained. Furthermore, the leadership of both commissions had changed hands prior to the launch of UNESP meaning that their capacity was relatively low. To this end support from UNESP was very relevant.

While it is acknowledged that the specific groups targeted under the project had the capacity to receive and understand the project and its outputs; the sporadic timetable of the elections sometimes hampered the implementation of institution building activities to take place in a timely fashion

and meant that the project tended to focus on the conducting of the elections per se.

Nonetheless, the positive step that almost over half the required funds for the electoral process emanated from national sources for the first time alleviated a lot of pressure from the international community and allowed a more nuanced focus on “nuts and bolts” of the election.

While the project was considered Afghan led, the evaluation found that many of the key electoral decisions were driven by the government, (i.e., the introduction of the Biometric Verification System) undermining the independence of the IEC and their decision-making powers. Notwithstanding, the overall ownership of the objectives of the project by the beneficiary institutions was strong, although there was some evidence of a disconnect between the secretariat and the commissioners and amongst certain national staff.

The design of the log frame was considered pertinent to a certain extent and when looking at the eight outputs, the evaluation deemed each of them to be relevant and indeed addressed the needs of the two institutions. While the design was robust in the sense of what it set out to achieve, the design of the results framework was rather unwieldy, did not have any specific gender outputs and tended to use qualitative indicators over quantitative ones. A mix of the types of indicators is more representative and allows attitudes and shifts in norms and attitudes to be tracked, rather than recording the number of events taking place or the percentage of persons taking part. Furthermore, output indicators were added with each revision, which sometimes led to confusion and sometimes the numbering of original indicators would change further adding to this confusion.

Gender was promoted through the UNESP gender advisor as well as the gender unit, however the overall design, while referring to gender in several activities, the log frame did not have any specific output dedicated to it. Youth, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups were not mentioned at all in the results framework despite their prominence in Afghan society and the need to protect these groups.

Efficiency

The overall efficiency of the project is rated as satisfactory. Monies tended to arrive on time and while the project could have started earlier in order to ensure sufficient time for more long-term capacity building, donors provided funds according

to the needs of the project once the project was up and running. The first year was when most of the funds were spent, with over USD\$22m being spent on the voter registration alone.

The project delivery stands at 87% of the actual committed funds, there is still a total of USD17,373,522 which remains unspent as of 31st December 2021. The project had a total budget of USD156,594,921. The project did not suffer from any financial shortages, however in the last year of implementation, only Denmark and Sweden continued to contribute, as all the other development partners agreements had already expired. The management/governance mechanisms established were sufficient to oversee the programmatic and financial management of the intervention. The monitoring of the project was adequate and information flow was forthcoming. The reporting was of a good quality however, the design of the project sometimes made for repetition in reporting, and it was sometimes difficult to delink the results of the process and those of the project.

Effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of the project is deemed to be satisfactory. Despite the security context, Covid and the challenges with ensuring transparent and credible elections in an environment such as Afghanistan, the project did well to fully achieve 28 out of its 45 activities; 11 were partially achieved, 2 were completely off track with regards to their indicators and 4 were canceled or suspended. (Outputs 1-6)

Overall, most of the activities took place, but in some instances, targets were not met, this was particularly evident in timelines for the issuance of the final results. Both the Wolesi Jirga and Presidential elections suffered significant delays to the timeline in pronouncing the final result. These delays also impacted on some parts of the effectiveness of the project, especially with regards to establishing institutional change, and thus several activities were delayed to after the elections. The abrupt end to the activities as the country fell to the de facto regime meant that although some of these key activities took place, such as the development of the strategic plan, it was not approved on time and

implementation thereof could not take place as the project could not continue its activities.

Output one – The output focused on key IEC managerial and communications systems, providing support to strategic and operational planning, IEC structures, procedures, and systems, including the electoral environment in which the Commission operates. There was a specific focus on support to recruitment, capacity building and training. The output had a total of 12 indicators. The evaluation finds that a total of seven were achieved with three only partially achieved, and one not achieved⁴ and the other one was cancelled as there were no concrete plans to finalize the boundaries.⁵

Output two had as its overall focus to ensure that the ECC fulfils its essential role in electoral dispute resolution in accordance with the Afghan electoral legal framework. The project worked with the ECC to endeavor and? strengthen its capacity to resolve electoral disputes and to define and enforce the legal and regulatory requirements for participation in and contestation of the elections.

Out of the ten outputs, five of them were completely achieved, three of them partially achieved, one was not achieved at all, and one other one was dropped. As will be seen under the section on efficiency, very little investment was provided to the ECC in comparison to the IEC. It is acknowledged that IEC implements the elections, and it is only natural that they should have been afforded a greater proportion of the funds.

Output three which looked at communication and outreach. The output had eight output indicators, two of them were not planned and the other six were all achieved. To support this objective, UNESP provided advisory, financial, and operational support to both EMBs in their strategic approach to communications and outreach. This support included planning and implementing electoral awareness campaigns, as well as proactive electoral stakeholder engagement, specifically with political stakeholders, media, civil society, and observer groups.

Countries who practice democratic elections tend to have a polling center specific voter list. As a way of

⁴ Output indicator 1.2 was not possible as the Strategic Plan had not been finalised.

⁵ Output indicator 1.9 – availability of finalised boundaries

for WJ, DC and PC constituencies did simply not place and therefore this was not possible.

background, the absence of such a list in Afghanistan has been the Achilles heels of the electoral process, leaving elections process susceptible to voter list fraud, ballot stuffing and the creation of ghost stations. The absence of a polling station list meant that the allocation of ballot papers to polling stations tended to exceed the number of potential voters and opened the system to many facets of fraudulent acts. Furthermore, the consistent voter registration drives prior to each election, meant that millions of duplicate cards were in circulation, and efforts were not always made to remove duplicate registration cards. For example, for the 2014 presidential elections, the data from over four elections were combined to make one single register meaning that millions of surplus voter registration cards were in circulation and the VR resulted in almost 21,000,000 voters at the end of the elections.

In 2018 the IEC voided all these voter registration cards and despite the precarious security conditions, conducted a new registration drive under output four. This would be the first time in the history of the Afghan elections that individuals would be tied to specific polling stations. This consequently allowed the IEC to better estimate the number of voters at each polling center and thus send an accurate number of ballots to each, which reduced the possibility of mass ballot stuffing. Indicator 4.1 was said to be achieved, but the other three indicators 4.2, 4.3.1. and 4.3.2 were deemed as partially achieved. While a polling center specific list was finalized, there are some doubts to its overall accuracy which puts into question its credibility in technical terms. Notwithstanding the creation of a polling center specific list is a significant achievement given the circumstances.

Output five focused on the 2018 electoral process. Most of the planned activities were carried out successfully and despite the relatively little amount of time available to put everything in place, the project was able to fulfill most of the indicators in this output. It should be noted that some of the activities under this output also fell under the remit of the aforementioned outputs above. While 83% of the targets were achieved, the election results were not delivered on time, (one of the key targets) however this was outside the remit of the project.

Output Six focused on the 2019 Presidential elections which were originally scheduled for 20 April 2019 and then were shifted to the 20 July of the same year. Nevertheless, due to the delays in announcing the results of the Parliamentary elections, the Presidential elections did not take place until 28 September 2019. When examining

the activities which fell under the remit of output six, we need to separate the credible administration of the elections from the potential perceived success of electoral dispute resolution and the ensuing announcement of the winner. If we are to take all the indicators at face value, all the indicators under this output were achieved with only indicator 6.4 not being fully achieved. This indicator referred to complaints being adjudicated on time, which was relatively impossible given the sheer number of complaints lodged with the ECC. While the journey to reach the results was quite contentious, and overshadows the overall electoral process, there was a definite improvement on the 2018 elections, and there are some who commented that administratively they were the “best elections yet”. Furthermore, this was an Afghan led process and 50% of the costs were afforded by the Afghan Government – this is a significant achievement. The ensuing political brinkmanship and the spurious allegations of fraud which led to a political impasse and high-level negotiations were of course outside of the scope of the project, but nevertheless have weighed heavily over the overall credibility of the process.

Given the security and political challenges and the subsequent fall of the country to the de facto government in August 2021, outputs seven and eight were not completed.

Impact

The project ensured the holding of elections which is an essential step in the consolidation of the democratization process and was the most important aim of the project. Nonetheless the aftermath that ensued due to the protracted and opaque result process reduced the overall legitimacy of the elections per se. This has resulted in further disappointment in a system which is not seen as transparent nor a legitimate means to decipher power in the country but rather the backdrop to which deals are negotiated thereafter. To this end the evaluation team rates the impact as moderately satisfactory.

It should be noted that the project had a significant impact in enabling the electoral process to take place, this is no mean feat in the Afghan Context. There is a consensus that without the project, elections would not have been able to take place. Nevertheless, it was posited that the design of the project has tended to focus on the elections per se rather than adopting a longer-term approach. This has impacted on the ability of the project to provide long term capacity and to ensure a complete institutionalization of the results.

The legitimacy of the process has been called into question by many, and as a result the satisfaction of Afghans with the democratic process has dwindled. Notwithstanding, despite the 2019 process, satisfaction with democracy has risen several percentage points since the last cycle of elections and restored some confidence in the process, although security and political complexities continued to have a huge impact on the process overall.

The development of the current voter register was seen to be one of the key successes of the project and a significant step to ensuring more transparency in the process, especially at the polling station level. The development of such a register is/was key to the future sustainability of the elections.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the project is of course now under even more scrutiny given the new set of circumstances, whereby both EMBs have been dissolved and much of the physical assets have either been destroyed, looted and/or are now unaccounted for. To this end, the evaluation endeavored to examine sustainability from the point of view of the original design of the project prior to the fall of the regime. Nonetheless, it is almost a year after the takeover of the GoIRA by the de facto government, and there are no clear indications that elections will be held any time soon or even considered for the future. Given the current circumstance, the evaluation ranks this criterion as moderately satisfactory. Had this evaluation taken place in July 2021, the ranking would have been higher although with several caveats.

The evaluation did find that the overall design lacked a more sustainable approach, however the biggest impact on the sustainability of the project and thus the overall design was the security situation coupled with a nonlinear trajectory of the democratic process which meant that the project continued to work under “emergency mode” which made long term planning particularly difficult.

While long term capacity and institutional building is still needed, the capacity to run an election has been cemented, and an important cadre of election experts have been formed and the two EMBs were more confident and capable than they had been in previous electoral cycles. The fact that the UNDP project had reduced its size from over 500

internationals in 2005 to just over 50 in 2019 is a clear sign of the capacity built.

At present there is very little political will to hold elections in the country. While prior to the fall of the GoIRA, there was some reluctance to hold elections, the two EMBs were ready and wanted to continue the trajectory to build the two institutions. To this end, the project was on a positive trajectory to sustain the institutional and human capital built over the years, not only under UNESP but also under the previous election projects.

Gender and Human Rights

The project was awarded a gender marker two, however the actual design of the project did not provide for gender specific objectives or outputs. Furthermore, while data was disaggregated, indicators were not always gender sensitive, and while concerted efforts were made to mainstream gender across all the outputs, a more gender and human rights centered approach would have been needed to ensure a more informed, sustainable and nuanced approach. The project document failed to mention persons with disabilities, vulnerable groups, and minorities, although that is not to say that the project with the EMBs did not outreach to these communities. Some inroads were made however they were insufficient to impact on women’s political participation; this criterion was deemed as satisfactory.

Considering that the current trajectory of the country is unknown and democratic standards for elections are no longer recognized by the de facto government, the evaluation lists a mixture of recommendations which could be applied if a similar project or another project in Afghanistan was to be established. It also provides several recommendations that should be carried out to ensure better sustainability of the knowledge and the results achieved. While it is not known what will happen in Afghanistan in the future, it is essential that if there should be a leaning towards the holding of elections in the future, lessons learned need to be captured well in advance and adhered to, to avoid the mistakes of the previous projects and ensuring that such an approach will not have to start from scratch in the future. The evaluation lists the following recommendations:

Recommendation	Linked to Conclusion/criterion	Recommendation addressed to	Comments on Recommendations	Priority Status
Ensure that all documentation from all UNDP electoral support projects is archived.	Sustainability	UNDP	This is essential given the current status of the project and the danger of information being lost. It should be as representative as possible, not only including the documents of the UN but also from IEC and ECC in order to ensure that all documentation is archived. The current ToR is for only 22 days, it might take longer to ensure that all election projects are included.	High
Document Lessons learnt of electoral support in the last 15 years	Effectiveness / Impact	UNDP/EAD	While there have been several reports on the electoral process over the years which have critiqued the election process as well as some of the results of the various election projects, a robust meta evaluation of ELECT I, II, PIP and UNESP has not been conducted. Carrying out an assessment of the overall effectiveness and impact of the election support to Afghanistan could play a key role in identifying lessons learned and best practices which could be referred to for future projects (of a similar nature)	High
Creation of a database of electoral staff and consideration of opening up the electoral roster to highly experienced Afghan electoral experts.	Sustainability	UNDP	The various projects have built an important cadre of election experts and staff with knowledge on various aspects of the process. Many of these persons are currently outside of Afghanistan, but there are of course still persons living in Afghanistan. Should there ever be another election, it would be important to be able to garner the support of persons who are already experienced and to be able to contact them in the shortest time possible. Given the sensitivities of collecting names, advice should be sought from the UNDP Myanmar office how they collected databases of personnel and ensure a safe environment and host for the names.	Medium
Ensure that a clear mandate is drawn up between both parties in order to ensure operation- ability and to avoid misunderstandings between the UN agencies	Efficiency	UNDP/ UNAMA	Interlocutors suggested that in the latter half of the project, there were some misunderstandings between the two agencies as to who had the overall coordination role. A MoU should be clearly set up prior to the start up the project to clarify roles, responsibilities.	Medium (should a similar project or new project come into being)
Promote the use of the UN Electoral Roster for recruitment for electoral projects	Efficiency	UNDP/EAD	Election projects are timebound, and delays to the startup of election projects are often directly affected by recruitment times and the availability of suitably experienced personnel. This is a common critique of election projects around the world. The access to the UN Election Roster would	Medium

			ensure a quick turnaround and ensure that personnel are highly experienced and essential time is not wasted on the highly lengthy recruitment process.	
A long-term capacity development approach which builds not only on the capacity of individuals but is able to develop the institutional capacity of the EMBs	Effectiveness – Output One	UNDP/IEC	The institutional capacity at the end of August 2021 were still both weak, some of this is structural and inherent of the system. It is important to work with the institutions to instigate change and have not only a strategic plan but a plan of reforms that can be implemented over a five-year period within the electoral cycle.	Should be automatically incorporated into the design of a similar project as part of its strategy
More investment in a strategic and sustainable approach towards building the institutional and individual capacity of the ECC and the PIECCS	Effectiveness – output two	UNDP/ECC	A more robust long-term strategy on building institutional and individual capacity both at the national and provincial level. It would be important to ensure clear institution building strategy as well as a far stronger financial and human resources investment.	Should be incorporated into a new project should ECC ever exist again
Carry out a series of dialogues at the provincial and local level between IEC /ECC and key stakeholders.	Effectiveness – output three and impact	UNDP / UNAMA	The communication strategy developed with the support of the project was more of an informative nature whereby it was hoped the provision of information to key stakeholders would improve transparency. However, at the end of the day this did little to build relationships and trust and made the information sharing unidirectional. The holding of a series of dialogues on key issues, such as women, PWD youth and political parties directly with the PIEC and IECC would eventually build a more robust relationship and could potentially lead to more buy in by the political parties as well as setting the rules of the game well in advance. UNDP could consult with UNDP Bolivia to see how this worked. Furthermore, given UNAMAs presence in the field, they could have been the coordinating agency in the field.	Should a new project document ever be written (dependent on the desire to hold elections) or for use for similar projects
Endeavour to understand the current status of the voters register	Effectiveness – output four and sustainability	UNDP / UNAMA and de facto government	One of the key successful products of the project was the voters register. Since the fall of the country, the status of the voter's register is not clear. Given the huge investment, sensitivity of the data and the fragility of losing key software to keep the register alive, diplomatic quarters should endeavor to enquire about the status of the voters register.	Medium/High
Designation of a key high-profile person independent from the project to support the peace/transition process	Impact	UN agencies /International Community	In Bolivia, a highly skilled accepted diplomat was recruited to act as a go between key political parties, government, and the election commission. It is essential that it is someone who has the political and diplomatic clout to enter talks with key actors. While such a designation could be seen as interference, the UN has a	Medium (should a new project be established)

			neutral political role to play so it essential that such a diplomat has the clout to convene the key stakeholders.	
Align tracking of project indicators with those of the IEC and ECC to facilitate tracking and efficient monitoring of results	Efficiency	UNDP/IEC/ECC	Given the difficulties that were sometimes experienced to access data, and that all indicators were relevant to IEC/ECC activities, a better alignment of monitoring and evaluation practices including advisory and technical support should be afforded to the monitoring departments of the EMBs.	Medium (should a new project or a similar project be established)
Design of the project should have clear indicators which illustrate the success of each output. (Activity indicators should be separate from output indicators)	Relevance (Design) and Efficiency	UNDP	The overall framework was too wieldy and the inclusion of activities as indicators overwhelmed the tracking system and meant that if a particular qualitative amount was not achieved, it meant that the output was off track. A maximum of two to three output indicators should exist per result – such indicators should combine both qualitative and quantitative data and should be an adequate measure of the success of the output. Outputs where possible should remain the same throughout the lifetime of the project, and outputs should be removed or completely replaced in the reporting system if they are no longer valid.	
A strategic approach to engaging women in the process is needed informed by an appropriate gender analysis.	Gender and human rights	UNDP / UN Women /AWN	A gender analysis should be undertaken in order to understand the key challenges to women's participation, and this should feed into the project document. Gender specific outcomes with regards to shifts in mindset should be considered and not only gender targeted results. All data should be disaggregated and external expertise from UN agencies such as UN Women and national organizations such as AWN should be utilized more to address the challenges that women face both as voters and as candidates.	High (if the project takes place or a similar project)
More focus on vulnerable groups such as Persons with disabilities and youth	Gender and human rights	UNDP /UNICEF and other key actors	A focus on vulnerable groups such as PWDs, and youth was largely missing. Activities as well as a specific output denoting their needs was needed. Inclusivity is very difficult if a project does not also provide a focus on these groups. A human rights analysis would be needed to gauge the types of challenges that are faced by these persons.	High (it is essential that a new project includes youth especially given the youth bulge in the country. Likewise given the sheer number of PWDs in Afghanistan, a focus on this group is also needed.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

In March 2022, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Afghanistan commissioned an evaluation of its intervention the United Nations Election Support Project (2017-2021) Ms. Charlemagne Gomez, (an international consultant) and Fazl Menallah Amin (a national consultant) have been contracted to carry out the final evaluation. The evaluators hereby present the final report which provides their key findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations of the UNESP. It should be noted that while the project was deemed to end in December 2022, because of the takeover of the GoIRA by the de-facto regime, activities under the project came to an abrupt end in August 2021. Thereafter the project ceased all activities and proceeded to close the project which officially closed on 30th June 2022. The evaluation seeks to assess six of the DAC Criteria, including relevance, coherence, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability with gender and human rights cutting across the whole of the evaluation.

Support to the electoral process of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has been a key priority of the international community since the fall of Taliban in 2001. Several key players have supported the electoral process, including but not limited to the United Nations (UN), International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), The Asia Foundation, National Democratic Institute (NDI) and European Centre on Election Systems (ECES). The United Nations Development Programme has supported the electoral process since 2004 under the auspices of various projects.⁶ The current project under final evaluation, the Electoral Support Project (UNESP) implemented by UNDP has played a significant role in supporting the electoral management bodies (EMBs) within the period of 2017 – 2021⁷. The UNESP financial and technical assistance aimed to strengthen the capacity of the election Management Bodies (EMBs) to conduct the 2018 parliamentary election and 2019 presidential and provincial council elections. Afghanistan in its short democratic history

has faced several challenges including an increasingly fractured political environment, growing insecurity which has facilitated and promoting fraud, corruption, and disenfranchisement. This has inevitably led to lack of acceptance of electoral results by some causing further political instability in the country.

In 2014, the Presidential and Provincial elections were the fifth consecutive set of elections to be held. The Presidential Elections were to mark a milestone in the short history of Afghanistan's democracy, whereby the Presidential elections were to pave the way for the first ever democratic transfer of power, as the incumbent President, Hamid Karzai, was only able to stand for two terms as per the Constitution of 2004. While the elections did take place on 14 June 2014, the elections were reportedly riddled with fraud and spurious allegations of fraud which led to the political fracas whereby the two leading presidential candidates battled for political supremacy despite the results of an undisclosed audit of the popular vote during which 100% of the ballots were recounted. This led to the naming of a National Unity Government as per a political agreement brokered by then US Secretary of State John Kerry and a delay to the electoral timeline established by the Independent Election Commission in conjunction with the Afghan Government for future elections. Parliamentary elections which had been due in 2015 would only take place in 2018, meaning that the former parliament had been in power since 2010 -- the date of the previous elections.

Against the background of the 2014 elections, the results fraught with fraud,⁸ and several significant allegations against the IEC of embezzling funds, a breakdown in trust between the electoral bodies and the international community evolved, leading to a boycott by the major donors until electoral reforms could be decided upon. A long process of negotiation between all interested stakeholders begun and it was not until 2015 that the UNDP Project Implementation Plan (PIP) which would consider the recommendations provided under the Special Electoral Reform Commission (SERC) which was tasked by the government in 2015 to come up

⁶ The Voter Registration and Presidential Election Project 2004 and Enhancing Legal and Election Capacity for Tomorrow I (ELECT) 2006-2011.

⁷ The project officially closed on 30th June 2022, however both EMBS were disbanded in December 2021 by the de facto government.

⁸ Approximately one million votes were found to be fraudulent. The 2014 process also saw a higher voter turnout than previous years and given the lack of trust in the final presidential results, a 100% of all polling stations results was conducted.

with proposals for electoral reform. The persistent “culture of impunity” and the real and perceived fraud that has rippled through all levels of the electoral administration has largely remained and was not really addressed by the SERC. As a result of the 2014 electoral process, confidence in the IEC was low. In addition, the reality of the Afghan development timeline in accordance with the government’s different set of cultural norms, political priorities and a volatile security context has hampered the international community’s ability to successfully support and foster more credible elections.

Against this background, once an electoral calendar was established, the United Nations Election Support Project (UNESP) was established to become the programming vehicle to support the 2018 to 2024 election cycles in Afghanistan.

PART TWO. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

The project had two overall objectives:

Objective One: to build the capacity of the Afghan electoral institutions (the Independent Elections Commission (IEC) and the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) to implement elections in line with the national electoral legal framework and Afghanistan’s international commitments; and

Objective Two: To allow a programming mechanism for the international community to partially finance the elections as per the request of the Government of Afghanistan.

In total the project had eight key outputs:

October 2017 to December 2020:- Output One: Administration of credible elections if facilitated by the meeting of key IEC structural and planning milestones (11 output indicators); Output Two: Credible electoral dispute resolution (EDR) is provided by the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) (10 output indicators); Output Three: Afghan public and political stakeholders are informed of the electoral process and committed to participating in the next electoral cycle in accordance with the law (8 total output indicators); Output Four: A polling center specific voter list for the upcoming elections is produced by the IEC (4 output activities); Output

Five: The IEC and ECC provide credible administration of and electoral dispute resolution for the Wolesi Jirga and District Council elections, respectively. (6 total output indicators); Output Six: The IEC and ECC are assisted in the formulation of a comprehensive registration process supporting the 2019 Presidential election (6 output indicators) ;⁹ January 2021 to June 2022 - Output Seven: Electoral laws and legal frameworks amended in accordance with proposed electoral reforms. (six output indicators); Output Eight: The IEC and ECC can provide credible administration of, and electoral dispute resolution, for the Provincial Council elections and other related electoral events. (8 output indicators). (It should be noted that at the time of writing this report, both Election Commissions have been dissolved due to the Taliban takeover of the country in mid-August 2021 and therefore Outputs 7 and 8 could not be implemented.

PART THREE: EVALUATION OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE, AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

3.1 PURPOSE

According to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), to ensure quality, all interventions should be systematically evaluated on the quality and the results of interventions in the context of an evolving cooperation policy ensuring a specific focus on result-oriented approaches and the contribution towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This evaluation examines evidence of whether, why and how each of the results of each of the 8 outputs can be linked to the log frame and whether the original design has had any factors that have driven or hampered progress. The evaluation also examines the overall implementation of the project and documents lessons learned for improving project design, relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of similar projects for the future. The evaluation, therefore, provides an overview of the success of the project and examines the cause and effects links between the inputs and activities, and outputs, outcomes, and impacts. Ultimately the evaluation serves accountability purposes; enables decision making and provides learning and management purposes. The evaluation will be used

⁹ Please note that the number of output indicators varied according to the year of implementation, as various indicators were added to align with added activities

according to the type of election.

for reference for future similar interventions and will serve as a record of the overall performance of UNESP for both UNDP, beneficiaries and current and future donors.

PART FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1. EVALUATION APPROACH

The evaluation adopted the principles of a Utilization-Focused Evaluation - which entailed collecting and analyzing suggestions and recommendations based on the key stakeholders’ opinions in order to inform future programme design and the way forward for future election support projects under the auspices of UNDP. In order to ensure that issues of gender equality, disability, vulnerability and social inclusion were addressed in the evaluation, specific evaluation questions were included to cover these issues. Furthermore, every effort was made to ensure that a wide range of persons were consulted, including representatives from different civil society organizations, and women’s organizations. Where possible data was disaggregated and furthermore, each evaluation criterion endeavored to cover issues of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) as well as human rights.

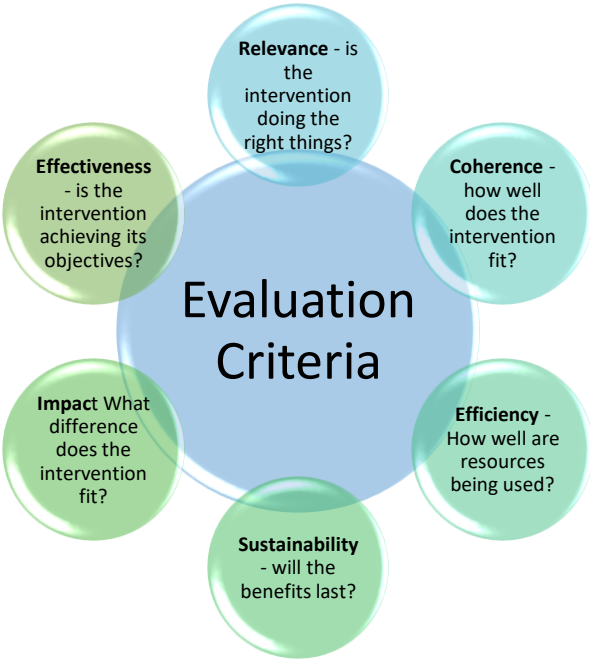


FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF EVALUATION CRITERIA

Using a mixed-method research design, this evaluation exercise was informed by a number of lines of evidence. The intervention was evaluated against the six DAC evaluation criteria, namely relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and coherence. The evaluation also assessed the consideration given to Gender Equality, Human Rights in the intervention’s design and implementation.

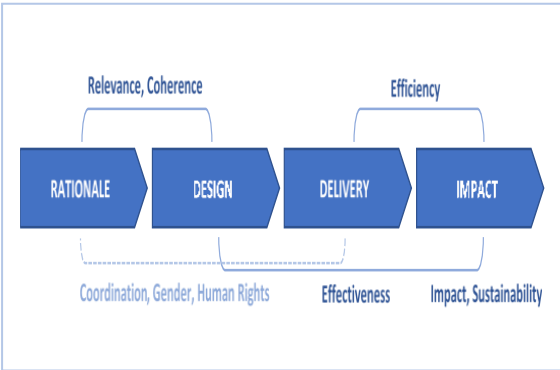


FIGURE 2:ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROJECT UNESP

4.2. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

For each of the evaluation criterion and building on the specific areas of analysis specified by the TORs, the consultants developed a comprehensive set of research questions, then regrouped and consolidated them into seven overarching Evaluation Questions. (The evaluation questions as well as the interview protocols are in Annexes I and V respectively)

4.3. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data collection toolkit that was utilized during both the desk review and field phases included the collection of quantitative as well as qualitative data/information. The Evaluation Matrix referred to in Annex I illustrates how the data/information was collected with the use of individual tools. As aforementioned, the theory of change and the evaluation matrix using the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development / Development Assistance Criteria (OECD/DAC) criteria were central to the overall evaluation framework.

The evaluation consisted of four distinct phases as illustrated in the figure 3 below.

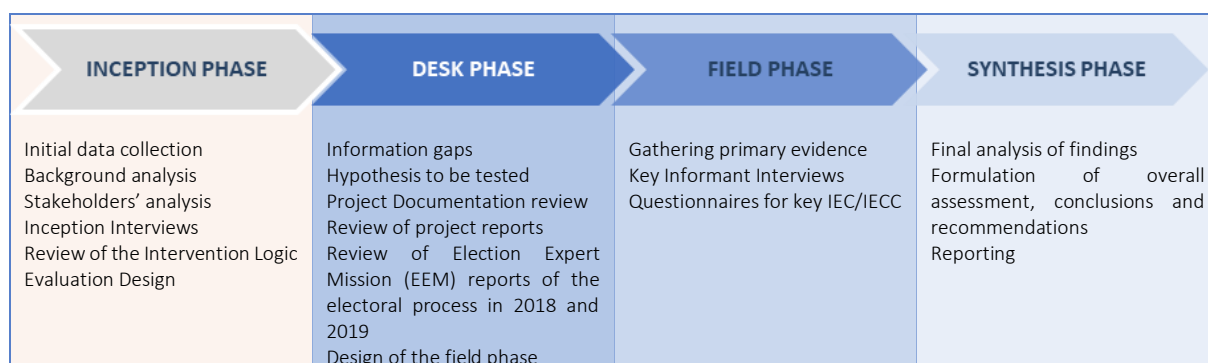


FIGURE 3: OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION PHASE

4.4. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTS

The evaluation reviewed over 75 documents, including documents from the project, annual reports as well as several key analytical documents both on the election process as well as Afghan development. This was complimented by a few interviews, a total of 39, with 7 females and 32 males. A list of possible interlocutors was provided by UNDP and an additional list of IEC and IECC personnel was compiled. The evaluation wrote to over a hundred persons, but due to the current situation in Afghanistan, many of the personnel especially from the IEC and/or IECC were either not available or in hiding or resettled in another country. Several persons also did not see the value in taking part in the interviews as the project in their eyes had finished and of course the electoral process has now been suspended. Notwithstanding, it was the premise of the evaluators to try and speak to as many persons as possible, therefore all persons on the lists were contacted at least two times, some did not answer, and others were simply not available. The evaluation endeavored to interview a wide range of stakeholders, including from both EMBs, the project, civil society, think tanks and of course UNDP, UNAMA, EAD and development partners. As well as key informant interviews taking place with 39 persons, all members of the IEC and IECC were sent a survey. Unfortunately, the response was quite low, and a total of seven persons responded. A copy of the survey and its results as well as the protocols for all of the interviews are included in annexes V to VII. The surveys mainly addressed the issue of impact and sustainability, whereby the KIIs covered all the DAC criteria.

4.5. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The evaluation has evaluated the project and its outputs against its context, theory of change and organizational performance. The theory of change was unpacked and is examined under the section of relevance. The evaluation also considered elements

not necessarily captured in the theory of change, such as policy dialogue, security constraints, contextual changes, Political context, Covid 19 and coordination (within the project, the donors and UNDP). The assumptions underpinning the theory of change were assessed for their continuing validity.

In short, the evaluation proposes organised primary data collection and analysis to review the action against its context, theory of change, and organizational performance. Data was analyzed to inform a complementary assessment against OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. (and coherence) as well as looking at cross cutting themes such as gender and human rights in all aspects of the project.

The evaluation has used two different rating scales. In order to rank each evaluation criteria – relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and coherence and gender and human rights:- the evaluation team utilized a scale to rank the project against a 4-fold rating scale as described below.

- Highly Satisfactory (4)
- Satisfactory (3)
- Moderately satisfactory (2)
- Unsatisfactory (1)

RATING	PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTION
4 HIGHLY SATISFACTORY (ALWAYS/ALMOST ALWAYS)	PERFORMANCE IS CLEARLY VERY STRONG IN RELATION TO THE EVALUATION QUESTION/CRITERION. WEAKNESSES ARE NOT SIGNIFICANT AND HAVE BEEN MANAGED EFFECTIVELY.
3 SATISFACTORY (MOSTLY, WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS)	PERFORMANCE IS REASONABLY STRONG ON MOST ASPECTS OF THE EVALUATION QUESTION/CRITERION. NO SIGNIFICANT GAPS OR WEAKNESSES, OR LESS SIGNIFICANT GAPS OR WEAKNESSES HAVE MOSTLY BEEN MANAGED EFFECTIVELY.
2 MODERATELY SATISFACTORY	PERFORMANCE IS INCONSISTENT IN RELATION TO THE

(SOMETIMES, WITH MANY EXCEPTIONS)	QUESTION/CRITERION. THERE ARE SOME SERIOUS WEAKNESSES. MEETS MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS/REQUIREMENTS AS FAR AS CAN BE DETERMINED.
1 UNSATISFACTORY	PERFORMANCE IS UNACCEPTABLY WEAK IN RELATION TO THE

(NEVER OR OCCASIONALLY WITH CLEAR WEAKNESSES)	EVALUATION QUESTION/CRITERION. DOES NOT MEET MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS/REQUIREMENTS.
---	---

FIGURE 4: SCORING OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE

In order to examine the attainment of individual results as prescribed in the log frame, each of the outputs has been ranked utilizing a traffic light system. Green signifies that the result was completely achieved as well as the target also being attained, orange means partially achieved, sometimes this has been interpreted that the activities were carried out, however the actual target had not been met. Many times, as will be explained under effectiveness, this was outside the purview of the project. Red means that the target was not achieved. This normally has meant that the target was so off track that it was not deemed to be achieved. As will be seen there were only three output indicators which were not achieved and these all referred to timing which was not in the prescribed timeline. The final reference utilized were the output indicators/activities which were either suspended or cancelled all together. These are highlighted in grey.

The evaluation has utilized mostly the same indicators set by the project under effectiveness and impact, however additional indicators have been included under the evaluation matrix (annex I).

4.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The evaluation has been conducted in line with latest UNEG guidelines (2020) on ethics incorporating the principles of integrity, accountability, respect, and beneficence. The evaluation team has ensured integrity by honoring honest and truthfulness in all communications and actions with each of the stakeholders. Given the background of both evaluators and their independence from the project itself, they were able to demonstrate independence, impartiality and incorruptibility in all interactions with the stakeholders as well as the writing of this report. The team has been transparent in all its actions and has ensured responsiveness to any questions that may have arisen. Furthermore, the team has exercised due care and has taken responsibility for all the comments and opinions mentioned in the report while maintaining confidentiality where it was requested and required. In order to ensure respect for all persons, and the engagement with stakeholders, the evaluation team has endeavored to consult with a wide range of different voices and perspectives and ensured that the evaluation approach has promoted meaningful engagements and fair treatment of all those involved in the evaluation. Finally, in order to promote beneficence, the evaluation team has striven to do good for the persons involved in the evaluation and assured that

no harm has come to either persons or the environment while conducting the evaluation.

4.7. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON EVALUATORS

The evaluation was conducted by an international election and evaluation expert as well as a national evaluation expert. The International evaluator, Charlemagne Gomez has a Bachelor of Arts in European Law as well as a master's in human Rights and Democratization. She has an additional master's degree in evaluation of public programmes and policies with a specialization in gender responsive evaluations. She has over 20 years of international experience, with over four years in-country experience and various years of working on evaluations of Afghan projects. She has worked mainly in the field of democratic governance, elections and gender and has worked for UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA as well as the EU and other international organizations. She has considerable experience in Afghanistan and is very familiar with the Afghan electoral context since 2004, being involved in former projects and working for the EU as an election specialist in 2010. She has also conducted a number of evaluations on electoral projects, including ELECT II, ECES – Proses Project and the ROM on the UNESP in July 2022. Charlemagne Gomez has conducted over twenty evaluations worldwide on election and democratic governance projects.

Fazl Menallah Amin earned Bachelor of Law degree (LLB) from the Faculty of Law and Political Science of Kabul University, he possesses more than 18 years' general experience and mostly worked for international companies (USAID funded projects), INGOs, SCOs and UN Agencies (UNDP, UNODC) and Afghan government. Mr. Amin has around 5 years' specific experience in the field M&E. He worked as M&E Specialist for Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc./USAID. Also, he worked for Checchi, MSI AMELA (USAID contractors) and other organizations as a consultant and actively contributed in conducting eight deferent mid-term evaluations, final evaluations and assessment of USAID and World Bank funded projects. He has extensive knowledge and experience of legal system and electoral context in Afghanistan as well as worked as a Commission Investigator for ECC. Mr. Amin role in UNDP UNESP Assessment included contribution in conducting desk review; developing tools; coordination of meetings with EMBs and other targeted respondents. He contributed in collecting data remotely via WhatsApp and Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

The combination of working together was key to the success of the evaluation, whereby the evaluators complimented each other's work with their experience, and knowledge of the country and the subject. Furthermore, it was important to have geographic representation in Afghanistan to understand the current context. The team worked well together ensuring a collaborative, collegial and transparent approach.

4.8. MAJOR LIMITATIONS

The evaluation faced some challenges and limitation in assessing the project. The evaluation was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as subsequent to the fall of the GoIRA and thus security conditions were not adequate for the international evaluator to travel to Kabul. Nonetheless, as during the height of the COVID 19 pandemic, almost all of the interviews were conducted remotely, the hiring of a national advisor ensured that some in person interviews could take place, although the majority of the interviews were indeed conducted remotely with the presence of both evaluators online. While conducting remote interviews did present a genuine challenge in accessing a handful of key stakeholders, and gathering information, the overall agenda was thus a little more spaced out in timing and accommodated the EID holidays and the fact that many of the key interlocutors found themselves outside of Afghanistan in different time zones. Furthermore, due to the current situation in Afghanistan and the dismantling of the EMBs, some members of the IEC and IECC were not available. To mitigate this gap, the international consultant utilized her contacts to mobilize some of the interviewees and also utilized past interviews conducted in July 2021 (by the same consultant) as background information in order to ensure effective triangulation of the data emanating from the interviews.

Given the current circumstances and the fact that the two EMBs have since been disbanded, it was very important to ensure that the interlocutors responses reflected their overall opinion of the project during its tenure and did not necessarily reflect the frustration that many of the interlocutors were undergoing due to hardship, security, and humanitarian challenges. This had the potential to cause a challenge as the interlocutors provided the evaluation with a mix of both positive and negative remarks on the project. Which sometimes led to a bias against the project and indeed the United Nations. The evaluation had two main strategies for mitigating this type of bias. First it emphasized the importance of maintaining confidentiality of all the interviewees and the independence of the evaluators from both UNDP and also any

stakeholder related to the Project. The second part of the strategy was to ensure that all questions were designed to elicit specific examples to help any type of response bias. Questions were designed in such a way that allowed the interlocutor to share their thoughts as well as ensuring that women were able to be open with regards to any challenges and limitations they may have had in general and within the project. The beneficiaries were at ease, and were overwhelmingly responsive in their answers., providing a mixture of both positive and negative answers depending on the question.

PART SIX. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1. RELEVANCE

Relevance assesses the extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change. The following section will therefore assess how clearly the projects goals and implementation are aligned with the beneficiaries and stakeholder needs, and the priorities underpinning the intervention.

Afghanistan is among the most challenging environments in the world [in which] to hold elections. It was a nascent democracy until the GoIRA fell to the de facto government in August 2021, thereby ending 20 years of democratization in Afghanistan. In the last twenty years, there have been several challenges in administering elections in Afghanistan including: an unverifiable number of eligible voters, many of whom are illiterate, a country spread over harsh terrain, corruption was pervasive, rule of law was tenuous where it has any hold at all, access to justice limited and therefore examples of election related violence were substantial and a culture of impunity for these violations was often times commonplace.

The project was considered as an essential vehicle to provide support to the electoral process. Despite the political, security and cultural context, the results emanating from the project and the support provided were a significant achievement.

The first case in point is to underline the importance of the UNESP. While an evaluation of this genre, could not completely ascertain what would have happened if the project had not supported the elections; comparisons with other similar processes

in countries such as Libya¹⁰, Myanmar and South Sudan¹¹ illustrate that democratic transition often fails at the first hurdle, and prior to the fall of Afghanistan, the country was undergoing its seventh set of elections, which is no small feat.

The international community has maintained its investment in Afghanistan since 2001¹², and while as will be seen under impact/ sustainability, the levels of funding went through ebbs and flows, there was always a commitment by the international community to fund the electoral process. There are of course several different organizations which have funded different parts/stages of the electoral process, but UNDP was well positioned to support the process for three key reasons; i) the consistent commitment of the UN to support the electoral process in Afghanistan since 2003; ii) UNDPs significant experience in affording support to electoral processes all around the world; iii) the neutrality of the UN Agencies in a heavily politicized context.

These three reasons have meant that UNDP had the experience, political acumen, neutrality, and knowledge to ensure that the projects' goals were consistent with the beneficiaries' requirements aligning these with other important national and global goals. Channeling the project through the basket fund meant that a wealth of nations contributed to the project without earmarking individual political interests and allowing a mix of countries to not only contribute to the process but to be better informed about the political process. Notwithstanding, throughout the decade and a half of technical assistance to the electoral process, the United States, the UK and European Union have been by far the largest donors.

The long and consistent engagement of UNDP in the electoral process over the last 18 years promoted a profound understanding of the needs of the beneficiaries and the institutions which oversee the electoral process. Nonetheless the establishment of Special Elections Reforms Commission (SERC) meant that until reforms were agreed upon, the IEC and IECC were not active. This resulted in many persons leaving the EMBA as well as the changes in the Civil Service Commission Requirements and the change

in the UNDP top up salaries, which had an impact on how many persons with prior experience in the EMBA remained. Furthermore, the overall leadership of both commissions had changed hands prior to the launch of UNESP meaning that essential knowledge had been lost. To this end support from UNESP was very relevant.

The overall objective of the project was "To build the capacity of the Afghan Electoral Institutions (the Independent Elections Commission (IEC) and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) to implement elections in line with the national electoral legal framework and Afghanistan's international commitments; and 2) To allow a programming mechanism for the international community to partially finance the elections as per the request of the Government of Afghanistan. "

Pursuant to the 2004/2005 electoral process, UN technical assistance and support to the electoral process has been channeled through UNOPS under UNAMA's lead as per the UNAMA electoral mandate. The 2006-2011 UNDP Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow project (ELECT I) and then ELECT II provided support to the Afghan electoral process until 2015. The level of financial support to the electoral process started to lull after the 2014 elections. This occurred for several reasons, including the negative outcome of the internal financial audit at the IEC which was conducted in 2014/2015. Furthermore, given the contentious outcome of the 2014 presidential elections, a Special Elections Reforms Commission (SERC) was set up to decide on reforms for the next electoral cycle. To ensure that vital gains were not lost, the Project Initiation Plan (PIP) was developed and would serve as a bridge between ELECT II and UNESP. Unfortunately, given the disappointment by international partners over the 2014 process, very few donors were interested in funding the PIP until decisions on electoral reforms were taken and the date of future elections were clear. Denmark, DFID, Germany, SDC, UNDP and USAID, provided money to a total amount of USD\$9.7 million, however once these funds were exhausted, only USAID further contributed to the PIP. UNESP which was developed in 2017 under PIP's supervision became operational in October 2017. It started its life with a total amount of received donations of USD\$46,763,490

¹⁰ Elections have not taken place since 2014

¹¹ Elections have not taken place since independence in 2011.

¹² Since August 2021, the international community has withdrawn a large part of its support.

with a full budget of USD\$104,359,721. Once the dates of the parliamentary elections were announced, the project as well as the budget were expanded, and the project was going at full speed to provide adequate support to the upcoming Wolesi jirga elections earmarked to take place in October 2018.

The fact that UN had provided support to the electoral process since 2004 made them aware of the needs of the election commission. The rationale also behind PIP was to look at these needs and address them in a project document once the SERC had delivered its conclusions and recommendations for reform. Furthermore, several Needs Assessment Missions (NAM) took place prior to the inception of the project and during its tenure. The NAMs ensured that not only EMBs were consulted, but also a wider range of stakeholders, ; which enabled buy in and allowing the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (UNED) to better gauge the needs of the process and the two institutions.

In 2016, shortly after the package of reforms were announced, commissioners were appointed and both the IEC and IECC were reinstated. The 2015 evaluation of ELECT II mentioned that any new project that would be developed would be “narrower in scope” than that of ELECT II. At the same time, the final evaluation acknowledged the need for the continuation of institution and capacity building well into the next electoral cycle

The specific groups targeted under the intervention had the capacity to receive and understand the intervention and its outputs; however, the sporadic timetable of the elections sometimes hampered the implementation of institution building activities to take place in a timely fashion.

The overall design of the project could have benefitted from a stronger capacity development component. The evaluation, however, recognizes the importance of the advisory role and “on the job” mentoring. This support was pivotal to ensuring the elections would take place. Nonetheless, while certain activities had been written into the project to support the institutional development of the institutions, these activities tended to run in silo from the other results of the project, thus meaning that they were literally implemented (to some extent) in the last months of the project and did not feed into the overall administration of the elections as intended.

While the electoral process has received technical assistance from the UN since 2004, long term sustainability of the capacity already built has been

rather short lived. Over the years, the former Joint Election Management Body (JEMB) transitioned into the two independent commissions of today (albeit they have been since disbanded). Both election commissions have suffered losses in personnel due to repeated changes in the political appointments of commissioners and the CEOs of EMBs. Furthermore, experienced election staff from the IEC have either left to continue their professional/personal trajectory and/or many have during the IEC’s attempt to address internal fraud and/or corruption were expelled from the Election Management Body (EMB). IECC, which has tended to receive less international support between electoral cycles also lost key personnel (with only 41 persons being retained from 2014) and therefore both institutions were in dire need of support to strengthen the overall organization of the elections as well as to build their long-term capacity.

The IECs recruitment of vacant Tashkeel posts were to be fast-tracked throughout 2017 but would also be staggered over several months and therefore persons employed would require training and mentoring. Most of them did not have experience in conducting the 2014 elections and very few had experience in the conduct of the parliamentary elections in 2010, therefore the support from the UNESP was paramount to support them in the planning of the upcoming electoral processes. To this end, the intervention had the potential to adapt to the institutional and human capacities of the beneficiaries.

While to a certain extent, long term capacity building was seen as pivotal to the intervention, the timing of the elections and all the problems which ensued after the electoral process in 2018 has meant that the support provided was “trying to build the plane, while actually flying it”. This has meant that much of the capacity, and even the strategic plans envisaged to strengthen the overall capacity of the EMBs were relegated to the backburner to provide support for the electoral process per se. Key induction trainings were indeed conducted, however the essential long-term capacity building and “know how” in relation to elections was still pending when the two EMBs were dissolved in late 2021. It is of course important to note that the project was not truly up and running until about six months prior to the parliamentary elections in 2018. Furthermore, the last-minute introduction of the BVR as agreed by the GoA and political parties meant that important resources were diverted to ensure implementation of this decision. To this end, substantial support did not commence until a few months prior to the elections, and there was very little room for study exchanges,

key trainings, and all the relevant procedures to be developed, including strategic planning. This was further impacted upon after the 2018 elections when the results were delayed and there were no opportunities between the parliamentary and presidential elections to impart the capacity Project of the intervention. The 2019 process was just as protracted and then the onslaught of Covid and the deteriorating security situation all weighed down heavily on the projects' ability to carry out key institutional building activities. More details will be given under impact and sustainability.

The government for the first time committed over half the required funds for the electoral process – this alleviated a lot of pressure from the international community.

Over the last decade, the importance of ensuring an Afghan owned and/ Afghan led process has been increasingly prioritized albeit at different stages and with varying consequences on the process. While it was considered that the 2014 elections were Afghan led and hence the ELECT II project was under a (National Implementation) NIM modality, the ensuing discovery of mismanagement of international funds and the weaknesses in the governments' financial and procurement procedures made it essential that a future project should follow a Direct Implementation (DIM) rather than a NIM approach. In terms of Afghanization of the process this may have been disappointing for some, however in terms of project transparency it was a necessity.

With regards to the financial capacities of the EMBs, it is worth noting that the previous support under the UN to the EMBs tended to support the financial needs of the staff, which put an important burden on the international community, and did very little for long term stability, as many staff salaries were topped up under the former projects. Prior to the commencement of this intervention, the UN went to great lengths to ensure that the recruitment and the payment of salaries would come under the purview of the Government. The government committed to over USD\$90m. This has enabled the project to support key areas of assistance outside of direct financial support for salaries. This in effect, tended to create a division between some staff, as some of the key staff's salaries were topped up while others were not. Therefore, the shift of the government to support the key elements of the electoral process, particularly staff, was an important step both in ownership of the process as well as sustainability of the institution.

Many of the key decisions were driven by the government, undermining the independence of the IEC and their decision-making powers.

Notwithstanding, while according to the mandate of the IEC, it should have overseen the whole process, last minute government decisions meant that the IEC had to follow their lead. There was indeed full Afghanization of the process, however it was rather one-sided and structural deficiencies within the IEC and the overwhelming control exercised by the presidential office and other political figures and heads over certain aspects of the process, meant that IEC did not always fully own the results of the project.

This is well illustrated by the late introduction of the Biometric Voter Verification devices. (BVV). Some interlocutors alluded to their disappointment at the limitations of the advisory role of the project, meaning that key decisions over the electoral process were largely taken out of the hands of the project. Frustrations were also expressed around the inability of the international community to engage more fully with key stakeholders prior to the holding of elections to sway decisions which had the potential to derail the process. A more robust oversight may have still been necessary, but at this juncture in the development of the country and after so many years of support to the same institution, such interference was frowned upon and simply was not appropriate. The limited advisory role of the project resulted in the projects apprehensive support to implement Afghan decisions such as the introduction of BVV irrespective of its implementation not being the most viable and suitable option given the circumstances and the tight timeline under which the IEC had to perform. The Afghan led process has meant that in many instances, the project has been unable to completely control the parameters of the project, especially with regards to the overall outcome of the elections which has been classically dominated by Afghan decisions which have impacted on the level of legitimacy, transparency and even inclusiveness of the process. Nevertheless, as will be seen under effectiveness, impact and sustainability, the advisory role undertaken by the project was seen as pertinent given the capacity built by the previous electoral projects.

RATIONALE

The overall ownership of the objectives by the beneficiary institutions was strong, although there was evidence of a disconnect between the secretariat and the commissioners and amongst certain national staff.

The evaluation posits that while there existed an overall commitment by the institution to the project, - it is indeed the commissioners of the EMBs who sign the project document - there was an apparent disconnect between the Commissioners who are signatory to the project document and the secretariat staff who often received the bulk of the assistance. This was further impacted upon by the fact that all the commissioners were replaced after the 2018 elections due to claims of allegations of fraud, and all but one or two of them were imprisoned for such actions. As a result, a chasm was created in their ability to provide technical guidance and experience of electoral processes as well as the absence of a full understanding of the overall objectives of the project and the advisory approach it was taking.

It is also worth noting, both EMBs have not necessarily enjoyed a completely fruitful relationship, this is both relevant in the inter and intra relationship of the individual EMBs and between them. This resulted in a disconnect between the two organizations and the ensuing decisions, particularly around the pronouncement of election results in late 2018 and early 2019, which inevitably impacted on the overall objective of the intervention being fulfilled. Furthermore, the overall issue of ownership was further muddled with the introduction of the new commissioners in 2019, who had of course not been party to the initial negotiations for the design of the intervention. While procedures had been developed, particularly in the IECC, these were often ignored by the new commissioners. This impacted particularly on the transparency of the process.

The overall ownership of the intervention by the key stakeholders can be observed from two sides. On the one hand the overall outputs and their achievement have largely been owned by the election management bodies and the support received thereto is greatly appreciated. Nonetheless, as will be illustrated below, the vertical framework does not always have a linear path to achieving the overall objective of the intervention, i.e., to have support that will lead to more credible elections whose results are accepted by voters, society, and political actors. (For further details, see under impact) It could be said that full ownership was afforded to the horizontal part of the results framework, however the overall objective was always difficult as it relies on so many external factors beyond the capacity of the IEC and the IECC to conduct transparent elections. While the ultimate responsibility for the integrity lies with the election

management bodies, the influencing factors, the overall political system, and the significance it has on the overall process weigh down too heavily for the election management bodies to be completely independent of the process and not fully prey to the external political pressures, particularly at the pronouncement of the votes and the acceptance of voters, civil society, and political parties.

[The project ensured a high alignment with UN policies and strategic priorities of the country.](#)

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was established by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1401 with the original mandate to support the implementation of the Bonn Agreement (December 2001). Since then, there have been several renewals of the mandate with the last one being renewed on 17 March 2022 for an additional one year.

UN Security Council Resolution 2344 (2017) covered the tenure of the UNESP and explicitly outlined and mandated the UN to help support the organization of future elections (parliamentary) as well as looking towards electoral reforms. To this end, the project was provided with the mandate to support the electoral process which is inherently endorsed by all member states.

UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017 set out to help “countries achieve the simultaneous eradication of poverty and significant reduction of inequalities and exclusions. It also included mandating UNDP to assist electoral institutions so that they are “able to perform core functions for improved accountability, participation and representation, including for peaceful transitions.”

[UNDP Afghanistan Country Programme Document \(CPD\) 2015-2019](#)

It states that the CPD will “address governance deficits and responds to the need to strengthen the accountability of institutions” and within this, and the under leadership of UNAMA, “UNDP electoral cycle support will assist national institutions in better management of presidential, parliamentary, and local election processes. The relevant CPD Outcome indicator (1.2) was that “the capacities of the electoral management bodies in planning, preparing and conducting elections and referenda are enhanced.” The baseline for the indicator was that the IEC and IECC have a strategic and operational plan, but there are deficiencies in planning and implementation of the plan. The target was therefore “IEC and IECC have a strategic and/or

operational plan that is fully implemented with few or no planning or implementation challenges”

It should be noted that the IECs strategic plan expired in 2016 and thus the new strategic plan was to set the direction of the institution for the coming five to seven years. IECC did in fact have a strategic plan but however was lost between cycles. (Please see under effectiveness)

SERC

The SERC, the Special Electoral Reform Commission was tasked by the government in 2015 to come up with proposals for electoral reform. According to the Afghanistan Analyst Network many of the feature of the new law which came into force in September 2016, shifted a lot of burden onto the IEC.

“.. the most controversial and complicated changes have been passed on to the IEC to decide on. These include, most prominently, an instruction to decrease the size of the electoral constituencies for the parliamentary and provincial council elections, which could usher in an overhaul of the electoral system. This will be a politically fraught exercise, which will pave the way for a new round of bickering and delay. It also threatens to drag the newly established commission into political controversy.”¹³

Notwithstanding, because of the introduction of the law, the president then appointed and inaugurated a new Independent Election Commission (IEC) and Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC). While many of the recommendations from the SERC and in line with the new electoral law, were largely ignored or simply no time was available for them to come into effect, the closure of the SERC provided new impetus for UNDP to design the UNESP which would commence in 2017.

Overall Design

When looking at the eight outputs, each of them were relevant and indeed addressed the needs of the two institutions.

Output 1 targets the IEC and for the first time in its history of support to the IEC, the intervention no longer supports many IEC operational and staff costs. Invariably it does support the IECs management and communications system as well as strategic and operational planning and monitoring and evaluation of IEC structures, procedures, and systems. The intervention also supports the recruitment of vacant Tashkeel post and provides training to IEC staff who have been largely replaced since the last elections held in 2014 (presidential elections).

Output 2 provides much needed support to the IECC, which under the previous elections, was supported by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). IECC has tended to receive less focused support due to debates on whether it should be a legally permanent or non-permanent institution¹⁴ and thus the overall sustainability of prior support, and the results has hitherto been low. Furthermore, given the political context and as former processes have demonstrated, the electoral dispute resolution system has been largely overwhelmed and clear and concise and sustainable procedures have not been put in place.

Output 3 attempts to address the loss in confidence in the electoral institutions and the process. Without such trust, the success of the electoral process is in jeopardy and clear understanding and awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the broad range of actors beyond the IEC is paramount to promote a credible and peaceful process.

Output 4 is crucial, as it provides support to the long overdue process of producing a voters list tying voter to a specific polling center. The lack of a reliable and accurate voters’ list tied to specific polling centers has been the Achilles heel in the electoral process since the first democratically held elections in 2004. The support provided for this process is paramount in weeding out much of the fraud and from preventing double voting and setting up of ghost stations. It was also crucial for overall electoral operations so that the IEC could know who was voting in these locations and send the correct number of ballots without having to send thousands of extra ballots because no one knew where people

¹³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-s-incomplete-new-electoral-law-changes-and-controversies>.

¹⁴ This debate has meant that the IECC has been closed down in its entirety and has mostly had to start from scratch during each cycle of elections.

would show up to vote. The extra ballots have given rise in previous elections for opportunities ballot stuffing.

Output 5 provides the nuts and bolts of the 2018 election process, (Wolesi Jirga Elections, including the Ghazni Wolesi Jirga elections)) which in previous process has sometimes meant the failure or success of the process. To this end, this Output provides full technical, financial, and advisory support to IEC to aid them with operational planning, procedures, procurement, logistics, recruitment, training, and public outreach during the electoral cycles. The Output also provides support to the ECC with public outreach.

Output 6 is like output five whereby it continues to support the electoral process for the 2019 presidential election. The output refers to the result that both the IEC and the IECC should be able to provide credible administration of, and electoral dispute resolution for the 2019 Presidential election.

Output 7 looks to support the electoral reform process whereby electoral laws and legal frameworks are amended in accordance with any proposed reforms. This output is particularly pertinent, as some of the challenges facing the electoral process are indeed structural and need important reforms to maximize the overall efficiency of the electoral process. Nonetheless the adherence to electoral reform requires important political will from all actors, and this has proven difficult in the past.

Output 8 was added in 2020 whereby provincial council elections were due to take place, in 2021 although there was no concrete timetable. Provincial council elections have traditionally taken place in parallel with other elections and the last ones to take place were in 2009. District council elections were due to take place in 2018 for the first time but were indefinitely postponed as insufficient numbers of women put themselves forward for nomination.

It should be of note that outputs seven and eight while very relevant were of course never achieved. This was outside of the scope of the project which relied on an established electoral timeline, and commitment by the government to conduct the elections and to promote electoral reform.

The design was robust in the sense of what it set out to achieve, however the design of the results framework was rather unwieldy, did not have any specific gender outputs and tended to use

qualitative indicators over quantitative. A mix of the types of indicators is more representative and allows attitudes and shifts in norms and attitudes to be tracked, rather than recording the number of events taking place or the percentage of persons taking part.

To speak of the design, the project while addressing the key needs of the beneficiaries put each output in a modular format, whereby activities and indeed goals under some of the outputs crossed over to other outputs. This made for confusion in reporting and did little to facilitate monitoring of the project as well as overcomplicating the analysis of the effectiveness of the project for this evaluation. While it is normal to add new outputs with regards to the electoral reform and elections in Ghazni, this should have meant that reporting should have only come under these outputs, but instead similar activities were reported across several outputs even when one election had been finalized. There was also some confusion with numbering of outputs, which differed across annual reports, and additional numbering of new activities under an already established output. In a project of this size, erring on the side of simplicity would have been much more effective, particularly given the trajectory of Afghan elections in the past, whereby there are almost always last-minute changes, which inevitably impact on the overall timelines and a protracted and contentious results process.

As aforementioned, the choice of a results framework with such detailed indicators, i.e., indicators were represented by individual activities, prove to be cumbersome for reporting purposes (and evaluation purposes) and did not really encapsulate what the general output was meant to achieve. While of course each level both at the horizontal and vertical level should have their respective indicators, identifying the indicators as activities made it harder to assess whether a particular output was being achieved, as it only really denoted if a particular activity had taken place or not. Each output should have been allocated two to three indicators at most, and the overall number of outputs could have been better narrated by outlining the support for each institution, that way additional activities for different elections could have been added /replaced without the need of for introducing a new output every time a different election was due to take place. Furthermore, the fact that IEC and IECC had their own individual outputs, many of the same activities were referred to in each of the elections under output five and six, and it was difficult to ascertain how near the project was in achieving each objective. Notwithstanding, it is of course natural to separate the electoral

processes especially with regards to funding, whereby additional money was added or provided to the presidential elections by specific donors however at the end of the day, the overall outcome of achieving legitimate, inclusive and transparent institutions should have been no different between any of the elections that were supported by the project, and the same output could have been reported upon but under different elections.

Gender was promoted through the UNESP gender advisor as well as the gender unit, however the overall design, while referring to gender in several activities, the log frame did not have any particular specific output dedicated to it. Youth, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups were not mentioned at all in the results framework.

The IEC has had a gender unit for over 15 years; however, gender and women's participation has not always been a specific priority of the election commission. To this end and considering women's challenges to exercise their political rights in Afghanistan, the project did assign a gender specialist. Nonetheless, while looking at each of the outputs, there were no gender specific outputs per se, and although women were mentioned in some of the activities/indicators, these normally referred to how many women would be registered, nominated etc rather than dealing with the root causes of why women were in fact discriminated against in the process. No specific activities were indeed conducted to mitigate the difficulties that women face overall, although there were of course some activities geared towards women and their participation, but once again these were more aligned to gender targeted results rather than gender responsive results.

Furthermore, there was absolutely no mention of persons with disabilities and/or youth or other vulnerable groups. While operational plans and procedures did sometimes refer to PWDs, given the fact that Afghanistan has one of the highest number of persons who live with disabilities and has a high youth demographic, it would have been important to include these groups in the overall design of the project to ensure compliance with the LNOB principles. As a result, there was very little reporting on these issues, and no specific activities and/or outputs specifically mentioned these demographics.

6.2. COHERENCE

In order to ensure coherence, the Election Support Group which comprised the key donors – the European Union, the Governments of Australia, Sweden (on behalf of the Nordic Plus) Germany, Japan, United Kingdom, the United States of America – as well as NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and UNAMA met regularly throughout the project. It was chaired by UNAMA and convened on a weekly basis to discuss the electoral process and to share progress and information. The meetings were normally attended by the ambassadors and enabled the development partners to be always informed of the process.

While there were sufficient mechanisms to inform the development partners, several key electoral assistance providers as well as civil society organizations (CSOs) mentioned that would have liked to have more interaction with the intervention to understand what they were doing and to better coordinate activities. Nonetheless the project did make efforts to try and coordinate with different groups and inform the groups accordingly of key information.

UNDP provided significant support to the electoral process, however, there were several other actors who lent support to different aspects of the process. This included the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) National Democratic Institute, (NDI) and European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES). Both IFES and NDI are mainly supported by USAID (the United States Agency for International Development) funds while ECES was supported by the European Union under a general agreement.

IFES and NDI provided support under the Consortium for Elections and Political Process (CEPPS), which sought to strengthen local and national capacity to promote good governance, a core component of which is working with domestic observation groups to ensure citizen participation and oversight of the electoral process. Since 2018, NDI had conducted programmes to strengthen civic participation in the electoral process, including data driven citizen oversight and election monitoring of the 2018 and 2019 elections. NDI has offices in Kabul, Balkh, Herat and Nangarhar.¹⁵

¹⁵ The provincial offices were closed in 2020 and the

country representative office was closed in 2022.

IFES also worked to help Afghans make their government more responsive to citizen needs, by equipping civil society organizations with advanced advocacy skills to promote community priorities and hold leaders accountable to their commitments effectively and sustainably. The two organizations, NDI and IFES as well as the International Republican Institute (IRI) also supported other parts of the process, including post-election reviews, CSO engagement in the electoral reform process, engagement of political parties in the electoral reform process and electoral technology guidance. Other activities have included focus group discussions on women's participation in elections as well as a review of election violence on women in Afghanistan.

The European Center for Election Support (ECES) also provided support under the guise of "Project in Support of Enhanced Sustainability and Electoral Integrity in Afghanistan (PROSES)" for a period of 21 months. The overall objective of the action was to foster more credible elections in Afghanistan, marked by reduced vulnerabilities to electoral integrity. It had an overall budget of 3.5 MEUR.

The collaboration and cooperation with UNESP could have been stronger with closer collaboration with all the entities. While work was not duplicated, there was sometimes misunderstandings by the EMBs who also received support from one or several of these entities. For example, shortly prior to the 2018 elections, without prior knowledge of UNESP, ECES took away key staff for training abroad, which also impacted on UNESPs ability to conduct their own training as well as finalize procedures. Notwithstanding, the EMBs mentioned that sometimes they felt that other entities such as IFES and ECES were more in tune with their needs, particularly as these organizations were not always so limited by strict restrictions of movement. While it is important that of course there is a healthy competition between different agencies supporting the electoral process, and a good working relationship sometimes depended on the personalities rather than the entity, collaboration could have been further fortified to allay some of these misgivings and to dissuade other organizations from conducting trainings as key vantage points of the process. In several countries, collaboration has always been dependent on individual personalities, but the development of a strong memorandum of understanding and ways to cultivate these relationships may have gone a long way to ensuring a more nuanced approach and could have avoided organizations from carrying out trainings during key times. A good example of collaboration is NDI, IFES

and UNDP imparting BRIGDE trainings together. This shares the financial and programmatic burden as well as builds more solid relationships between the entities.

While it can be deemed that the support provided by the UNESP was complementary to the support provided by the other organizations, much of the support of UNESP focused on IEC and IECC. There was therefore very little overlap with the activities of the other organizations, which mainly supported civil society and political parties and women candidates (although ECES did end up providing capacity building to members of the IECC and the IEC to a lesser extent) given the important role that some of these organizations played through direct contact with many of the key players, such as political parties, civil society and candidates, all agencies could have benefitted from a more strategic approach to complement the soft elements of the electoral process with the support that was given by UNDP to the two EMBs.

6.3. EFFICIENCY

The definition of efficiency is how well are resources being used. The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

The overall efficiency of the project is rated as satisfactory. Monies tended to arrive on time and while the project could have started earlier to ensure sufficient time for more long-term capacity, donors provided funds according to the needs of the project. The first year was when most of the funds were spent, with over USD\$22m being spent on the voter register alone.

The original budget of UNESP was placed at \$104.3million and once elections were officially scheduled the budget increased to \$156.5million. In total eleven donors contributed to the project, with United States Agency for International Development (USAID) contributing 47% of the overall budget and the EU 25% of the budget. Most of these countries have continued to support the Afghanistan Electoral Process over the course of the former projects as well, although after remnant funds from ELECT II

were exhausted,¹⁶ USAID was the only donor which in fact supported the PIP.

The financing agreements stretched to different intervals within the timeframe of the project; Department for International Development (DFID-UK), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia (DFAT) and Germany’s contribution ended on 31st December 2020. Almost all these monies were spent, with 426,000 still pending as of the end of December 2021.

The EU contributed nearly 26 million dollars in total and their agreement ended on the 31st July 2021. A total of USD8,847,680 has not been spent and will

be returned to the EU unless there is an agreement with UNDP to repurpose the funds. The funding agreements of Italy, Sida, Norway, Japan and USAID respectively finished on 31st December 2021 with a total of USD 7,349,891 being unspent from these five donors. Norway and Denmark are the only countries which are continuing to support the project financially up till the projects end which is foreseen for the 30th June 2022. It is envisaged that the funds committed both by Denmark and Norway will be spent as they are the only two countries which are supporting the final phases and closure of the project (January 2022-June 2022).

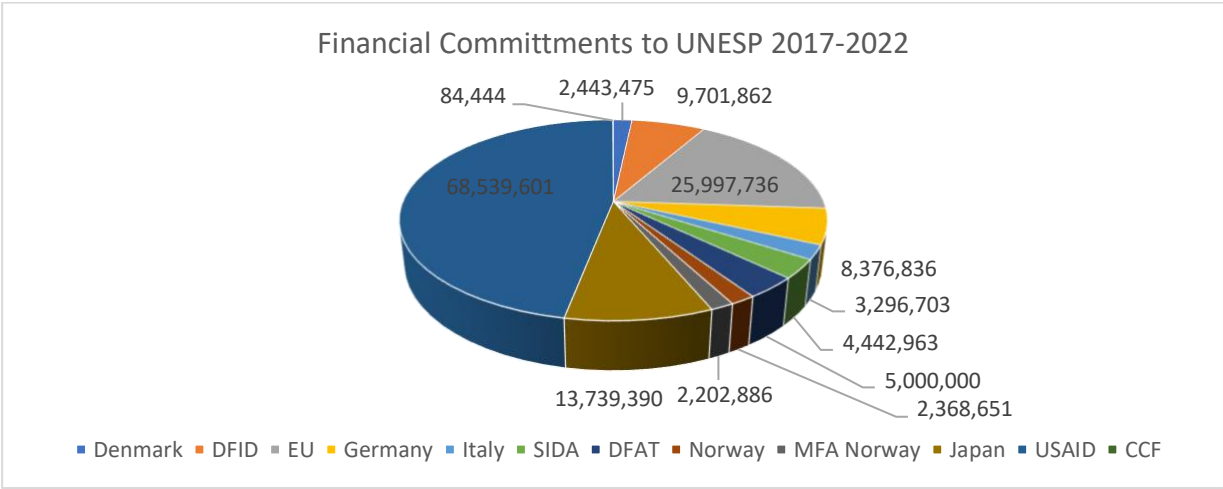


FIGURE 5: FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS OF DONORS TO UNESP 2017-2022

As aforementioned, while overall spending accounts for 87% of the actual committed funds, there is still a total of USD17,373,522 which remains unspent as at 31st December 2021. The reason for the underspending is of course directly attributable to the Covid pandemic whereby many activities were unable to take place as planned and then of course the fall of Afghanistan to the de facto government in August 2021. Both election commissions were subsequently dissolved, and UNDP could no longer continue to support any electoral processes which had been indefinitely suspended.

The fact that the initial budget was only estimated at USD 15m and suddenly increased to over USD146,000,000 placed a huge burden on the team,

whereby the small team in place were challenged with aligning the projects needs while at the same time trying to expand the project to its full scale in a relatively short amount of time. UNDP tends to experience delays in establishing / expanding electoral projects as UNDP are reluctant to utilize the UN EAD Election Expert Roster. This is of course to ensure due diligence with regards to their recruitment processes but does not necessarily guarantee the best person for the job. UNEAD has an established roster of exerts who are readily available. UNDP recruitment procedures often take longer than three months, thus meaning that persons who would be normally available are not able to wait for such a long time to be recruited.

¹⁶ This included funds from Denmark, DFID, Germany and

Swiss Development Cooperation.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Output One	4,871,199	9,197,751	8,196,014	6,056,725	28,321,689
Output Two	644,138	1,674,372	1,003,283	347,650	3,669,443
Output Three	545,963	750,016	464,780	809,237	2,569,996
Output Four	22,894,913	3,994,090	56,628	No expenditures	26,945,631
Output Five	16,274,388	14,888,914	384,781	57,923	31,606,006
Output Six	N/A	17,807,475	1,327,978	3,609 ¹⁷	19,139,062
Output Seven	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Expenditures	
Output Eight	N/A	N/A	N/A	No Expenditures	
Total	45,230,601	48,312,618	11,433,464	7,275,144	112,2251,827 ¹⁸

FIGURE 6: TABLE OF EXPENDITURES FOR 2018-2021

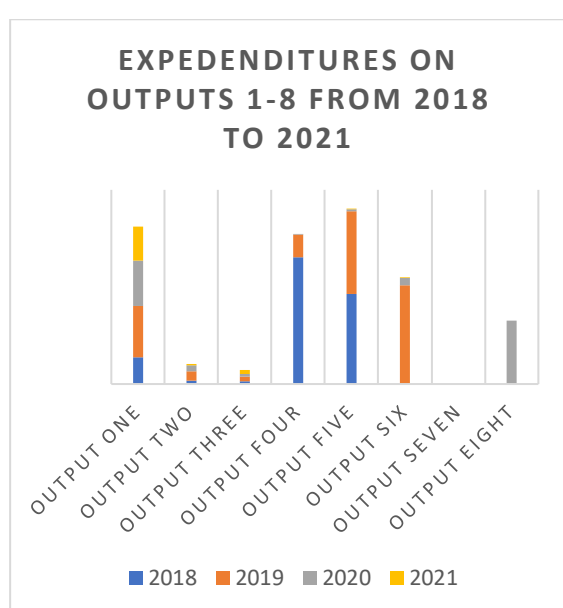


FIGURE 7: EXPENDITURES ON OUTPUTS FROM OUTPUTS 1-8

As is illustrated by figure 7, Output One (USD\$28,321,689), Output Four (USD\$26,945,631), and Output Five (USD\$31,606,006) incurred the highest expenditures. These three outputs were directly related to the holding of the elections. The year 2019 was the year when slightly more money was spent, with a total of USD\$48,312,618 being spent in 2019 as compared to USD\$45,230,601 in 2018. Both years were of course election years, and therefore they are the highest out of the five years of implementation, Expenses for 2018 were shared across Output One, Two, Three, Four and Five, with the largest amount of money being spent on output four and then output five. The presidential elections saw a similar pattern, whereby most funds were

spent on output one and five, with a small proportion on output four, however the highest proportion of monies was spent under output six which was meant to cover the specific results under the presidential elections.

ORGANISATIONAL EFFICIENCY

The management/governance mechanisms established were sufficient to oversee the programmatic and financial management of the intervention.

The UNESP places the UNs electoral support to Afghanistan directly under the political and supervisory oversight of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and reflects the growing sustainability of the Afghan electoral process, as evidenced by the Government of Afghanistan's financial commitment to both electoral institutions, and the provision of significant in-kind support to the implementation of elections.

The over politicization of the process and the sensitivity of the country requires a dual approach. UNDP which has a wealth of experience in providing technical support to elections was well placed to provide support. Best practice denotes that an integrated approach especially in such conflict situations such as Afghanistan is essential to ensure that the UN can play a coordinating and/or convening role. The role of both UNAMA and UNDP and the collaboration of both partners was essential and has proven fruitful.

¹⁷ This amount was recorded for this output as a result of pending accrual for services provided in 2019 Presidential elections.

¹⁸ Please note that this amount stands at USD113,105,334.00.

THE UN SYSTEM HAS ADOPTED THE PRINCIPLE THAT ALL ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE IN PEACEKEEPING, PEACEBUILDING OR SPECIAL POLITICAL MISSION SETTINGS SHOULD BE DELIVERED IN A FULLY INTEGRATED MANNER FROM THE OUTSET. IN OUR EXPERIENCE, THE MOST EFFECTIVE SITUATIONS ARE THOSE IN WHICH THE UN HAS BEEN GIVEN A COORDINATING OR CONVENING ROLE WITH RESPECT TO EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS. I AGAIN ENCOURAGE MEMBER STATES, WHEN REQUESTING ASSISTANCE, AND WHEN DRAFTING MANDATES AND FINALIZING PROJECT DOCUMENTS, TO CONSIDER INCLUDING A LEAD ROLE FOR THE UN IN ENSURING COHERENCE AND COORDINATION AMONG ALL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS. (A/70/306, PARA 37)

While the importance of an integrated approach is significantly underscored, several interlocutors stated that the coordination between the two entities in the later stages of the project could have been strengthened by having a clearer framework of cooperation in place. It was suggested that the lines were sometimes blurred between the two agencies of who had the overall coordinating role, and this sometimes led to misunderstandings and sometimes duplication of roles.

MONITORING EFFICIENCY

The monitoring of the project was adequate and information flow was forthcoming. The reporting was of a good quality however, the design of the project sometimes made for repetition in reporting, and it was sometimes difficult to delink the results of the process and those of the project.

In general, the project employed several efficient monitoring and reporting tools which enabled rich, timely and varied information to be shared with donors and other stakeholders. The content of the weekly reports although internal and only shared with the project, were fed into the Election Support Group Meetings which at the height of the elections, tended to take place on a weekly basis. Perhaps given the workload of donors, the receipt of monthly and quarterly (updates may have overwhelmed some of them especially those that dealt with several different portfolios); however, the receipt of information was appreciated. Notwithstanding, the mid-term evaluation referred to information sometimes coming too late, whereby monthly reports tended to be delivered a few months after the events took place. One of the donors consulted under this evaluation also referred to the fact that

quarterly reports were often provided several months after the event, and therefore it was very difficult to make timely decisions. Notwithstanding, as aforementioned development partners were informed on a regular basis through the Election Support Group (ESG) meetings, and the smaller donors particularly felt that they benefitted substantially from being part of the project. Their inclusion in such meetings allowed the sharing of information and discussions around the table on how other countries viewed the process. Notwithstanding as highlighted in the mid-term evaluation, reports tended to speak of the successes of the electoral process, and while adequate reference was made to UNESP contribution to the individual activities, it was very difficult to ascertain to what extent individual activities led to the overall results expected and how this would contribute to the electoral process in general as well as the overall outcome of the project.

Furthermore, the overall design and the subsequent extensions made for a complex log frame whereby there were a total of eight outputs and many of these outputs cut across other outputs, and therefore repetition of results was very common across different outputs. While there was a deliberate intention to ensure modules to ensure flexibility to add activities and scope, it made for a log frame that was unwieldy and difficult to link up with the overall objectives of the project.

Notwithstanding, the project made good use of the log frame and regularly updated the progress of all the indicators. It was however stated that that it was sometimes difficult to obtain all the relevant information quickly. While the project had a few advisors embedded in both the IEC and the ECC, there were no clear linkages between monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the IEC/ECC with those of the UNESP. This often meant that it was difficult to obtain key figures.

6.4. EFFECTIVENESS

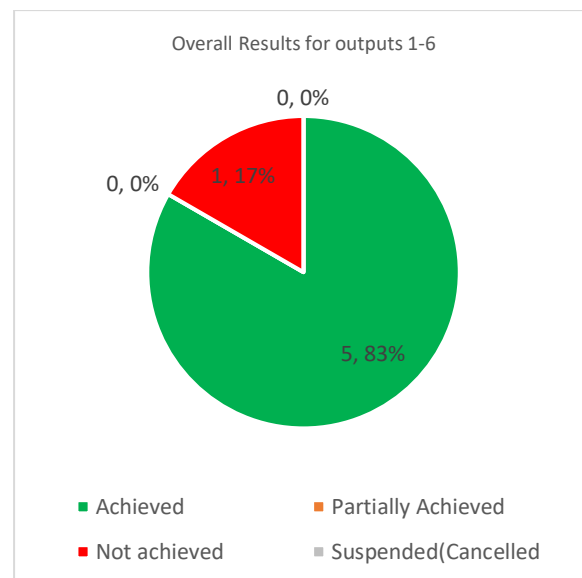
Effectiveness is defined by examining whether the intervention has achieved its objectives. This section provides insight into whether the project attained the envisaged results, the process in which this was done, what factors were decisive in this process and whether there were any unintended effects.

The project originally had five key outputs and a total of 18 activities under two core outcomes. As aforementioned, the project underwent several extensions whereby a further three outcomes were added by 2020. However due to the fluid situation

on the ground, the last two outputs were not completed and were consistently postponed due to the inability of the government to commit funds for the elections in Ghazi and for electoral reform to recommence. After the fall of the GoIRA, all activities were suspended and there are no calls for any type of elections on the horizon. Each of the activities had an established indicator with its own individual target, normally with a yearly target. The progress of these indicators was consistently shared in the annual reports, although the overall design has been found to be particularly cumbersome and often confusing (please see under relevance and efficiency) Notwithstanding, the following section on effectiveness will outline the progress of each of the eight outputs, while the section under impact will analyze the impact the project had on the overall objective of the project and the electoral process per se.

The following sections will outline the overall result of each individual output and describe how the individual activities under each of the outputs contributed to the overall result. Each indicator has been given a score according to the traffic light system, green for achieved, orange for partially achieved, red for not achieved at all. Gray denotes that an indicator/activity was cancelled or suspended. Please see annex for a breakdown of each output with its relevant output indicator and individual score, i.e., achieved, partially achieved, not achieved, or cancelled/suspended. Given the overall assessment as described below, and even though many of the indicators were not necessarily fully achieved, given the circumstances and the fact that the project did manage to implement almost all the activities under the first six outputs, the final evaluation rates the criterion of effectiveness as satisfactory.

Out of a total of 45 indicators for outputs 1-6, 28 were achieved, 11 were partially achieved, 2 were not achieved and 4 were canceled or suspended.



OUTPUT ONE: ADMINISTRATION OF CREDIBLE ELECTIONS IS FACILITATED BY THE MEETING OF KEY IEC STRUCTURAL AND PLANNING MILESTONES.

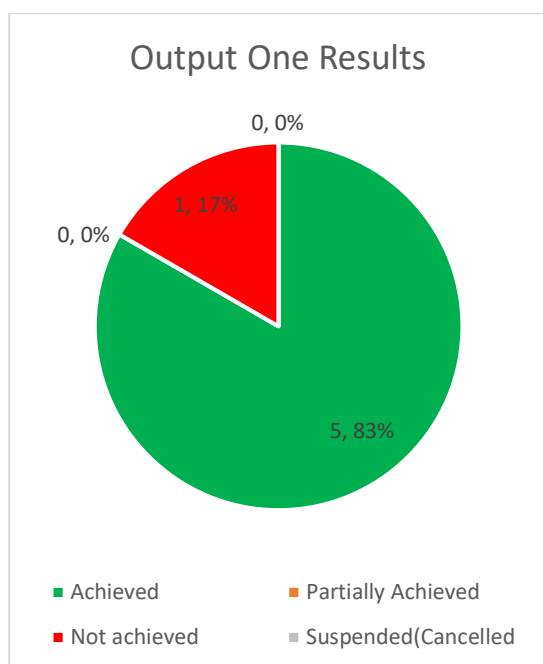
Late 2016 marked the reconstitution of the new IEC. It also marked the expiration of the previous Strategic Plan. In May 2015 the Afghan Government had made the decision to take over the direct daily financing of both electoral institutions. A welcome change to ensure that Afghan elections would be truly Afghan led and would mean that the UNDP project would no longer be responsible for the IEC operational and staff costs.

The output focused on key IEC managerial and communications systems, providing support to strategic and operational planning, IEC structures, procedures, and systems, including the electoral environment in which the Commission operates. There was a specific focus on support to recruitment, capacity building and training. The output had a total of 11 indicators. The evaluation finds that a total of six were achieved with five only partially achieved, and one not achieved¹⁹ and the other one was cancelled as there were no concrete plans to finalize the boundaries.²⁰

¹⁹ Output indicator 1.2 was not possible as the Strategic Plan had not been finalised.

²⁰ Output indicator 1.9 – availability of finalised

boundaries for WJ, DC and PC constituencies did simply not place and therefore this was not possible.



As was stated above each output established its own individual indicators according to activities, although there was no overall indicator which indicated whether the output had been successfully achieved. It should be noted that Output One ran along the whole of the tenure of the project, thus while for example, an indicator stating whether a polling list had been completed was contingent on the election, therefore whereby a particular output had achieved its goal under the first two elections, the evaluation deemed it to be achieved, even if an election had not taken place (ie the provincial council and/or Ghanzi WJ elections) it is achieved. The outstanding elections for provincial council and elections in Ghazni as well as district council elections were of course still pending and had not taken place.

1.1 A comprehensive Strategic Plan is designed and adopted by the IEC, including an M&E plan. – Partially Achieved.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

As stated above the last IEC strategic plan finalized its tenure in 2016. The project had envisaged the development of a strategic plan to define the IEC's "mission statement, values, objectives, and priorities for the overall coverage of the strategic plan. The drafting of the plan was meant to cover 2017-2022, however due to the heavy electoral calendar (Parliamentary elections in 2018 and presidential elections in 2019) and several blips in the road to amplifying the project once an election date had been set, there were subsequent delays and challenges in implementing and finalizing this activity. The strategic plan was finally discussed and designed in August 2021 but was never approved and implemented due to the take-over of the GoIRA by the Taliban Regime.

1.3.1 Percentage of recruited Tashkeel staff in relation to the approved IEC organigram

(disaggregated F/M). – Achieved

TASHKEEL²¹ STAFF AND TRAINING

In 2017, the IEC was in the process of reviewing its organigram and terms of reference of work units and positions. The UNEST would help with the review of the organigram and finalizing terms of reference for staff to be recruited; conducting and updating training needs assessment for the IEC; Providing a comprehensive induction training package for on-boarded staff; design a training plan and delivering in-country and external trainings including using BRIDGE modules based on identified needs and; Designing and implementing senior leadership capacity development packages for newly appointed commissioners and senior secretariat staff including BRIDGE trainings.

²¹ A chart showing the classification of departments and

hierarchy of existing positions in an organisation.

NO	Category	Q4Y2017			Q4Y2018			Q4Y2019			Q4Y2020			Q4Y2021		
		No	%		No	%		No	%		No	%		No	%	
1	Total number of Tashkeel positions filled	307	67,0%		360	77,0%		417	89,7%		435	74,7%		442	76,0%	
2	total number of Tashkeel positions vacant	150	33,0%		105	23,0%		48	10,3%		147	25,3%		140	24,0%	
3	total number of Tashkeel positions per organogram	457			457			465			582			582		
4	Gender breakdown of recruited Tashkeel positions	Male	Female	Female %	Male	Female	Female %	Male	Female	Female %	Male	Female	Female %	Male	Female	Female %
		289	18	6,0%	338	22	6,0%	387	30	7,2%	399	36	8,3%	405	37	8,4%
5	Seniority breakdown of recruited Tashkeel positions	Senior	Other	Sr%	Senior	Other	Sr%	Senior	Other	Sr%	Senior	Other	Sr%	Senior	Other	Sr%
		51	256	17,0%	65	295	18,0%	76	341	18,2%	89	346	20,5%	92	350	20,8%
6	Gender breakdown of Senior positions	Senior Male	Senior Female	Sr Fem %	Senior Male	Senior Female	Sr Fem %	Senior Male	Senior Female	Sr Fem %	Senior Male	Senior Female	Sr Fem %	Senior Male	Senior Female	Sr Fem %
		48	3	6,0%	61	4	6,0%	71	5	6,6%	85	4	4,5%	87	5	5,4%
7	Gender breakdown of other positions	Other Male	Other Female	Jr Fem	Other Male	Other Female	Jr Fem	Other Male	Other Female	Jr Fem	Other Male	Other Female	Jr Fem	Other Male	Other Female	Jr Fem
		239	17	7,0%	277	18	82,0%	316	25	7,3%	314	32	9,2%	318	32	9,0%

FIGURE 8: TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN THE TASHKEEL SYSTEM FOR IEC

As can be noted from figure 8 above, the number of taskeel positions changed in 2020. It increased from 465 to 582, however after extensive discussions on the Tashkeel structure, between the IEC and the Independent Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), it was established that reductions would be made from the 582 to staff members to 465. Given the increase in the number of personnel required, and given that 2020 was not an electoral year, the number of positions that were vacant increased from 10.3% in 2019 to 25.3% in 2020. This decreased ever so slightly (by one percentage point) in 2021. By December 2021,²² the IEC had been dissolved. The number of women in senior positions also oscillated between 5.4% and 6.6%. The highest percentage of women (6.6% - i.e. 5 women) in senior positions was at its height in 2019 and resulted in an increase by over 2 percentage points since 2010. In 2021 due also to the increase in the number of personnel in the organigram, it fell to its lowest yet of 5.4%. Notwithstanding the number of women had increased from 3 to 5 over the five years, although in percentage terms this meant that a lower percentage of women were in senior positions. The number of women overall did increase its numbers with 17 women in 2017 (7.0%) to 32 women (9%) in 2021. The recruitment process was halted after the fall of Afghanistan to the now de facto government.

The project also supported in the recruitment of key positions including the IEC Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Deputy CEO for Operations, Deputy CEO for Administration & Finance, IEC Spokesperson, and the Training Director.

1.3.2 Percentage of IEC Tashkeel staff who have received induction and technical training and are therefore able to effectively fulfil their functions (disaggregated F/M). – Partially Achieved.

Given the proximity of the elections, the envisaged long-term support (although this was not explicitly expressed in the project document,) was relegated to the back burner. The project concentrated on the training of temporary staff. The project supported the IEC in the recruitment, training and deployment of thousands of temporary staff required to administer electoral cycling country-wide, including but not restricted to:

- 446 District Electoral Officers (DEOs)
- 1,166 Deputy District Electoral Officers (DDEOs) were recruited through Concor examination system.
- 250 BVV Technical Staff.
- 63 Operators and two supervisors for the IEC Call Centre.

²² The EMBs were formally discussed on 24 December

2021.

- 770 Civic Educators were employed and deployed throughout the provinces.
- 10 HQ Trainers; and
- 147 Provincial Trainers were recruited.
- 9,437 VR staff for VR Phase I;
- 17,163 VR staff for VR Phase II and III; and
- Over 120,000 polling staff, drawn from public servants, mainly teachers (through the Ministry of Education [MoE] and Ministry of Higher Education [MoHE]).

For the 2018 parliamentary elections a total of 192,124 temporary positions were recruited (60,489 or 31.48% of these were women). The UNEST supported the IEC in training of trainers and were able to monitor the cascade trainings at provincial level.

A capacity assessment was done in 2018 and was finalized in 2019. Prior the fall of the GoIRA the project commenced to organize bridge training modules and translation was commenced into Dari and Pashtu but interrupted due to fall of Afghanistan to the de facto government on 15 August 2021.

"There's been a lot of physical infrastructure investment, fixing up the IEC compound, buildings, and providing equipment, but I think the areas where we haven't seen a huge benefit is in the investment of the people. Although there may indeed be examples of permanent IEC employees receiving training in Afghanistan and even abroad, those efforts do not seem to be systematic. A senior IEC official with knowledge of the organizations trainings activities reported in late 2019 that permanent staff had not received any training for at least a year." Siga Report 2021

1.5 Extent to which the IEC is compliant with the Afghan public financial management system (Scale: not compliant, somewhat compliant, fully compliant). – Partially achieved.

IEC BECOMES FULLY COMPLAINT WITH AFGHAN PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The IEC has had significant challenges with its public financial management as evidenced by the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations, Supreme Audit Office, and the IEC internal investigation which revealed fraud in the use of international funds. To this end, the project aimed to provide advice in areas

of procurement, finance, human resources, and administration.

Activities would include: - i) Procurement, following Afghan public procurement law, policies, and procedures as well as training on key procurement concepts; ii) Finance, including zero-based and incremental budgeting approaches, internal controls, and audit; iii) Human resources management, including talent management, staff performance assessment and staff capacity development and iv) Administration, including asset management, inventory control etc. There is little reference to these activities in the reports, however the annual reports of 2018 and 2019 stated that it was on target, but report that it was somewhat compliant.

COMPREHENSIVE ASSET MANAGEMENT, LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORT PROCEDURES ARE UPDATED, APPROVED, AND IMPLEMENTED BY THE IEC

1.6 Comprehensive asset management, logistics and transport procedures are updated, approved and implemented by the IEC. – Partially achieved.

Activities included:- i) Development and, as required, implementation of a procurement plan for IEC assets; ii) Design and implementation of an asset management plan for permanent IEC assets; iii) Design and implementation of a logistics and transport plan for permanent IEC assets; IV) Procurement of ICT equipment for improved communications between IEC HQ and provincial officers; v) Establish a network between IEC HQ and provincial offices for efficient and secure communication; vi) Draft electoral equipment and

1.7 NUMBER (OR %) OF IEC OPERATIONAL PLANS AND PROCEDURES THAT INCORPORATE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF WOMEN. – ACHIEVED.

materials specification, as requested.

SPECIFIC NEEDS OF WOMEN ARE INTEGRATED IN ALL IEC OPERATIONAL PLANS AND PROCEDURES.

Activities would include: i) An updated assessment of the barriers to women's participation in the electoral process; ii) Develop and implement a gender strategy and action plan for women's participation in the electoral process; III) Gender proofing of all IEC electoral plans and procedures; iv)

Facilitated engagement between civil society groups, women candidates, political parties, and the IEC; iv) Developing a gender sensitive concept for voter registration, candidate nomination, polling, counting and results processing for the next elections; v) Developing a strategy for the IEC's interaction with political parties in order to increase the number of female candidates; vi) Review of recruitment and HR policies to ensure that women are encouraged to apply for posts; vii) The development of a female focused recruitment strategy.

In 2019 electoral cycle, gender inputs were included in the into development of all operational plans and procedures. Gender considerations were significantly considered when pertaining to the numbers of required female PSs, polling staff for female PSs, and female searchers for PCs. The IPOD Public Outreach Strategy also had targeted campaigns and messages to increase female participation in all phases of the electoral cycle. In addition, the project led the drafting of a Gender Strategy for the 2019 presidential election, however internal IEC delays inhibited its timely endorsement and implementation. This draft strategy incorporated the gender considerations for the participation of women, youth, marginalized groups, and people with disabilities providing a holistic approach for the implementation of approved regulations, procedures, plans and guidelines. While this result is considered achieved, gender mainstreaming within the IEC and the electoral process still has a long way to go, and women both within the institution are not always taken seriously, particularly since the Gender Unit is not a stand-alone unit and the relatively low participation of women in the elections both as voters and particularly as candidates. The Project supported the IEC Gender Unit to draft an action plan and budget for the upcoming Presidential election.

1.9 Availability of finalized boundaries for the Wolesi Jirga, district council and provincial council constituencies published by the IDLG and IEC. – not planned.

BOUNDARIES FOR THE ELECTORAL CONSTITUENCIES ARE FINALIZED AND PUBLISHED BY THE IDLG AND IEC

Given the impending Wolesi Jirga and provincial council elections as well as the potential holding of district count elections for the first time, decisions needed to be taken on constituencies. This would have included boundary delimitation, whereby several boundaries are disputed. To this end, the

UNEST would provide technical assistance, advice, and possible procurement support, on i) Principles, process, criteria and steps for boundary delimitation process; ii) Support public outreach and consultations on delimitation of constituency boundaries; iii) determination of Kuchi constituencies and iv) Communication of the finalized constituency boundaries to electoral stakeholders and the wider Afghan public via a public information campaign. This activity unfortunately did not take place as the IEC did not complete this process.

1.10 Availability of revised and approved regulations, procedures and plans for (1) voter registration, (2) candidate nominations, (3) polling procedures and (4) results management are adopted and implemented by the IEC. – Achieved.

3.1.1.1 REVISED AND COMPREHENSIVE REGULATIONS, PROCEDURES AND PLANS FOR VOTER REGISTRATION, CANDIDATE NOMINATIONS, POLLING PROCEDURES AND RESULTS MANAGEMENT ARE ADOPTED AND IMPLEMENTED BY THE IEC.

The drafting and approval of timely regulations, procedures and plans that govern the conduct of electoral operations for registration, nomination, polling, counting, and results management are key to an electoral process. UNESP was to work closely with the IEC's planning, procedures and training units and was to provide technical advice on the review and updating of regulations, procedures, and plans for each of the key stages of the electoral process. The activities envisaged were the i) review and updating of operating regulations, procedures and plans for voter registration in compliance with the 2016 Election Law as relevant; ii) Review and updating of candidate nomination and polling day operations procedures, regulations and plans in line with 2016 Election Law as relevant; iii) Review and updating of counting and results processing and announcement procedures, regulations and plans in line with 2016 Election Law as relevant; iv) Assist in development of new procedures in line with 2016 Election Law as relevant; v) Assist in design of cascade training plans for IEC personnel, full time and temporary, to implement the approved regulations, procedures and plans at each stage of the process; vi) Drafting or updating of training materials; vii) Procurement, financial and logistical support for the rollout of cascade training plans at each stage of the process.

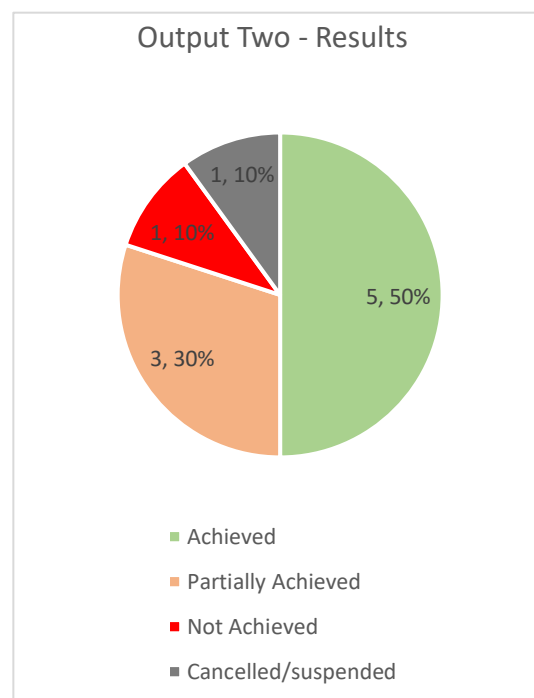
Annex V highlights the number of regulations, guidelines etc that were developed and approved with the support of the UNESP: These regulations were key in ensuring that election operations could commence on time. While the evaluation did not have the remit to examine the quality of the regulations, and there were no specific comments by the interlocutors on the quality of the regulations. Several reports have found that the almost ad hoc way that regulations were passed, has meant that some of them did not necessarily meet the highest standards, however given the tight timeline these were probably what could be achieved. Nonetheless, it is essential to ensure that regulations are updated and adjusted for future elections rather than completely rewritten for each process. However, the overall quality of the regulations and how sustainable they are for future processes is something which this evaluation has been unable to decipher.

A senior elections advisor was reported as being dismissive of a plan produced by the IEC in June 2018, calling it “terribly generic” and missing critical details. An April 2018 International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES) assessment of electoral preparations expressed similar concerns, noting that “neither the IEC nor ECC have begun developing operational plans to guide preparation of other fundamental parts of the electoral process, drastically increasing the risk of malpractice.”

The absence of strategic and cyclical operational plans, risk mitigation strategies, and a comprehensive set of regulations and procedures upon which training programs must be built further impedes the training department’s ability to carry out its duties in a timely and efficient manner. The IEC’s piecemeal, short-term, and last-minute approach to planning and preparedness decreases the likelihood that the training department can deliver the right training, to the right people, at the right time with corresponding ramifications for election integrity. Taken together, these factors present significant vulnerabilities with correspondingly high probable impacts for election integrity. IFES 2018 Post-election Assessment

OUTPUT TWO: CREDIBLE ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION (EDR) IS PROVIDED BY THE ECC

The overall focus was to ensure that the ECC fulfils its essential role in the electoral dispute resolution in accordance with the Afghan electoral legal framework. The project worked with the ECC to endeavor to strengthen its capacity to resolve electoral disputes and to define and enforce the legal and regulatory requirements for participation in and contestation of the elections.



Out of the ten outputs, five of them were completely achieved, three of them partially achieved, one was not achieved at all, and one other one was dropped. As can be seen under efficiency, very little investment was provided to the ECC in comparison to the IEC. It is acknowledged that IEC implements the elections, and it is natural that they should be afforded a greater proportion of the funds. Nevertheless, the ECC plays such an important role in the process - much of the contention surrounding the legitimacy of the elections in previous processes have revolved around the results, to this end more investment should have been allocated to the ECC. Furthermore, while IEC has always had a large proportion of the funds, between each electoral cycle, the overall building of the ECC and its sustainability has been largely ignored. This has meant that the ECC has always “hit the ground running” and implemented its mandate without any long-term procedures in place. This fact along with the political brinkmanship displayed in both elections, poor training, and lack of transparency displayed by some members of the ECC as well as an overwhelming number of complaints to be addressed in such a short time, resulted in

undermining the credibility of the electoral dispute resolution system.

“Every time these elections have taken place, there is a massive influx of financial support. There is a last-minute scramble---and then a couple of years later the lights go out and everyone goes home. You lose the experience and equipment, and materials disappear into thin air.” Dominic Grant who provided UN technical support to the ECC throughout the 2014 cycle. SIGAR Report 2020

2.1 A comprehensive Strategic Plan is designed and adopted by the ECC, including organigram and TORs. – Not achieved.

A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PLAN IS ADOPTED BY THE ECC

The project document acknowledges the limited institutional memory that existed with the ECC and stated that the first step will be to assist the ECC in drafting a five-year strategic plan 2017-2022. It was alleged however by the SIGAR report that ELECT II had developed a strategic plan, but this was however not utilized. For UNESP, unfortunately given the tight timelines and the need to get the ECC up and running and ready for the impending Wolesi Jirga Elections, the development of a “new” strategic plan was relegated to the backburner. In 2021, a detailed plan for strategic planning process was shared which included guidelines on formulation of vision values and mission but could not continue due to fall of Afghanistan.

As ELECT II was shuttering its support for the ECC in 2015, the program’s advisors helped the ECC draft a strategic plan for the organization that would last through 2019. In an interview with SIGAR five years later, SIGAR asked a UNESP advisor if that plan had been used by the ECC. However, neither the advisor nor the ECC was aware of the plan’s existence, demonstrating that foundational documents produced at great cost to donors were getting lost between elections as support fluctuated. (SIGAR provided a copy of the strategic plan at the advisor’s request.) Sigar Report 2020

2.2 Availability of an Institutional Cooperation Framework for the ECC.- Achieved.

DEVELOPMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

While the roles of both commissions are defined and differ in nature, neither can fully function without the support of the other. Furthermore, for the ECC to function, it is vital that it formalizes its relationships with the IEC and other relevant state institutions including the Judiciary and public oversight bodies. The project would support the following activities i) drafting of a cooperation strategy, ii) development of cooperation agreements with strategic partners.

In 2019, ECC signed Memorandum of Understandings with 25 institutions and national networks for strengthening synergies and coordination. A joint MOU between IEC-ECC was also signed.

2.3.1 Percentage of recruited Tashkeel staff in relation to the approved ECC organigram (disaggregated F/M).- Achieved.

ECC STAFF RECEIVE INDUCTION AND OPERATIONAL TRAINING

In 2018, the ECC was in the process of adopting a new organigram which was revised to 410 persons with 68 new permanent positions added. Upon the announcement of the electoral calendar, the ECC needed to be resourced to begin adjudicating the expected tens of thousands of complaints that would have been generated at each milestone of the electoral process. To this end, the activities envisaged for this output were the following: i) Finalizing terms of reference and staff to be recruited; conducting a training needs assessment for the ECC, iii) provision of a draft induction training plan for staff; design and delivery of an electoral dispute resolution training plan using BRIDGE modules where requested, incorporating ECC procedures) drafting of training materials; v) Provision of assistance to the conduct of training modules are required by the ECC.

NO	Category	Q4Y2017			Q4Y2018			Q4Y2019			Q4Y2020			Q4Y2021		
		No		%	No		%	No		%	No		%	No		%
1	Total number of Tashkeel positions filled		121	35,0%		366	89,0%		377	92,0%		368	89,8%		372	91,0%
2	total number of Tashkeel positions vacant		221	65,0%		44	11,0%		33	8,0%		42	10,2%		38	9,0%
3	total number of Tashkeel positions per organogram		342			410			410			410			410	
4	Gender breakdown of recruited Tashkeel positions	Male	Female	Female %	Male	Female	Female %	Male	Female	Female %	Male	Female	Female %	Male	Female	Female %
		110	11	9,0%	229	37	16,0%	387	30	9,0%	329	37	10,1%	339	33	9,0%
5	Seniority breakdown of recruited Tashkeel positions	Senior	Other	Sr%	Senior	Other	Sr%	Senior	Other	Sr%	Senior	Other	Sr%	Senior	Other	Sr%
		12	109	10,0%	73	293	25,0%	76	341	19,0%	73	295	19,8%	72	300	19,0%
6	Gender breakdown of Senior positions	Senior Male	Senior Female	Sr Fem %	Senior Male	Senior Female	Sr Fem %	Senior Male	Senior Female	Sr Fem %	Senior Male	Senior Female	Sr Fem %	Senior Male	Senior Female	Sr Fem %
		11	1	8,0%	68	5	7,0%	71	5	7,0%	68	5	6,8%	67	5	7,0%
7	Gender breakdown of other positions	Other Male	Other Female	Jr Fem	Other Male	Other Female	Jr Fem	Other Male	Other Female	Jr Fem	Other Male	Other Female	Jr Fem	Other Male	Other Female	Jr Fem
		99	10	9,0%	261	32	12,0%	316	25	9,0%	263	32	10,8%	272	28	9,0%

FIGURE 9: OVERVIEW OF THE TASHKEEL AT THE ECC FROM 2017-2021

3.2 Percentage of ECC Tashkeel staff who have received induction and technical training and are therefore able to effectively fulfil their functions (disaggregated F/M).- Partially achieved.

Training was provided, however the number of training sessions envisaged was not met and while some training focused on the EDR; BRIDGE or similar methodological frameworks were not used, and staff felt that sometimes training was too short term focused and only supported the operational day to day running of the organization and not long term. (See under sustainability) Furthermore, given the fact that much of the core work is done in the provinces, the supported afforded to provincial staff was considered as poor and needed to target their needs more. Training could not be completed due to the prolonged adjudication of WJ electoral complaints and therefore the project only completed 20 per cent of planned capacity building training programmes.

The project supported induction packages of the newly recruited staff. Furthermore, through the support of the UNESP, the trainings sought also to contribute to an increased understanding of operational activities and roles responsibility leading to the development of institutional capacity of the ECC for WJ elections. The project put particular

emphasis on providing in-depth legal knowledge and capacity to use an EDR system that could stand up to public scrutiny and support a credible EDR process for the public and political parties (please see under impact for more details) Capacity building and sustainable support to particularly the permanent staff was often critiqued. While a target of 80% was set for the provision of technical and induction training, the project was only able to complete 20 per cent of the planned capacity building training programmes (only 15% women and 20% of the men envisaged for the training were trained). Many of these capacity building programmes could not be undertaken due to the prolonged adjudication of 2018 WJ electoral complaints.

In the survey whereby ECC and IEC staff replied, 50% stated that the overall quality of assistance afforded to their respective organization was good and the other 50% said that it was fair. It should be further stated that capacity assessments were only undertaken in 2020, and therefore while on the job trainings were useful and in general seen to be of quality, there seemed to be "misunderstandings between ECC and UNESP on plans and requirements of ECC". Another respondent states that while financial and procurement support was effective and fast, mentoring and trainings were "often times too short and sometimes irrelevant". Furthermore, given the tight deadlines, and the long and protracted election process, there was little time during the first couple of years of the project to ensure long term support. One respondent stated that "he/she needed expert and long-term trainings,

but most of the trainings were short and general. However, the short-term trainings were effective for everyday tasks.

A Capacity assessment was conducted in 2018 to ascertain the capacities of the staff and the institution. After the publication of the capacity assessment, the project supported the ECC to develop an ECC Training Plan. The trainings which were conducted related to operations management and the human resources management information system. In 2021 a capacity building plan was developed. UNESP helped it to develop its bridge training programme and prepare respective training materials. However, these were not actually carried out prior to the collapse of Afghanistan.

Name of Training/Workshop	Total Number of persons	Number of Women	Number of Men	Year of training/ Workshop
Induction and Electoral Dispute Resolution standards and Investigations training	183	100	83	2018
Legal and EDR Training	306	204	102	2018
Operations Management and Human Resources Management	17	3	14	2019
Training on Sexual and Gender based Violence	152	30	120	2019
Training on IT in the rollout of the EDR case management system	5	0	5	2019
EDR training for Legal officers	34	0	34	2019
CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Associate)	3	0	3	2020
Administration and Finance Training	34	1	33	2020
Communication and Coordination	30	4	26	2020
Leadership and management	34	0	34	2020
9 trainings	166	22	144	2021
Total	964	364	600	

FIGURE 10: NUMBER OF TRAININGS FOR ECC DURING THE TENURE OF THE PROJECT

In late December 2018, UNESP did support ECC in the planning and facilitation of two WJ elections lessons learned consultations, held in the first week in January 2019: 1) on 1 January, with Political Parties and CSOs; and 2) on 5 January, with government entities. In April 2019, a further two lessons learned workshops took place. 136 PECC Commissioners and ECC staff (31 women) participated. Several lessons learned were subsequently used for the 2019 Parliamentary elections, including the inclusion of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, and strengthening of public awareness. After the parliamentary and Presidential elections, following approval of the lessons learned questionnaire developed with technical inputs from the project, questionnaires were distributed through the Information and Public Outreach Department and they subsequently collated and consolidated inputs from ECC central office directorates in 30 out of 34 PECCS. The report reflected on achievements, challenges, and recommendations for future elections.

Percentage of women employed at ECC.- according to the project document – activity cancelled.

INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN EMPLOYED AT ECC

The number of women who have been traditionally employed by the ECC has been rather low. In 2014, the percentage of women employed was 7% of the total workforce. The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA), Afghanistan outlined its intention to achieve the target of 30% representation of women in elected and appointed bodies at all levels of government by 2020. To this end, the UNEST was to i) review of recruitment and HR policies to ensure that women are encouraged to apply for posts and ii) the development of a female focused recruitment strategy.

The project supported ECC and the PECCs through the provision of ToR and advice to recruit several key positions. In 2018, 102 Provincial PECC Commissioners were recruited which included 29 women (28.5%). In 2018 there was an annual increase of 7% of women employed. The ECC employed five women in senior positions and 32 women in other positions, and therefore in 2018, 16% of posts were filled by women as opposed to 9% previously. These figures are reflected above under figure 6.

Furthermore in 2019, the project provided technical inputs to the DCEO and Finance and Admin on gender inclusive HR and recruitment. The project advised to widen the network of stakeholders on where advertisements to recruit women would be put and extending deadlines when there were few applications from qualified female applicants. Other strategies were also put in place such as mentoring of staff on a career track for promotion and inclusion of staff from the Gender Unit on recruitment panels, however the number of female staff recruited by ECC in 2019 remained low. In 2020, the ECC started merit-based recruitment of the 42 vacant Tashkeel positions using gender inclusive guidelines which resulted in a slight increase in the number of women in the ECC, but nowhere near the overall target of 30%.

2.4 Number of new regulations on the conduct of the complaints process drafted, adopted and published on time. - Achieved.

REVIEW OF REGULATORY AND PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK

The project supported sustainable change through strategic and operational planning to ECC structures, procedures, and systems. While the development of procedures was supported, it was stated by some officials of ECC, that procedures were sometimes ignored by senior staff. This was sometimes seen to be done on purpose and for a lack of comprehension on the role specifically of the senior staff, especially those that had been replaced subsequent to the 2018 elections. (See annex III for full list of regulations etc. developed under UNESP).

THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF WOMEN ARE PROGRAMMED IN ALL ECC OPERATIONAL PLANS AND PROCEDURES

The project provided gender inputs into the development of all operational plans and procedures for the 2019 electoral cycle. The operational plan for 2019 presidential elections had a specific section to promote gender and social inclusion in different phases of the electoral calendar. It contributed to mainstreaming gender and inclusion in ECC public outreach campaigns and communication products. With advisory support of UNDP-UNESP, ECC maintained sex-disaggregated data of all trainings, and a targeted training conducted on sexual and gender-based violence where 152 staff (30 women) were trained. Similarly, with UNDP-UNESP support, the Provincial and Central ECC have successfully compiled sex-disaggregated data of complaints and appeals

2.5 Number (or %) of ECC operational plans and procedures that integrate programme specific needs of women. - Achieved.

registered through the EDR case management system.

2.6 EDR Case Management System in place. – Partially achieved.

A FUNCTIONING EDR CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IS ADOPTED AND IMPLEMENTED BY THE ECC

UNESP, in consultation with ECC, designed and developed an electronic Electoral Dispute Resolution (EDR) Case Management System to register and adjudicate complaints. This system was ready prior to the 2018 electoral process, however subsequent to a consultative technical meeting on the utilization of the EDR system, attended by seven members from ECC and UNESP, the project recommended that ECC start using the system to register complaints. However, it was concluded that Provinces would not be using the system to process complaints from the WJ elections and would review for the 2019 elections. It was reported by one of the interlocutors that the system did not meet their needs. One of the key reasons was the fact that the provinces did not have adequate access to internet connection and while some training had been carried out, it was not robust enough to ensure that the system could be used in a way whereby it would

be utilized according to its overall purpose.

	Received	Adjudicated	%
PC Complaints	373	373	100%
VR Complaints	56	56	100%
Complaints during candidate nomination process	30	30	100%
Complaints after publication of Preliminary List of Candidates	616	616	100%
Vetting Commission	230	230	100%
Voter Registry / Voter Lists	0	0	100%
CN Complaints Final List	0	0	100%
Campaign Period	481	481	100%
Polling Complaints	11,845	11,845	100%
Preliminary Results	2,982	1,352	45%
Total	16,613	14,983	90%

FIGURE 11: COMPLAINTS RECEIVED AND ADJUDICATED BY ECC IN 2018 AS SHOWN BY ELECTORAL PHASE

In 2019 it was reported there were further technical problems whereby the ECC wanted to be able to input the data in an offline mode, and when adequate internet was available, the information would be synchronized to feed into the database. This was reported as not possible and the handing over of the system came apparently late to use this. Furthermore, many of the PECC staff were not adequately trained in IT and many were computer illiterate. To this end, while UNESP did deliver a system, the ECC stated that it did not suit their needs and therefore the use of the system was not galvanized. To this end, the result was the partial use of the system whereby 60% of the complaints and objections were entered into the system, however this was used more as a database to store the complaints rather than as a case management system which linked up to the HQs.

2.8 Availability of budgeted operational plan for the adjudication of electoral complaints for the upcoming elections, approved by the ECC. - Achieved

A BUDGETED OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR THE ADJUDICATION OF ELECTORAL COMPLAINTS FOR THE COMING ELECTORAL CYCLE IS APPROVED BY THE ECC

In 2018 the ECC Operational Plan and associated budget was completed and approved. To ensure cross functionality, the 2018 ECC Operational Plan was also integrated with the IEC Operational Plan to develop a Joint Electoral Operation Plan. The 2019 ECC Operational Plan was also drafted with the input from the project.

Timely Adjudication of electoral complaints as per the national electoral legal framework is provided by the ECC.

2.9 Percentage of electoral complaints, which are timely adjudicated by the ECC as per the national electoral legal framework. – Partially Achieved.

As expected, the Wolesi Jirga elections received a high number of complaints. In total 16,613 complaints were received by the ECC HQ and the PECC Offices. By the end of 2018, 90% of these cases were adjudicated. As to be expected the majority of these cases were received during polling day and these were mainly dealt with by the individual PECCs.

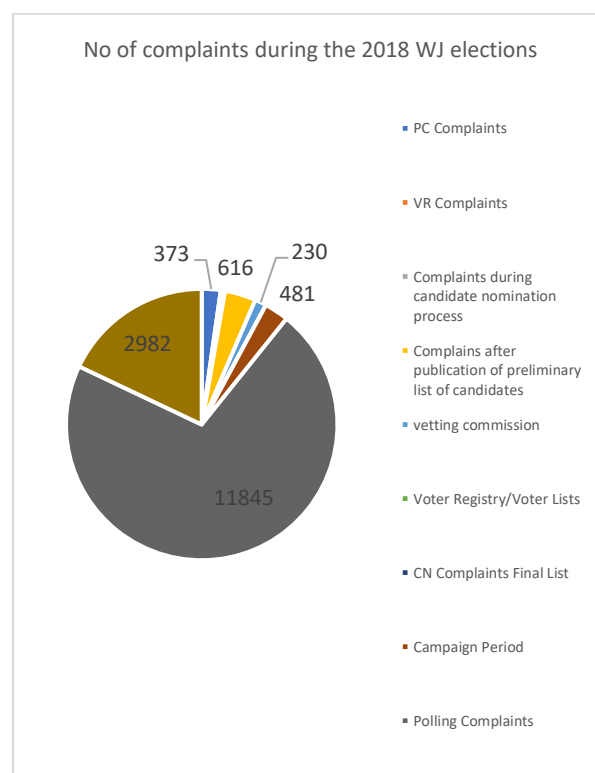
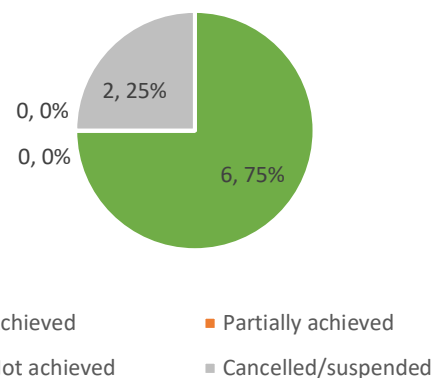


FIGURE 12:NO OF COMPLAINTS DURING THE 2018 WJ ELECTIONS

Summary of electoral complaints received in 2019	Complaints	Appeals
2019 Voter Registration	18	0
Early campaigning	6	0
Campaign Period	124	5
Presidential election	5	0
Campaign Period	124	5
Presidential election – paper based exceptional cases	32	0
Presidential election preliminary results	16,738	6,377
Total	21,446	6,566

Results for Output Three



The output had eight output indicators, two of them were not planned and the other six were all achieved.

To support this objective, UNESP provided advisory, financial, and operational support to both EMBs in their strategic approach to communications and outreach. This support included planning and implementing electoral awareness campaigns, as well as proactive electoral stakeholder engagement, specifically with political stakeholders, media, civil society, and observer groups.

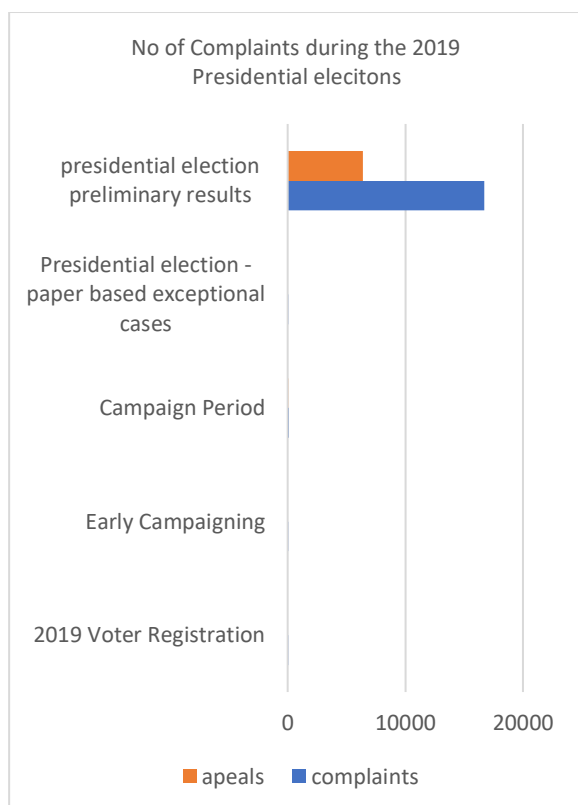


FIGURE 13: NO OF COMPLAINTS DURING THE 2019 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

OUTPUT 3 – AFGHAN PUBLIC AND POLITICAL STAKEHOLDERS ARE INFORMED OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND COMMITTED TO PARTICIPATING IN THE NEXT ELECTORAL CYCLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW.

3.1.2 Percentage of people who declare themselves (a) informed and (b) satisfied with IEC's and ECC's role in the electoral process

COMPREHENSIVE IEC OUTREACH TO ELIGIBLE AFGHAN CITIZENS TO REGISTER FOR THE NEXT ELECTION CYCLE IS EFFECTIVE

The project worked closely with the EMBs to ensure strategic, targeted, and diversified public outreach. Both EMBs approved communication policies and outreach plans that utilized diversified platforms targeting a wide set of persons, including women. In 2018, according to the Asia Foundation, only 42% of the population declared that they were informed and satisfied with IECs and ECCs role in the electoral process. This did not reach the target of 50% but of course was an increase over the baseline figure. (Although this is only natural as elections had not been held in over four years). The Asia Foundation has been conducting the Afghan survey since 2007 and as the figure below illustrates, just prior to the 2014 elections the IEC enjoyed the greatest confidence since records began but by the next year

this had fallen by three percentage points due to the debacle of the 2014 presidential elections. To this end, by the end of 2019 confidence had improved since 2015 some 6 points, however due to Covid no survey was conducted after the 2019 electoral process.

Year	Percentage
2008	57%
2009	67%
2010	54%
2011	59%
2012	60%
2013	
2014	66%
2015	36%
2016	34%
2017	38%
2018	43%
2019	42%

FIGURE 14: CONFIDENCE IN THE INDEPENDENT ELECTION COMMISSION

SPECIFIC, TARGETED AND COMPREHENSIVE EFFORTS BY THE IEC AND AFGHAN CIVIL SOCIETY TO ENCOURAGE WOMEN TO REGISTER AND PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS — AS BOTH VOTERS AND CANDIDATES — ARE EFFECTIVE.

3.3 Percentage of people/eligible voters reached through IEC public information campaigns (about the functions of the entities they are voting for, the importance of making an informed choice, and their rights and responsibilities according to the law as voters.- Not planned

While it is difficult to ascertain whether more women have registered since the last elections, the overall voter turnout still oscillates at around 37.43%.

Reg. Male	Reg. Female	Reg. Voters	Male Valid Votes	Female Valid Votes	Total Valid Votes	Invalid Ballots	Total Votes Cast	Voters in BVV
5,810,413	3,087,655	8,899,941	2,223,539	1,369,808	3,660,124	153,846	3,813,766	3,161,078

With regards to women candidates, parliamentary elections had not been held since 2010. A total of 2,556 candidates were accepted to run for the WJ elections in 2010, with 406 of these being women who represented approximately 15.88%. However, this number dropped in numbers, as 47 candidates were excluded from the ballot papers, including 10 women. Therefore, there were 2,506 candidates including 396 women, however in percentage terms this was still 15.8%. In 2018, according to AAN there were approximately 401 women out of 2,651 candidates in total (including 49 Kuchis), so while the numbers of women were down by only 5 women, in percentage terms the 401 women represented 15% of the total amount of candidates. District council elections which were meant to take place simultaneously with the presidential elections were postponed due to no female candidates not coming forward in at least 120 districts.²³

OUTREACH EFFORTS OF AFGHAN CIVIL SOCIETY TO ENCOURAGE AFGHANS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTORAL PROCESS ARE EFFECTIVE

Participation at the WJ elections was good despite various problems and security threats. Of the 8,899,941 registered valid voters (3,087,655 or 34.69% female), a total of 3,660,124 valid votes were cast (1,369,808 or 37.43% female) according to preliminary results. Given the conditions, the numbers are not so low in comparison to previous years. In 2010 there was a total of 4,265,534 votes cast, with approximately 1,668,617 women voting (approximately 39%). The over inflated register and the use of women's identities to create ghost stations, the figures from 2010 are not entirely reliable.

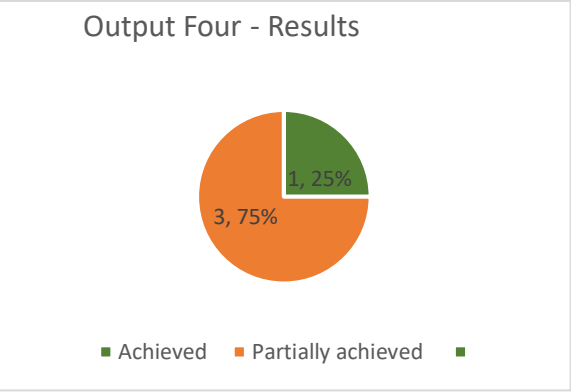
²³ <https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-heading-for-spring-presidential-polls-ponders-postponing-district-council-elections/29401428.html>.

council-elections/29401428.html.

There were several efforts to outreach to different organizations to strengthen stakeholder confidence in the work of the EMBs. (For a full breakdown of activities see annex IV) posters and 400,000 brochures which were in part distributed through the activities of the CEs.

OUTPUT 4: A POLLING CENTER SPECIFIC VOTER LIST FOR THE NEXT ELECTION IS PRODUCED BY THE IEC.

“From 2003 to 2018, the integrity of the Afghan voter registration process was undermined by a reliance on quick, ad hoc, partial solutions.” SIGAR Report 2020 – Voter registration and access to the polls



Countries who practice democratic elections tend outreach to have a polling center specific voter list. The absence of such a list in Afghanistan has been the Achilles heels of the electoral process, leaving the process susceptible to voter list fraud, ballot stuffing and the creation of ghost stations. The absence of a polling station list has also meant that the allocation of ballot papers to polling stations tended to exceed the number of potential IEC stakeholders and voters and opened the system to many facets of fraudulent acts. Furthermore, the consistent voter registration drives prior to each election, meant that millions of duplicate cards were in circulation, and efforts were not always made to remove duplicate registration cards. The data from over four elections were combined to make one single register meaning that millions of surplus voter registration cards were in circulation and the VR at the end of the 2014 presidential elections had almost 21,000,000 voters. In 2018 the IEC voided all these voter registration cards and despite the precarious security conditions, conducted a new registration drive. This would be the first time in the history of the Afghan elections that individuals would be tied to specific polling stations. This consequently allowed the IEC to better estimate the

number of voters at each polling center and thus send an accurate number of ballots to each, which reduced the possibility of mass ballot stuffing. For the first time, voter registration would be indicated by a sticker on an individual tazkera, as opposed to a stand-alone voter registration card.

The request and the need for linking voters to polling stations has long been a recommendation of election observers, the international community and election experts alike. The creation of a polling center specific list faced many challenges and was particularly stymied by the ever-deteriorating security situation, the decision on which type of voter register to be used; voter register vs civil register vs e-NID, the canvassing of sufficient international funding for such a drive and the lack of a firm commitment by the Afghan government to promote a particular system. Despite these challenges, 2018 saw the first ever creation of a polling center specific list. This was an important milestone in Afghanistan’s electoral history and is a significant achievement. Nonetheless several challenges did arise, and these will be further discussed under impact. To this end, while this output is deemed a success given the overall achievement of producing a voters list tied to individual polling stations, the output has been ranked as partially achieved, as there were still a few challenges to the overall quality of the register, albeit many of these being outside of the purview of the project.

Indicator 4.1 was said to be achieved, but the other three indicators 4.2, 4.3.1. and 4.3.2 were deemed as partially achieved. While a polling center specific list was finalized, there are some doubts to its overall accuracy which puts into question its credibility in technical terms. Notwithstanding the creation of a polling center specific list is a significant achievement given the circumstances.

“New Voter Registry Reduced Ballot Stuffing, but Some Registered Voters Were Prevented from Voting” SIGAR Report 2020 – Voter registration and access to the polls

TIMELY PROCUREMENT OF ALL MATERIAL NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT VOTER REGISTRATION IS CONDUCTED

4.1. Percentage of materials (items) for voter registration, as per the IEC operational plan, procured on time.- Achieved

It was anticipated that the VR campaign would be accompanied by a data entry process of individual records of the millions of registered voters' country wide. A voter registry and PC based voter lists was generated from the VR database, which was developed with UNESP support.

To support the VR process, UNESP designed and procured some 31,500 VR books, as well as 1,700 training VR books, training kits, stationary and other bulk items. The materials were distributed to the IEC provincial hubs with UNESP and ANDSF support. The Project assisted the IEC in developing transport plans in coordination with the ANDSF and NATO RS to ensure security escorts for sensitive materials.

Renovation works were also carried out of the IEC data center and ICT equipment and training of data center staff was provided with financial support from the project. The cleaning of data was also supported by UNESP (please see more information under impact).

As aforementioned, the polling center specific list was a significant achievement, and while it lauded a key milestone in the history of Afghan elections, the voter register was undertaken in haste, and needed more time to weed out duplicates and ensure that it did not disenfranchise important numbers of the population. The very fact that that over a third of the voter centers were closed or did not open, meant that in some key areas, men and women were unable to register. Most of these closures were due to the prevailing security situation, and this is of course outside of the purview of the project.

The security situation had an overall impact on both elections and the number of planned VR centers which could open. In 2018 only 66.45% were fully functional. The overall target was 80%.

Polling Stations/VR Centres	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Total	Percentage
Planned	1,419	3,049	2,917	7,385	
Open	1,292	1,987	1,628	4,907	66.45%
Did not Open ("Black" districts)	83	432	521	1,036	14.03%
Closed due to Threat Level	44	408	768	1,220	16.52%
Did not receive electoral materials ²⁴	0	222	0	222	3.01%

FIGURE 15: VR CENTERS OPEN/CLOSED DURING VR PHASES 2018

In 2019, a top up was launched across 33 provinces and in Ghazni. With the support of the project, the VR procedures were revised, and ToTs was conducted for 2020 provincial trainers and training officers (53 women who then cascaded the training to 3,186 staff (1,108 women) A total of 553,749 persons were added.

Reports received from the field suggested that some PCs did not receive materials, including BVV devices and VIs on time, in many cases due to the local security environment; and were therefore not operational. A preliminary report from the IEC indicated that by 20 October, electoral materials had been delivered to 4,657 out of 5,074 PCs (including Kandahar); equaling 91.78% of PCs equipped for election day. UNESP Annual Report 2018

4.2. A credible polling centre specific voter list for the upcoming elections is finalized by the IEC. – Partially achieved

3.1.1.1 A CREDIBLE POLLING CENTER SPECIFIC VOTER LIST FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS IS FINALIZED BY THE IEC

On 5 October 2018, the IEC Commissioners approved and signed the final list of 5,074 PCs and 20,053 PSs. This was a reduced number when compared to the planned 7,385 PCs (68.71%) and 24,388 PSs (82.22%) from the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoIA) PC security assessment. The finalization of the list so close to the elections, meant that many of the observers received the copy of the

²⁴ The VR Centers that did not receive electoral materials are located in the 17 Ghazni districts (illustratively, some 180 VR centers were planned but did not open in Ghazni Province alone), in two districts in Zabul, one in Paktya and

one in Urozgan, where ongoing battles prevented the ANDSF from providing air lift of electoral cargo.

polling station list very close to the elections, if at all. This meant for planning purposes it was very difficult for domestic observer groups as they did not know where they would be able to recruit observers from, and where they would be needed. The evaluation team found that consultations with observers both international and national, the access to the polling station list was a major concern. Furthermore, as will be noted in this report, while a list of 7,385 polling stations were planned, many more did not open either due to insurgencies, being in blacklisted areas, or simply because voter materials did not arrive on time, including the actual voter lists.

Description	Voter Registration Centers			Development of a voter register from scratch, many alluded to the quality of the register and how it was one of worst elections in the history of Afghanistan. Notwithstanding, these allegations did not center around the quality of the register and the number of persons who were potentially disenfranchised, but also the political brinkmanship and fraud and sometimes lack of transparency that was seen after both the 2018 and 2019 elections.			
	Open	Closed	Total	% Open	% Closed	Total	% women
33 provinces	428	31	459	93.2	6.8	318,534	36.9
Ghazni	209	43	252	82.9	17.1	235,215	35.2
Total	637	74	711	89.6	10.4	553,749	36.2

FIGURE 16: NO OF VOTER REGISTRATIONS OPENED

The Final VR List for 2018 resulted in 8,899,941 registered voters, including 3,089,414 (34.71%) females and 5,810,527 males, as summarized below.

Regular Voters	Kuchi Voters		Sikh Voters		Total Voters	
	Wo men	Men	Wo me n	M e n	Wo men	Men
	3,050,558	5,677,726	38,685	132,619	171	18
Total	8,728,284	171,304	353		8,899,941	

FIGURE 17: REGISTERED VOTERS FOR THE 2018 WOLESI JIRGA ELECTIONS

It is of course difficult to ascertain to what extent women's representation has been maximized, as in 2014, there were nearly 21,000,000 voter registration cards in circulation, and it was difficult to understand how many of these were genuine cards which were not duplicated. Traditionally, far less women than men have been registered in the voters register, although Afghanistan is one of the few places on earth where it is thought that the number of women outnumber the number of men. Previous registration figures have typically stated

that the voters register was made up of 60% of men and 40% of women.²⁵

According to the 2019 Annual Report, all 9,532,553 voter records in the database were verified resulting in removal of 428,901 invalid records. A list of 9,103,652 voter records were printed for review and corrections during the VR top-up process. Other key documents state that the register was not all together credible and fake registrants still made it to the register in both 2018 and 2019, some analysts have said that it was one of the biggest irregularities of both elections. In the interviews, while many lauded the significant achievement of the development of a voter register from scratch, many alluded to the quality of the register and how it was one of worst elections in the history of Afghanistan. Notwithstanding, these allegations did not center around the quality of the register and the number of persons who were potentially disenfranchised, but also the political brinkmanship and fraud and sometimes lack of transparency that was seen after both the 2018 and 2019 elections.

According to Scott Warden of the USIP, the 2018 election saw "greater operational problems than any other Afghan elections since the end of Taliban rule." As there was no display and correction period, on election day were unable to find their names on the list at their polling stations. The registry was improved by 2019 election, however according to the SIGAR report – Lessons from the US experience in Afghanistan, "a significant number of voters were still unable to find their names on the list."

Subsequent to the elections both in 2018 and 2019, the project sought, in collaboration with the IEC IT team, to draft an advisory paper titled 'Voter List Cleaning Using the Paper Based Tazkira database' to guide the IEC through the steps of cleaning the current voter registration database comparing data from the paper based Tazkira, registration books and the voter list. This process was process suspended on 5 June 2021 due to covid -19 and never resumed

3.1 OUTPUT 5 THE IEC AND IECC PROVIDE CREDIBLE ADMINISTRATION OF AN ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION FOR THE WOLESI JIRGA AND DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS, RESPECTIVELY.

Most of the outputs were carried out successfully and despite the relatively little amount of time

²⁵ These figures are taken from page 23 of the EUEAT

available to put everything in place, the project was able to fulfill the majority of the indicators in this output. It should be noted that some of the activities under this output also fell under the remit of other outputs above. While 83% of the outputs were achieved, the results were not delivered on time, however this was outside the remit of the project.

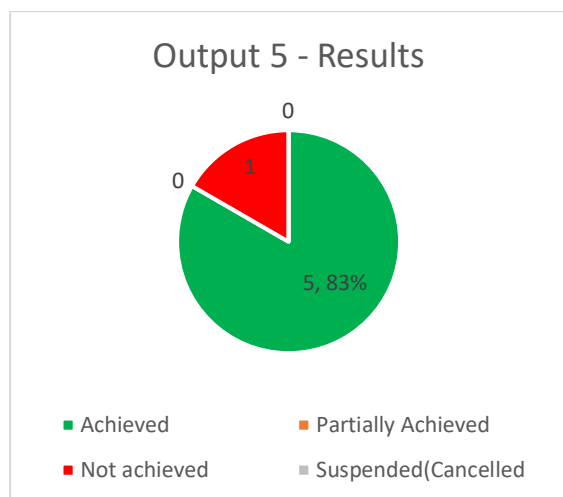


FIGURE 18: OUTPUT FIVE RESULTS

TIMELY PROCUREMENT OF ALL EQUIPMENT NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE WOLESI JIRGA AND DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS IS CONDUCTED -ACHIEVED

IEC. UNESP ICT specialists supported the design and development of databases for VR and CN to with the capabilities for batching, data entry, verification, scanning and automatic creation of PC-Based VLs, CN lists, Ballot Papers, and Election Result Forms for both the Main Election and Recounts. UNESP also supported the establishment and upgrading of the IEC Data Centre for voter tallying and the IEC Call Centre for public enquiries. ICT equipment (servers, laptops, networks, network security etc.) and provincial internet connectivity was also financed through UNESP; enabling provinces to double their capacity to send scanned materials to HQ (VR Books, CN Applications, etc.).

5.2. Percentage of media complaints adjudicated by the Media Committee in a timely manner [indicator removed, tracked under 8.2]. Achieved

THE MEDIA COMMITTEE IS FACILITATED TO IMPLEMENT ITS MANDATE

The IEC Media Committee was reestablished on 30 June 2018, the Media Committee's (MC) function was to monitor electoral campaign processes, to

ensure their fair and impartial reporting in the media, and to address any media violations in contradiction to the Electoral Law.

5.2.1 The IEC Media Committee is in place, according to the Electoral Law [indicator removed, tracked under 8.2].-

UNESP provided the MC with procurement of election materials to help the body start its work and

supported the MC throughout 2018 with advice on conducting media monitoring and the drafting of regulations for media coverage of the electoral campaign, which were approved on 16 September. For the 2019 elections, UNESP provided support throughout November to develop the 2019 Operational Plan and Strategy, including drafting regulations and procedures for adjudication of media relation complaints, public awareness campaigns and media monitoring. In December, UNESP advised the MC on the development of a concept for the set-up of Media Monitoring Unit (MMU) at the IEC aimed at supporting the Media Committee mandate of media activities oversight. The MMU is planned to be operational by mid-February 2019.

5.4 Percentage of Polling Centres and Polling Stations that open for polling on election day, as per the IEC operational plan. [amended] - Achieved

VOTING TAKES PLACE IN IEC APPROVED POLLING STATIONS IN SECURE AREAS ON E-DAY

Planned and unexpected polling center closures on election day due to insecurity has steadily increased, reflecting a worsening security environment; effective Taliban attacks continue to increase; insurgent activity is closely correlated with lower registration and turnout rates; and fear for personal safety and fear while voting are at record highs. On the current course, insecurity alone will increasingly undermine the legitimacy of Afghan elections.

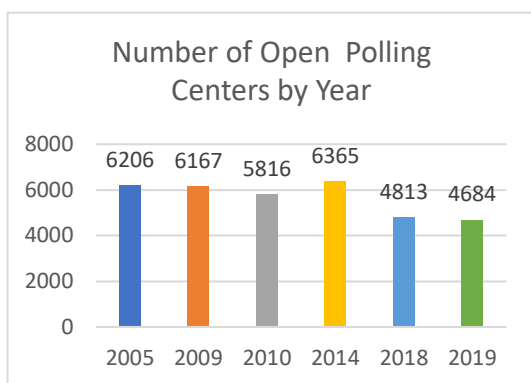


FIGURE 19: NUMBER OF POLLING CENTERS OPEN ON ELECTION DAY 2005-2019

As is noted from the graph above, the number of open polling centers by year has gradually decreased. This is concomitant with the deteriorating security situation which only got worse in the lead up to the fall of the Afghan GoIRA in August 2021. In 2019, the IEC did compile a list of 8,417 possible polling centers. It was anticipated that 2,044 of them would be closed for security reasons. Due to several other limitations and security threats, a further 689 polling stations were closed, which meant that 2,733 were closed, leaving only 4,684 (63 per cent) of the polling stations open. This is the highest percentage of polling centers closed in the history of Afghan elections. The closure of so many polling stations, with the security situation and the disappointment in the process, meant that there was the lowest turnout of elections in the history of elections in Afghanistan, (Please see under impact below).

Notwithstanding this indicator was deemed as partially achieved as the overall target of polling stations to be open was 80% and only 63 per cent actually open.

5.5.2 Final polling results publicized on time (according to the electoral calendar) by the IEC. Not achieved

RESULTS FROM ALL IEC POLLING LOCATIONS ARE CONSOLIDATED AND PROCESSED FOR TIMELY ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE IEC
Please see under output one

3.2 OUTPUT 6 THE IEC AND ECC ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE CREDIBLE ADMINISTRATION OF, AND ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION FOR THE 2019 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

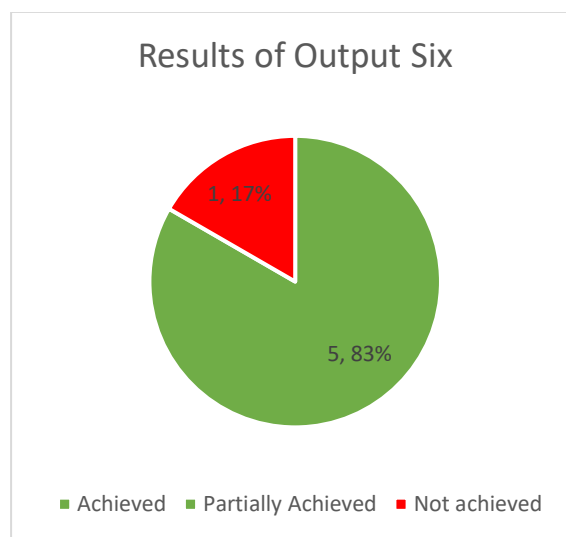


FIGURE 20: RESULTS OF OUTPUT SIX

The 2019 Presidential elections which were originally scheduled for 20 April 2019 and then were shifted to the 20 July. Nevertheless, due to the delays in announcing the results of the Parliamentary elections, the Presidential elections did not take place until 28 September 2019. When examining this output, we need to separate the credible administration of the elections from the potential perceived success of electoral dispute resolution and the ensuing announcement of the winner. If we are to take all the indicators at face value, all the indicators below were achieved with only indicator 6.4 not being fully achieved, as the complaints were clearly not adjudicated on time given the sheer number of complaints lodged with the ECC. While the journey to reach the results was quite contentious, and overshadows the overall electoral process, there was a definite improvement on the 2018 elections, and there are some who commented that administratively they were the "best elections yet". Furthermore, the overall importance that this was an Afghan led process and 50% of the costs were afforded by the Afghan Government – this is a significant achievement. The ensuing political brinkmanship and the spurious allegations of fraud which led to a political impasse and high-level negotiations were of course outside of the scope of the project, but nevertheless have weighed heavily over the overall credibility of the process.

6.1. PERCENTAGE OF CANDIDATE NOMINATIONS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS VETTED BY THE IEC (F/M).

6.1. Percentage of candidate nominations for the Presidential elections vetted by the IEC (F/M). – Achieved

To align with the revised electoral schedule, vetting of candidates was extended to 20 April 2019. Four days later, the ECC announced the finalization of the vetting of the candidate list and a ballot lottery was undertaken by IEC.

Thereafter, on 25 April, the IEC, with technical and advisory support from the project conducted the ballot lottery to establish the order of presidential candidates on the ballot paper; 100 representatives of the 18 candidates, civil society, political parties, and international community attended. No complaints were registered against the ballot lottery. Nonetheless, five candidates subsequently withdrew and a total of 13 presidential (all male) candidates ran for the elections.²⁶

As opposed to 2004 and 2009 elections, there were no female candidates. In 2004, Massuda Jalal ranked 6th out of 18 candidates. In 2009 two female candidates also stood. In 2014, one female candidate was disqualified prior to the elections. Three of the presidential candidates for 2018 proposed one woman each for one of their two vice-presidential posts.

6.2 PERCENTAGE OF POLLING CENTERS/POLLING STATIONS RECEIVING ELECTORAL MATERIALS FOR ELECTION DAY.

6.2 Percentage of Polling Centres/Polling Stations receiving electoral materials for election day. - Achieved

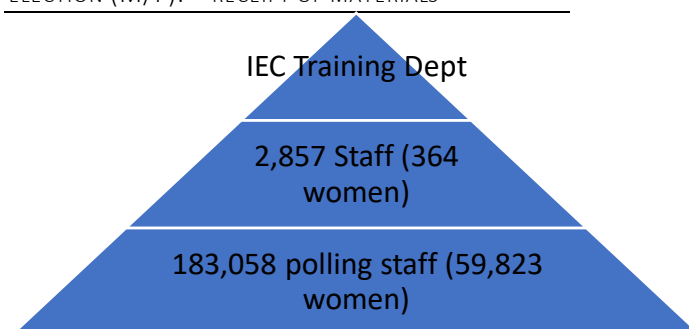
The project supported the IEC by procuring PC/PS kits; indelible ink and invisible ink for operations; blue boxes; voting screens; envelopes; ballot papers (printed in Dubai); training and public outreach materials.

Further, at the advice of the project, IEC retrieved and cleaned existing non-sensitive materials comprising 5,988 ballot boxes and 19,269 blue storage boxes. Then, the IEC and PIECs with operational support from the project prepared designated warehouses for storage of electoral materials. Thereafter, IEC with advisory and logistical support completed packing and subsequent movement of materials to the provinces, districts, and PCs in accordance with the NMP and PMPs. Consequently, all PCs received electoral materials for election day. In addition, the project supported the procurement and dispatch of visibility materials for use by ECC staff during the elections. The project also facilitated logistical arrangements for movement of Data Centre and CC staff at IEC HQ, in line with the extended working shifts.

Subsequent to the fall of the GoIRA, the status of the IEQ HQ and the majority of the offices in the provinces have been looted and are now in disrepair. It is difficult to ascertain, if any material, has been destroyed or whether it is safe and locked up under the De facto Governments guardianship.

6.2.1 Number of IEC and ECC temporary polling staff trained in counting, polling and results processing procedures for the Presidential election (M/F). - Achieved

6.2.1 NUMBER OF IEC AND ECC TEMPORARY POLLING STAFF TRAINED IN COUNTING, POLLING AND RESULTS PROCESSING PROCEDURES FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION (M/F). – RECEIPT OF MATERIALS



²⁶ The five candidates who withdrew were (Dr. Shida Mohammad Abdali; Noor ul-Haq Ulumi; Dr. Zalmai Rassol; Haji Ibrahim, Mohammad Alokozay; and Hanif Atmar).

FIGURE 21: OUTLINE OF CASCADE TRAINING FOR POLLING STAFF

The project helped support the training of trainings for over 183,058 polling staff. The trained polling staff used the knowledge on polling day in the various roles and responsibilities at the PCs and PSs and were provided with various high-quality printed sample forms and station kits funded and procured by the project. In addition, 37 staff (7 women) were trained on monitoring and observation in order to observe the voting process in some PCs.

To support the EDR process, the project supported the development of training material. A total of 112 PECC Commissioners (23 Women) were provided with orientation training. An additional training was provided on the EDR case management system and complaints adjudication process. A further 43 (3 women) data entry staff were trained on the EDR system. By the end of 2019, the staff had completed 3,626 (80.1%) of the complaints registered on election day.

In total, the project trained 191,395 (61,893 women) IEC temporary staff using the cascade training methodology. The ECC trained a total of 527 staff (90 women). In total, the overall amount of staff training was 191,922 (61,893 women).

.2.3 Percentage of media complaints adjudicated by the Media Committee in a timely manner, according to the adjudication schedule. - Achieved

6.2.3 PERCENTAGE OF MEDIA COMPLAINTS ADJUDICATED BY THE MEDIA COMMITTEE IN A TIMELY MANNER, ACCORDING TO THE ADJUDICATION SCHEDULE.

The Media Committee has a mandate of monitoring the reporting and fair and impartial broadcasting of electoral campaigns, addressing media violations in contradiction to the objectives, policies, and procedures under Paragraph (1) of Article 27 of the Election Law.

The Media Committee is a temporary body which has been established in each of the elections since the 2004 process. In line with its mandate, it was established for both the WJ elections and continued its work through the presidential elections. For the MC to carry out its mandate, support was afforded thereto by the project. The project supported the MC to develop a concept note on the establishment of a Media Monitoring Unit.

On 25 September, the Media Committee presented that the campaign teams lacked a programme-oriented strategy during the electoral campaign and instead focused on criticizing other electoral campaigns and mutual accusations. Further, some mass media houses violated the law by conducting public perception surveys that confused the public; women's participation in electoral debates was insufficient and unbalanced and continued to broadcast campaign messages of candidates during the silence period. A total of 55 complaints were submitted and are summarized below.

Subject of complaints	# of complaints
Baseless/ false/ inaccurate/ defamatory information/partiality.	16
Abuse of government resources, unequal media coverage for candidates especially by the Radio Television Afghanistan.	12
Placement of candidate's pictures near PCs on the election day (not removed during silence period).	17
Limited awareness raising on the electoral process. Lack of familiarity on the use of BVV devices.	10
Total number of media complaints received	55

FIGURE 22: SUMMARY OF THE TYPE OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE MEDIA COMMITTEE

6.2.4 Number of people accredited for electoral observation (disaggregated domestic observer/ political party monitor/media/candidate's agents; F/M). - Achieved

6.2.4 NUMBER OF PEOPLE ACCREDITED FOR ELECTORAL OBSERVATION (DISAGGREGATED DOMESTIC OBSERVER/ POLITICAL PARTY MONITOR/MEDIA/CANDIDATE'S AGENTS; F/M).

As aforementioned, 13 candidates ran for the presidential elections in 2019. To facilitate accreditation, the database was updated based on lessons learned from the previous elections. In June 2019, the IEC provided a briefing for over 80 potential observers, monitors, media representatives and candidates agents. In total 140,008 persons (50,503 women) were accredited for observation and monitoring roles on election day.

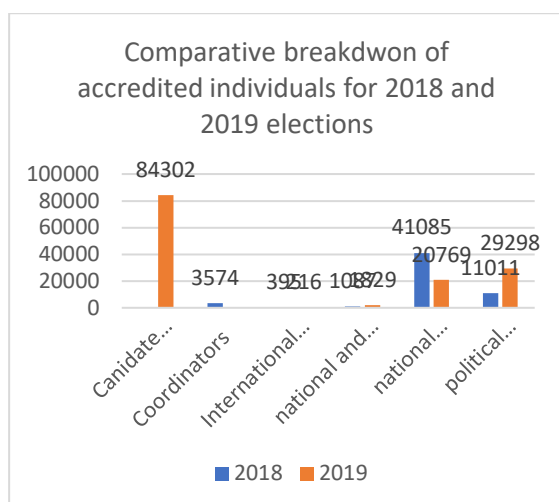


FIGURE 23: BREAKDOWN OF ACCREDITED INDIVIDUALS FOR 2018 AND 2019 ELECTIONS

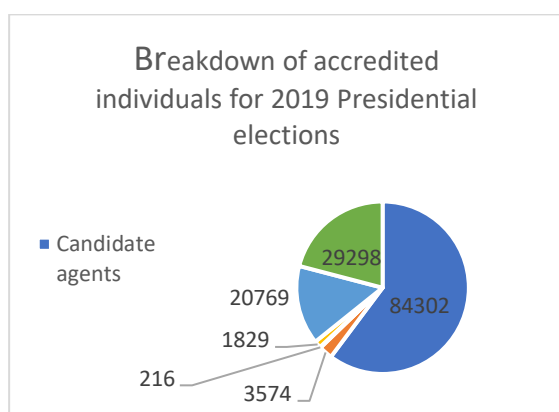


FIGURE 24: BREAKDOWN OF ACCREDITED INDIVIDUALS FOR 2019 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

In addition, IEC conducted briefings and guided tours for 166 monitors and observers³⁸ engaged in the post-electoral observation at the NTC and DAVE, and during sensitive electoral material intake. Observer spaces were set up in the NTC and DAVE Support System Centre, and an Election Information Centre established to facilitate more access and enhance transparency. At the request of ERD, 27 observers (1 woman) representing political parties, presidential candidates, civil society, international organizations, ECC and media monitored packing of equipment and materials for the audit and recount process. Thereafter, nine observers representing presidential candidates, political parties and civil society participated in a consultative meeting to seek cooperation during observation and monitoring of audit and recount data transmission in the Data Centre. Field reports indicated that observers representing ECC, presidential candidates, civil society and media observed and

monitored the audit and recount process across the 34 provinces.

UNESP convened a consultative meeting with four international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) Consequently, the ERD, through a WhatsApp group with these NGOs shared informed and led coordination of the activities of the IEC, INGOs and international observers.

6.3.1 Provisional polling results publicized on time, according to the electoral calendar by the IEC.- Not achieved

6.3.1 PROVISIONAL POLLING RESULTS PUBLICIZED ON TIME, ACCORDING TO THE ELECTORAL CALENDAR BY THE IEC. / DATA CENTER WITH INFRASTRUCTURE, SOFTWARE AND TRAINING PLAN FOR DATA CENTER OPERATORS IS IN PLACE.

THE INDEPENDENT ELECTION COMMISSION (IEC) HAS FINALLY ANNOUNCED THE PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE 28 SEPTEMBER PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. THE ANNOUNCEMENT CAME ON 22 DECEMBER, ALMOST THREE MONTHS AFTER THE VOTE AND MORE THAN TWO MONTHS AFTER THE RESULTS ANNOUNCEMENT HAD BEEN ENVISAGED IN THE ELECTORAL CALENDAR. IN THESE PRELIMINARY RESULTS, PRESIDENT ASHRAF GHANI HAS CROSSED THE 50 PER CENT THRESHOLD NECESSARY TO AVOID A RUN-OFF, BUT ONLY BY A RAZOR-THIN MARGIN OF FEWER THAN 12,000 VOTES. THE MAIN OTHER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES HAVE ALREADY REJECTED THE RESULT, WHICH THEY SAID DID NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THEIR COMPLAINTS AND DEMANDS AND HAVE ASKED THE ECC TO RECTIFY THE "FRAUDULENT RESULT." - AFGHAN ANALYST NETWORK.

To start the process of tallying the results, sensitive election material had to be retrieved, this was completed with the support from the project in a two-stage retrieval from the Polling centers to the PIECS to the IEQ HQ. The retrieval process was reasonably quick whereby it took a total of six days as opposed to 10-15 days in previous electoral processes. This was attributed to the implementation of the security strategy by the ANDSF, in coordination with the member of the Security Coordination Taskforce. The project further provides technical and operational support to set up, run and manage the National Tally Center (NTC).

Forms were processed to enable results tabulation and detection of irregular data records and/or Fraud.

The project provided technical, operational and data management support for the following functions: [1] timing of preparations and defining priorities during the actual set up of the NTC; [2] staff recruitment and training; [3] revision and improvement of the software programme including the introduction of important data reconciliation and audit functions; [4] increase of process space during the all-important intake phase of the process; [5] progress reporting and publication, as well as the interpretation of obtained data to guide further management of the process; [6] observer management and briefings on the process; [7] troubleshooting and internal NTC data reconciliation to detect misplaced results forms and ensure all results forms were processed indeed; [8] assisting the NTC management team with the overall process management and in particular with the audit of those PSs displaying irregular or fraudulent data records.

The Digital Audit Verification (DAVE) Support System was developed in-house by IEC with support from the project to review the raw results-related photos and data received directly from the BVV devices. 100 persons (including 35 women) were trained on the software. Overall, the DAVE system served as a deterrent against physical tampering of the hardcopy result forms from the PS to the NTC at IEC HQ.

As a result, the IEC announced partial results approximately three weeks after election day, based on the results tabulation from these systems. Nonetheless the IEC exercised caution by comparing the NTC data with the DAVE verified data first before they went on to announce preliminary results. On the 27th of October, the IEC announced the audit and recount process for votes cast at 8,329 polling stations. There were however some delays in the audit process due to demonstrations due to growing tensions with candidates. The process recommenced on the 17 November in several provinces and then on the 15th of December the remaining seven provinces continued with the audit. The IEC Secretariat then went on to announce the preliminary results within two months of the elections, on the 22 December 2019.

3.3 OUTPUT 7 ELECTORAL LAWS AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AMENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROPOSED ELECTORAL REFORMS.

3.4 OUTPUT 8 IEC AND ECC ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE CREDIBLE ADMINISTRATION OF, AND ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION, FOR THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS AND OTHER RELATED ELECTORAL EVENTS.

The project did not make much progress on either output seven or eight. Output seven was to have six output indicators and output eight had eight outputs indicators. The delays which have been outlined above as well as the impact of the security situation, reluctance by the government to implement reforms and the effects on activities due to Covid meant that none of the overall indicators in either output have been achieved.

There were however some amendments, to the Election Law and electoral reform were the topics of the National Election Forum, conducted on 20 January 2021 by the EMBs with coordination support of UNESP. UNESP provided recommendations to the draft concept of the amendments to the Election Law, which was discussed during the meeting of IEC and ECC leadership on 28 February 2021.

The Election Law Amendment Committee and legal officials of the EMBs shared the draft concept of amendments, additions, and deletions of some articles of the Election Law with the members of the leadership of both EMBs for finalization and receipt of their feedback and recommendations, as well as for inclusion of their views and recommendations in the Draft Election Law.

In early March 2021 the finalized Concept of Election Law was submitted to the Ministry of Justice. By 15 August the concept was still sitting with the Ministry of Justice of the former GoIRA.

6.5. IMPACT

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

The project ensured the holding of elections which is an essential step in the consolidation of the democratization process and was the most important aim of the project. Nonetheless the aftermath that ensued due to the protracted and

opaque result process reduced the overall legitimacy of the elections per se. This has resulted in further disappointment in a system which is not seen as transparent nor a legitimate means to decipher power in the country but rather the backdrop to which deals are negotiated thereafter. To this end the evaluation team rates the impact as moderately satisfactory. As aforementioned under relevance, the overall impact which is of course dictated by the CPD pushed the bar quite high. To this end, the following section will underscore the impact that the project has had, particularly in the areas of capacity building and voter registration. The section will also highlight where the challenges lied to achieve the overall goal of the project.

The electoral system and the constitution that undergirds it are not accepted as the exclusive or even primary means for apportioning decision-making power and authority in Afghanistan. . . . But elections remain an important and understudied part of the Afghan political system. (USIP – C.Cookman)

The project had a significant impact in enabling the electoral process to take place, this is no mean feat in the Afghan Context.

Universally, the right to stand and to be elected is recognized by international law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948 played a significant role in the development of political participation as a universally accepted human rights. These rights are linked to several other significant rights such as the right to freedom of expression, right to assembly, right to association and movement. In 1966, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) was signed in 1996, this is a binding instrument to which Afghanistan made its accession in January 1983.²⁷ This covenant builds upon the right to political participation, underlining the requirements associated with elections which are clearly a pertinent part of this right. The project supported this right and enabled for the elections to take place, albeit with limitations concomitant to the security and political limitations and cultural traditions of Afghanistan.

The Afghan electoral process has been supported by the international community since 2003, and UNDP has actively supported this process since 2004. The international community, since 2001, has spent approximately SD\$1.2 billion supporting the

electoral process and UNDP has spent to the tune of some USD\$ 830mil since 2004. The bulk of the support has been afforded to support the financial, logistics and capacity needs of the IEC. Funds have also been apportioned to the IECC, however this has not been as consistent and the level of commitment to developing the IECC by any international partner has certainly not been constant. UNDP has also provided support to domestic observation, the media, and several other small ticket items. Several international interlocutors who had first-hand experience of working with UNESP expressed their satisfaction and “pleasant surprise” that many of their national counterpart’s capacity and knowledge were on a par with them, and that the capacity gained over the years (cumulative experience since 2006) was high and of a good quality. There were of course exceptions.

Many of the national counterparts consulted had indeed worked with the IEC for over a decade and they were very thankful to the project and the prior projects of UNDP (Elect I and II) for building their capacity in certain areas. The need for advisors has been severely reduced over the years from the requirement of over 500 international advisors for the 2004/5 elections to a substantial decrease to around 50 international advisors in 2018/2019. This coupled with the financial commitment of the Government to support over 50% of the cost of the elections, the process was entirely Afghan led. This was of course a cumulative result of previous projects and not just UNESP. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that the role of the advisors, were just that; to advise and most of the IEC led the process with the international advisors in the shadows. This also included decision making which sometimes had negative repercussions on the overall process and meant that the support had to be geared to something that was not in the original project document. A case in point was the Biometric Voter Verification (BVV) system.

It is worth noting, when we compare the situation of Afghanistan to other countries which have held monumental elections in the last 15 years, such as South Sudan and Libya. The holding of “almost” periodic elections in Afghanistan has been a genuine achievement.²⁸ Within a few years, the democratization process has ground to a complete

²⁷

https://tbineternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=1&Lang=EN.

²⁸ Iraq has also been successful in holding periodic elections since 2004 with the support of UNDP.

halt in both South Sudan and Libya and security as well as political challenges overshadow the need and desire to hold periodic elections. In spite of all of the challenges, the government and the international community has maintained its commitment to ensuring periodic elections. A precondition for building democracy.

Furthermore, it is of note that, as the request and need for individual voters to be tied to polling stations has increased over the years, so have the security risks. The deteriorating security in Afghanistan has always been considered as one of the key hindering factors to starting afresh with a new voter registration drive. Despite all these obstacles, a voter registration tying individual voters to polling stations was achieved. This is a significant achievement. The current state of the register (prior to the fall of the GoIRA) was by no means perfect but is heralded as a success as it is infinitely better than the register which was used for the 2014 elections. In addition, having this key mechanism to mitigate fraud, the new register has reduced much of the fraud in the provinces however as will be illustrated below much of the classic fraud formerly found in polling stations has now shifted up the chain to the (more centralized) count and disqualification processes.²⁹

Due to a series of new anti-fraud measures that target fraud at polling stations, it now requires “a lot more planning and covering up to do massive ballot stuffing”
Martine van Bijlert – co-founder of the AAN.

The design of the project has tended to focus on the elections per se rather than adopting a longer-term approach.

As has been common with previous UNDP electoral support projects in Afghanistan, much of the emphasis has been on the holding of elections rather than undertaking a more focused broader and longer-term approach. In December 2021, the General assembly resolution 76/176 recommends that “throughout the timespan of the entire electoral cycle, including before and after elections, as appropriate, on the basis of a needs assessment and in accordance with the evolving needs of requesting Member States, bearing in mind sustainability and cost-effectiveness, the United Nations continue to provide technical advice and other assistance to requesting States and electoral

institutions in order to help to strengthen their democratic processes, also bearing in mind that the relevant office may provide additional assistance in the form of mediation and good offices, upon the request of Member States;”

This has been incorporated into the UN policy on Principles and Types, FP/01/2012, as revised in 2021, which identifies “broader and longer-term focus” as one of the principles of UN assistance. The policy indicates that “UN electoral assistance will thus be provided with a longer-term perspective that focuses on building sustainable and credible national institutions and processes and with the aim that in the future, electoral processes will be entirely nationally managed.”

This approach has sometimes proven difficult with the propensity to lengthen timelines by the GoIRA, which was often dictated by political decisions and the deterioration of security in the country. The decrease in the number of polling stations over the years reflects how many parts of the country simply became inaccessible due to insurgents or security failures. The lack of commitment of funds by international donors between elections, the need for electoral reform and the protracted and politicized results’ process have also of course contributed to the absence of long-term approach towards support. This approach has been particularly pertinent since the 2009 elections when UNDP endeavored to “over promise and under deliver” and therefore the approach shifted to managing expectations by “under promising and over delivering “and concentrating on the nuts and bolts of the electoral process. The previous project had been seen to be too ambitious as it included several beneficiaries including an important domestic observation and civil society component. After the debacle of the 2009 elections when over a million votes were removed from the overall count, and massive fraud was uncovered, expectations needed to be managed. Consequentially the 2010 elections resulted in the IEC endeavoring to institute more anti-fraud measures, including disqualifying whole ballot boxes where 90% or above votes was

²⁹ Abdullah Ahmazai, former IEC chief electoral officer (cited from SIGAR report page 75) said that in 2018 fraud was common at the National Tally Center and less

common outside Kabul, compared to past elections.

for one candidate, which of course also caused disenfranchisement. In addition, there were many closures of polling centers that were open in 2009 to avoid fraud but led to disenfranchisement (i.e. Ghazni election in 2010). Etc.

To this end, while IEC did impose more restrictive anti-fraud measures, it inevitably caused disenfranchisement and non-acceptance of results as well until the grievances were settled almost a year later. Both 2009 and 2010 showcase the twin problems caused by insecurity – fraud and disenfranchisement made all the more difficult without polling station specific voter lists. All of this also had an ethnic dimension – where one ethnic group was more affected than others. Consequentially, the results process and the political aftermath of the Afghan elections has always been the most contentious and, has been the part of the process which needed the most attention to mitigate the challenges that have been largely political and have often led to a negotiated process sometimes upheld by the international community rather than ensuring that the will of the electorate is respected. This has occurred at all levels of the process - provincial council, parliamentary and presidential elections. This had diminished the legitimacy of the process and resulted in apathy amongst many towards the process which in turn has only strengthened the ability of key actors to broker deals and running a mockery of the process. This was pertinent in 2014 but also in both the 2018 and 2019 process.

Traditionally, there has been emphasis on technical support before the election and then heavy political support after the election, usually in the form of putting out fires. There should be more emphasis on political support before the election, but that's hard because then you are accused of interfering in the election if you have political intrusions or political influence beforehand. And by "political" I mean an ambassadorial-level intervention.

It is of course difficult for a project such as UNESP to control the overall outcome of the election, and to mitigate not only fraud in a few guises but also the spurious allegations ³⁰of fraud from a great majority of the candidates which further diminish confidence in the process and the electoral authorities.

In the experience of the UN, the factors set out below can help to create a context that is conducive to credible elections, even if there is no single formula for all situations:

- Mitigating zero-sum politics well before an election
- Pursuing dialogue and consensus in setting the "rules of the game"
- When embarking on electoral reform: developing solutions to address the problem at hand and fit the context
- Focusing on inclusion and non-discrimination and mitigating the politics of exclusion
- Placing a premium on responsible political leadership
- Encouraging broad participation of all political actors rather than disengagement
- Strengthening both the performance of the electoral authorities and how they are perceived by electoral stakeholders
- Taking politically and financially sustainable decisions about technology.

A/72/260, paras. 29-37.

As the electoral process has matured, the number of complaints has increased, this is particularly troublesome given that the elections produce "more winners than it does losers", and therefore many of the losing candidates use the ambiguous results process as a way of contesting the legitimacy of the overall process. Notwithstanding, despite the ambiguity of the results process and how it impacts on the how the overall electoral process is perceived, the international community exercised absolute caution in their engagement with Afghan counterparts, particularly in the lead up to the elections. One interlocutor stated that despite being a political officer for the embassy, by the end of the 2018 and 2019 electoral process, "he had become an expert in looking at the technical issues of the election rather than performing his role as a political expert." While elections are technical in substance, they are political in nature, and this is even more pronounced in Afghanistan. Nonetheless the

³⁰ While it is true that there were numerous attempts at

fraud, the nature of the elections and the fact that

international community, given their heavy financial investment have tended to focus on the technical rather than the political, ignoring the brokering of agreements which have ensued practically after every election process since 2009. Furthermore, the international community rarely remained on the same page, and were not always united in its key messaging. This was particularly pertinent after the holding of the elections and where results are announced.

A consistent and relevant approach to supporting the process is key; however, projects are often unable to support such a strategy due to droughts and floods in donor support as well as a protracted process which impacts on the overall timeline.

By timeline-based, sporadic cycles of support—will force donors to continue reacting to crises rather than address systemic deficiencies.

These circumstances have blinkered the approach and while the need for investment is understood, financial support has often come too late to make a more important impact on the political environment and put in timely technical solutions which can mitigate fraud rather than be used as a “means of contesting them.”³¹ Technology of course can mitigate fraud; however, the introduction of such technology takes time and requires a “trial and error approach” whereby the system should be piloted rather than hastily introduced resulting in proliferating problems which thus require troubleshooting in a short timeline prior to the taking place of the elections.

“Technological solutions, like other kinds of anti-fraud measures, cannot address problems that stem primarily from a lack of political will.”

Furthermore, a balance in understanding that electoral support can only go so far and support to the IEC is essential. It is equally important to acknowledge that political leaders from both the government and opposition parties share the responsibility for successful elections, and a project of this genre can only go so far to promote such action.

Political leaders, from both government and opposition parties, bear the overriding responsibility for successful elections. (A/74/285 6 August 2019, para 29) They have a powerful influence on public discourse and on the perceptions of their followers about an election and its outcome. Their words have a particularly wide reach and resonance online. Ideally, leaders would help to temper disappointment after an electoral loss and set the tone for the peaceful acceptance of results and for an active and constructive role in political opposition. They should avoid fanning the flames of discontent and inciting hatred, or even violence, against opponents, including by making broad declarations about allegedly “stolen” elections. Responsible political leadership does not mean ignoring instances of possible malfeasance or errors, or not pursuing avenues for dispute resolution established by law. Leaders should, however, recognize that willfully encouraging distrust in an election without concrete evidence can cause long-lasting tears in the fabric of democratic processes. (A/76/266, para 39).

The caution exercised by development partners is of course understandable, and especially given the diversity of the countries invested in Afghanistan, it is only natural that there are differing priorities and strategies to engage with the Afghan government and political actors. This is perhaps where the UN agencies are best placed to react given their neutrality and their lack of partisanship for a particular actor. Nonetheless, as we saw with the late introduction of the BVV system, and the problems which emanated therefrom, the project had little time to effectively manage and order some of the institution building priorities outlined in the prodoc.³² The establishment of PIP was primarily to bridge the gap between ELECT II and UNESP. Nonetheless, as it was stated under efficiency, UNESP had to suddenly upgrade its support to align with the electoral calendar. During PIPs tenure, only USAID continued its support throughout its entire duration and additional donors only invested once the electoral timetable was established and a new project document developed.

This drought and floods in lending of support is well illustrated in figure 26 below, whereby especially before 2018 we saw a huge dearth of funds, which meant that projects such as UNESP were always in emergency mode. This coupled with the protracted results process, meant that the project spent an awful lot of time putting out fires, even in the timelines which should have been reserved for discussions and decisions on the reforms to be implemented in preparation of the elections. This is evident in the holding and drafting of the strategic

³¹ The use of election technology – SIGAR Report page 103 – February 2021.

³² GoIRA made the decision on the Biometric Machines (to be used for all Ministries not just IEC) without the

input / awareness of UNESP / UNAMA / Donors. The GoIRA conducted direct procurement contracting directly with the company that provided finger printer readers for all border crossings (Immigration).

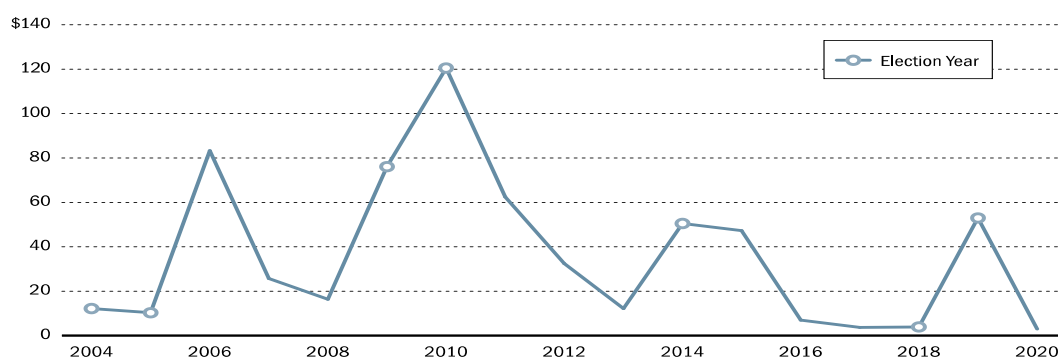
plan which was only carried out in august 2021 two years after the previous elections and five years after the former strategic plan had expired. This timeline was of course further extended by the onset of Covid.

The UN Development Programme’s Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide calls for a recognition that “inter-election periods are as crucial as the buildup to the elections themselves.”¹¹⁷⁷ Likewise, the European Commission has instructed that capacity development is best begun immediately at the conclusion of the last election, so that it can avoid being pushed to the side “by the more urgent and immediate needs of an impending election.”¹¹⁷⁸ The chairman of the board of directors of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems recently testified to the Congress about the damaging effect of short-term funding for elections, which he said “does not allow for capacity building . . . or strategic planning.” He added, “effective electoral assistance demands investment years in advance of the election date and in the period in between elections.”

FIGURE 25: FLOODS AND DROUGHTS OF ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE IN AFGHANISTAN

This cyclical approach to funding has of course had a

FLOODS AND DROUGHTS: U.S. ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE IN AFGHANISTAN (\$ Millions)



Note: Includes both bilateral and multilateral assistance from USAID.
Source: USAID, response to SIGAR data call, January 13, 2020.

profound impact on the ability of the project to align

to a more long-term approach. This is commonplace the world over. Furthermore, as can be seen under figure 26 above, 2010 received the peak of the funds and funds started to diminish thereafter. This was of course not just a problem for the electoral process but for all funds flooding to Afghanistan. Given the international political climate and context at the time,³³ a change in priorities by key donors, coupled with general donor fatigue; the last decade has been witnessing a diminishing flow of aid to Afghanistan and many international ³⁴ as well as national organizations have suffered severely therefore. Notwithstanding, the overall design of the project did not follow the electoral cycle approach and did not allow important gains to be consolidated upon from previous elections, especially in relation to the IECC. (Please see under sustainability).

Elections in and of themselves do not constitute democracy. They are not an end but a step, albeit an important and often essential one, on the path towards the democratization of societies and the realization of the right to take part in the governance of one’s country as enunciated in major international human rights instruments. It would be unfortunate to confuse the end with the means and to forget that democracy implies for more than the mere act of periodically casting a vote, but cover the entire process of participation by citizens in the political life of their country. – UNSG 1991

³³ Much of the shift in international funding had coincided with the Arab Spring and conflicts of the time with the being provided to Africa, the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan as well as contributions from international donors to the Arab States region, particularly in response to the Syrian Refugee crisis and in support of reconstruction efforts as

well as investing in elections in countries like Tunisia and Libya.

³⁴ For example, UNDP’s programme expenditures have declined from USD750 million in 2014 to USD495 million in 2016.

The Country Project Document outlined that the elections should be deemed as legitimate, transparent, and inclusive. While it was important to support the electoral process, the fact that elections took place within a year of the project being established, once again meant that the project would be in emergency mode, therefore the delay to the development of fundamental strategic plans for both institutions was imminent.

The necessity to broker a deal to create a national unity government so that the top two candidates for office could both play a role in the first democratic transition of presidential power in Afghanistan, to date, while marginalizing the popular vote represents a very real crisis of confidence in the validity of the Afghan electoral process—most notably for Afghans who risk their lives to trek to the polls and who have done several times over the past decade. Final Evaluation of ELECT II

The 2014 process was of course the most illustrative of endeavoring to use a technical solution to a political problem. i.e., the outcome of undertaking a 100% audit, was replaced with a political solution. This has now become common place, whereby fraud which at times was decentralized has often been replaced by a more centralized form of fraud whereby the introduction of technology has provided another reason for contesting the elections rather than mitigating fraud.

The legitimacy of the process has been called into question by many, and as a result the satisfaction of Afghans with the democratic process has dwindled. Notwithstanding, despite the 2019 process, satisfaction with democracy has risen several percentage points since the last cycle of elections.

When looking at the legitimacy of the elections, there has been a downward shift in the confidence instilled by the Afghan public in the EMBs over the years. although it is worth noting, that during the tenure of the project, this has slightly increased over the last electoral cycle. Although as illustrated under effectiveness, the Afghan survey found that there had been an increase in confidence of the IEC since 2015 by approximately 6 points. In a recent (yet to be published) survey conducted in 2021, this has fallen a further 2 points, with 40% of the population satisfied with their performance. This is still higher prior to UNESP. It is worth noting that there were several high-level changes in the commissioners between the two elections. While this was of course important to break the culture of impunity; this was done without due process and did not necessarily iron out the problems which are so inherently political and structural.

“Replacing commissioners and secretariat staff likely hurts capacity more than it addresses corruption “

The theory of change of the UNESP emphasized not only the continued democratization of Afghanistan, but also for maintaining its constitutional integrity and consolidating its political institutions. The electoral processes of 2018 and 2019, unfortunately did not fulfil this goal. As aforementioned under relevance the project recognized the importance of instilling confidence amongst the electorate and highlighted the significance to the process of ensuring a broad acceptance of the election results. Unfortunately, the protracted process was seen by many of the interlocutors as the worst elections in the history of Afghanistan and only resulting in the further withering confidence in a system which was incapable to decide the leaders of tomorrow. This of course is outside the purview of the project, and there are many underlying factors which mean that the overall system is set up to fail. Furthermore, as many eyes were on the peace process, the overall process was perhaps not as fully supported by international partners and even the government as it should have been. Furthermore, due to this uncertainty, candidates were also not sure what would happen with respect to the peace process, so they launched their campaigns quite late in the process and were perhaps not able to mobilize their voters in such a short time frame.

While confidence in the democratic processes have gone up since the last electoral process, the number of persons who went out to vote has most definitely decreased. This was largely due to a mix of disenchantment of the process, late campaigning, insecurity, possible confusion about the new VR process where perhaps many were not able to register either due to insecurity, poor understanding of the process and/or disenchantment. These factors likely impact on the overall turnout, so much so that between 2018 and 2019 there was almost a 25-percentage point drop in the number of persons who turned out to vote. While the figures cannot be 100 per cent reliable, especially when compared to the turnout over the years, due to the over inflated voter register and the number of ghost stations and ghost voters alleged to have taken place in previous elections. There is still a substantial drop in the turnout which meant that the new president did not have the strong mandate to lead the country into peace talks. It is unclear as to what impact this had

on the impending crisis and the relative ease in which the GoIRA fell in 2021.³⁵

Year	Registered Voter Turnout	Total Vote	Cumulative Registration	Voting Age Population Turnout	Voting Age Population	Population	Invalid Votes
2019 (Presidential)	19%	1,824,401	9,665,745	9.63%	18,938,369	35,780,458	0.02%
2018 (Parliamentary)	45.23%	3,294,827	8,843,151	21.81%	18,340,292	34,940,837	9.96%
2014 (Presidential Prov Council)	38.90%	8,109,493	20,845,988	50.03%	16,208,255	31,822,848	1.68%
2010 (Parliamentary)	35.14%	4,216,594	12,000,000	29.71%	14,191,908	29,120,727	4.42%
2009 (Presidential/Prov Council)	38.80%	4,823,090	12,430,644	35.06%	13,757,508	28,483,631	4.67%
2005 (Parliamentary/Prov Council)	49.37%	6,406,615	12,977,336	51.71%	12,389,532	26,334,702	5.10%
2004 (Presidential)	83.66%	8,128,940	9,716,413	67.54%	12,035,602	25,697,635	1.28%

FIGURE 26: COMPARATIVE TURNOUT FROM 2004 TO 2019

The development of the current voter register was a significant step to ensuring more transparency in the process, especially at the polling station level. The development of such a register is/was key to the future sustainability of the elections.

Voter registration was for a long time seen as thorn in the side of the IEC and hindered the possibility of having transparent elections in Afghanistan. The establishing of a voter register tying voters to polling stations was an important step in assuring greater transparency and was (prior to the fall of the GoIRA) a key building block for the future. There was much criticism on how the current voters register has disenfranchised an important number of persons, and of course there were many reports of persons not finding their names on the polling station list on election day. Given the circumstances of the speed with which the voter register was developed, subsequently the resources/staff of the IEC were diverted to implementing the new BVR which led little time to ensure a display and correction period for the electorate to consult whether they were on

the register or not. It is therefore, acknowledged that there were flaws in the voter register. However, when comparing the transparency of the voter register in 2018 compared to all the flaws of the previous processes, the IEC was on its way of having a more legitimate and transparent voter register, and there is no doubt that it reduced and mitigated against massive fraud taking place in individual polling stations. Such misdemeanors were rife in all the previous electoral processes since 2004 and became a keyway to commit localized fraud.

Acknowledging that the project achieved a significant hurdle to overcoming fraud, a more credible voter register is not the only mechanism to assure transparency. The Project document referred to the fact that the “The key development challenge facing elections in Afghanistan is to provide a sufficient degree of capacity so that the electoral process engenders confidence amongst the electorate, withstands the intense scrutiny and contestation from political actors that has accompanied every Afghan election since 2004, and

³⁵ Presidential elections were held in Afghanistan on 28 September 2019. According to preliminary results, which runner-up Abdullah Abdullah appealed against, incumbent Ashraf Ghani was re-elected with 923,592 votes, 50.64% of the vote. After delays over disputed votes, Ghani was declared the winner in the final results on 18 February 2020.] Abdullah Abdullah rejected the results and moved to set up his own parallel government and separate inauguration. However, Ghani was officially

sworn in for a second term on 9 March 2020] The ensuing political crisis was not resolved until 16 May 2020, when Ghani and Abdullah signed a power-sharing deal in which Ghani would remain president and Abdullah would lead the peace talks with the Taliban when they start. Voter turnout was less than 20%.

inspires the broad acceptance of the election results.”

Citizens must have confidence that the outcome reflects their will in order for it to be accepted. That confidence is determined by factors that go beyond the technical quality of the electoral process itself, or compliance with international obligations, or the effective performance of the electoral management body: it is also shaped by the broader political and economic context.

The process was unfortunately not seen as transparent by many of the interlocutors and this was expressed in a few damaging reports written after the elections. While the IEC endeavored to take steps to ensure transparency with regards to the process, the fact that the project had just over a year to ensure a transparent election, was simply not enough. The voter registers obviously improved the process in terms of ballot stuffing, but the late introduction of the BVV which had its overall goal to improve transparency in the process, was used as a tool to contest the elections. Furthermore, while the ECC were supported, the changeover of commissioners and the lack of public transparency with regards to the results and the reasons for the audits did not demonstrate a high level of transparency of the process. Several candidates spoken to, stated that deals were done behind closed doors, to ensure that candidates would have their results endorsed. The lack of publication of many of the decisions alluded to at best a lack of transparent communication and at worst a cover up. Several interlocutors spoken to both from the international community as well as national counterparts alluded to the lack of transparency of the results process. Notwithstanding this was not only a problem for both EMBs but was a result of political figures interference in the process and the lack of sufficient mechanism to guard against corruption. In the 2018 Wolesi jirga elections, several different interlocutors stated that provincial commissioners were sometimes pressured into accepting certain results/complaints and as the first point of contact for most of the complaints for the ECC, this meant that local brokers could easily influence over the results and the outcome of complaints. This was of course attempted at a more national scale during the presidential elections.

The political brinkmanship prompted serious concerns in many quarters of the potential for a dangerous miscalculation which could have long-lasting implications for the future of the country

Ingrid Hayden, the UN secretary-general's deputy special representative for Afghanistan

While many of these issues are difficult to address in a project, the overall time limitations of the project prior to the process meant that mitigating measures could not be installed. The fact that this project was an integrated one, i.e., between UNDP on the technical side, and UNAMA on the political side – political engagement needed to be more focused. In the 2020 elections of Bolivia, a special representative entirely dedicated to the process acted as a peace broker between the key stakeholders. Furthermore, the project although a technical electoral support project had an important component on peace and dialogue. Numerous and consistent dialogues took place between the key electoral stakeholders and the election commission which inevitably over time led to more trust of the election commission and allowed stakeholders to air their concerns prior to the elections taking place.

6.6. SUSTAINABILITY

This section assesses the sustainability of the outputs and whether the design ensured that sustainability of the achieved results was considered, including whether the intervention considered partner capacities and built ownership during the tenure of the project as well if there was willingness and capacity to sustain financing and support of the beneficiary institutions at the end of the project.

The sustainability of the project is of course now under even more scrutiny given the new set of circumstances, whereby both EMBs have been dissolved and much of the physical assets have either been destroyed, looted and/or are now unaccounted for. To this end, this section will endeavor to examine sustainability from the point of view of the original design of the project prior to the fall of the regime. Nonetheless, it is almost a year after the takeover of the GoIRA by the de facto government, and there are no clear indications that elections will be held any time soon or even considered for the future. This section will also examine what could be “salvaged” from the current legacy of the project, especially given the current situation since the fall of the GoIRA in August 2021. As a result, the evaluation ranks this criterion as moderately satisfactory given the current circumstances. Had this evaluation taken place in July 2021, the ranking would have been higher although with several caveats.

The overall design lacked a more sustainable approach, however the biggest impact on the sustainability of the project and thus the overall design was the security situation coupled with a

nonlinear trajectory of the democratic process which meant that the project continued to work under “emergency mode” which made long term planning particularly difficult.

As aforementioned under relevance and impact, the overall design of the project focused on the delivery of the elections, while several activities concentrated on institutional building, (mainly under output one) they were very far and few between and were only finalized and/or commenced shortly before the collapse of the country to the Taliban Regime. The evaluation found that there was ownership of most results of the project with regards to individual deliverables, however achievement of the overall objective relied on so many external factors, it was very difficult to counter these all into the project document and for the two EMBs to take the ultimate ownership of ensuring legitimate, inclusive, and transparent institutions. To this end, there was ownership of most deliverables in the project, although a more sustained approach was needed to ensure that all results from the project endured past the lifetime of the elections and the overall objective could eventually be achieved.

Notwithstanding, here it is important to note, that as well as the design which was more about ensuring that the elections took place, rather than a long-term strategy; the protracted results process, the political complexities of the electoral process coupled with the deterioration of security and the onslaught of Covid has meant that the project was delayed in carrying out key activities in the post electoral phase. The project also suffered from several changes in management and delays in getting qualified persons on board, this inevitably took a toll on the project’s effectiveness. A key number of advisors were indeed hired to provide further capacity and institution building in 2021, however many of them did not actually end up travelling to Kabul because of the Covid and security crisis. When the Covid pandemic eased a little bit, advisors were prevented from going to Kabul due to the collapse of the GoIRA to the current de facto government and thus activities were suspended indefinitely. The project seemed to be on the right trajectory prior to this suspension of activities, albeit rather late in the process.

“From technical point of view, I am satisfied, but from advisory point of view and capacity building point view I am not satisfied”

I needed expert and long-term trainings, but most of the trainings were short and general. However, the short-term trainings were effective for everyday jobs of temporary staff.

“Financial and procurement support was effective and fast but mentoring and trainings were too short and sometimes irrelevant.” (Comments from various respondents of the Survey (IEC and IECC)

While long term capacity and institutional building is still needed, the capacity to run an election has been cemented, and an important cadre of election experts have been formed.

The key stakeholders, namely the IEC and the IECC are still in dire need of long-term capacity building. While the support during the electoral period was fundamental to the holding of elections and was useful and enabled key beneficiaries to benefit from the advisor’s experience, specific capacity building programmes have yet to be developed. The low support to institutional capacity hitherto, is of course normal, given the fact that both the advisors and the EMB staff were fully engaged in conducting the elections and there was not sufficient time to dedicate to the building of capacity in key areas as institution building and cemented strategic plans. The support provided by the intervention nevertheless during the electoral processes was vital to hone skills and provide experience to the staff in the conducting of elections.

“The UNESP trainings were very effective in performing daily tasks. However, they did not have lasting impact as IEC had limited permanent staff and temporary staff were leaving at the end of each electoral cycle.” – Survey respondent

While much of the capacity building has centered around secretariat staff, the dismissal of both commissions after the 2018 parliamentary elections, also led to confusion and prompted an even greater disconnect between the Commissioners and the Secretariat Staff, with the latter being well versed in the established rules and procedures. It was alluded to by several of the interlocutors that the newly appointed commissioners tended to liberally interpret the rules and were not always familiar with the procedures. It was reported that they did not always apply the established guidelines in relation to the conducting of electoral complaints which inevitably resulted in many of the stakeholders doubting their transparency. The issues of ensuring that all permanent positions were filled is also a contentious issue, as many staff have left and often the qualifications of the personnel filling the more senior positions was not always optimal and in line with the needs of the commission. Some of the interlocutors alluded to an unfair recruitment process which was often the result of alleged nepotism and favoritism as to who the commissions would employ.

As the UNESP advisors were doing the job side by side with IEC counterparts, it had positive impact on administering the electoral process. – Survey Respondent

To this end, while the election commission (as at August 2021)³⁶ was in a good position to conduct elections, the ability of the election commissions to stamp out fraud and to deal more efficiently with electoral complaints was still rather low. While many of the challenges facing the democratic process in Afghanistan were indeed political with many of the key stakeholders not embracing the electoral process as the key means to transfer power; other challenges were structural which needed a full overhaul of reforms to at least ensure that the EMBs were aptly equipped to deal with fraud and not bow under pressure from the government or other political figures. Notwithstanding, while UNESP alone has not built individual capacities, the fact that elections have taken place since 2004, has provided Afghanistan with some important capacity, both technically and intellectually. Not all those people were working in either of the EMBs at the time of the fall of the GoIRA, however there does exist an important cadre of intellectuals and technicians who have gained an important insight into the challenges, bottlenecks and possible solutions for future electoral processes should the holding of elections ever be a reality again in Afghanistan. While the future of Afghanistan is still uncertain, there exists a cadre of persons with experience, knowledge, and technical know-how amongst Afghans. Some of these are still in country, others are in neighboring countries and others have resettled in other countries. There is certainly a need to ensure that the knowledge and experience gained is not lost and is somehow galvanized for the future.

With regards to financial capacities, the last three years have seen a general trend in the right direction with regards to the taking on of financial capacities, including the taking over by the government of many financial aspects of the electoral process. The intervention undertook the payment of nearly 150,000 temporary polling workers and to date, a total of USD 1.97 million has been paid for around 34,000 beneficiaries. The payment of polling staff in

the 2019 process was entirely taken over by the government, thus freeing the intervention of this burden, and ensuring that responsibility for such large sums of money and big number of payees lie with the government.

One of the key benefits generated by the intervention is the production of the voters register, which serves as a key fraud prevention mechanism for future processes and provides a solid foundation for future voter registers. Although, it is unsure how secure the voter register currently is, and whether the records are safe. The procedures and guidelines also established under the intervention are sustainable and would only require updating for future electoral processes. To this end, many of the key outputs have indeed reached their targets and are still providing benefits after the electoral process. Nonetheless, many of the outputs which have been produced, are largely election specific, and are at risk of being lost if not institutionalized in key systems and archiving of such procedures. Given the current context, the elections may be further delayed in the future, and it is unsure as to whether many of the procedures and guidelines will last till the next planning of elections.

When respondents were asked how they rated the overall quality of the assistance that the institution received from UNESP, half of the respondents rated it as good and the other half as fair. Respondents from the survey as well as the interviews stated that while they received on the job training and mentoring, often trainings were too short or in essence did not build long term capacity. Several interlocutors lauded their international counterparts however there were also several comments on the quality of the advisors and how sensitive they were to Afghan needs. As in any project of this size, there were some excellent advisors and some who were either not so experienced or were not the right fit for the project. The overall quality of trainings was rated as fair by 75% of the respondents and only 25% rated them as good.

At present there is very little political will to hold elections in the country. While prior to the fall of the GoIRA, there was some reluctance to hold elections,

³⁶ It should be noted that at the time of writing this report, the government of Afghanistan had been overthrown in August 2021 by the Taliban Regime who subsequently dissolved both EMBs. Elections at the time of writing were

not considered to be feasible option for the short or medium time future.

the two EMBs were ready and wanted to continue on the trajectory to build the two institutions

Given the current circumstance in the country, there is absolutely no appetite by the current de facto government to hold elections or continue the project in any manner or form. Many of the key personnel who worked for the EMBs are either in hiding, are in neighboring countries waiting for a pathway or have already been or are about to be resettled in another country. In a way, the timing of the strategic planning was beneficial as most of the commissioners of the IEC and IECC were in Beirut as Kabul fell. However, many of them did not travel with their families, and in some cases even ten months later are still struggling to get their family out of Afghanistan and reunite with them in their new places of settlement.

Prior to the fall of Afghanistan, there was of course a certain political will to continue to invest in the elections and the two institutions. Despite all the challenges and the overly politicized outcome of the two elections, the beneficiary institutions were very keen to further develop their capacity and in interviews held with the EU ROM in July 2021 just prior to the fall of Afghanistan, both the IECC and IEC expressed their desire to continue training and to build their institutions. This was further reflected in the overall comments expressed in both the interviews and the surveys during the exercise of this evaluation. While consultations (whether via interviews and/or survey) revealed a strong frustration by an important number of persons both in the IEC and IECC with regards to long term capacity and the overall project, the appetite to continue long term planning was definitely apparent. Much of this frustration was of course directly caused by the hiatus in the project caused by the onslaught of the covid pandemic, the security situation and very few international advisors physically remaining in Afghanistan to continue with the building of the institution. The question remains, if Afghanistan had not fallen to the de facto regime, what could have been done in the remaining part of the project, because the preparation for the strategic plan for the IEC only culminated in August 2021. Furthermore, while it was not an overall surprise that the peace talks fell through and the country was overthrown by the Taliban, the project would have needed to be strengthened to open the way of the possible scenarios that could have endured if the peace negotiations had been successful. The desire was there, but a new project would have warranted a definite shift in approach to really consolidate the gains of the project and really

set both institutions on the path to building their institutional capacity.

When looking at what needs to be changed, given the current circumstances, there is no immediate possibility of change to the regime nor their attitude to elections and democratic practices. Nonetheless, the United Nations is still engaged in the community as are several key donors. To this end, while several damning reports have slammed the electoral process to date, there has not been an overall lesson learned of the support to the process by UNDP and UNAMA. It is acknowledged that the support afforded to the process over the last 18 years has been fundamental and has allowed the possibility of Afghans to turn to the ballot box to decide their leaders, albeit with certain political, security and technical challenges.

6.7. GENDER AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Women in Afghanistan face several key challenges in their development. These include access to socio-economic indicators, such as their levels of literacy, secondary and tertiary education enrolment and completion, wage equality and political participation. Afghanistan has long been considered one of the worst places to be a woman. On the Gender Inequality index, the country Index ranks 154, one of the lowest in the world, and information prior to the fall of the country stated that approximately 80% of Afghan women faced some type of gender-based violence. While a legal framework existed, the public, governmental and non-governmental sector responses to gender-based violence (GBV) are under- resourced. It is posited that 28 per cent of women are married by age 18. According to UN Women 35% of girls are subject to underage marriage. The maternal mortality rate was one of the worst in the world, with a figure of 673/100,000. Child marriage is rife which also contributes to high a maternal mortality rate. These issues and almost inexistent access to economic empowerment of women in the country as well as access to key networks invariably impacts on women's general ability and motivation to actively participate in political life. Contrary to this, Afghanistan did have a relatively high number of women in parliament under the established quota system.

The project assigned a gender marker of two, although there were no gender specific outputs per se. A gender marker was assigned for each output in the UNDP Atlas PPM module, which tended to be a gender marker of one. When examining gender and to what extent outputs would have contributed to a

change in mindsets, the Gender at Work Framework can be utilized to examine what are the key drivers of change. The framework looks at the interlinkages between individual/systemic changes and informal/formal changes. The framework is said to “highlight the interrelationship between equality, organizational change and institutions or “rules of the game” held in place by power dynamics within communities.³⁷ It helps to “identify and connect internal process to understand and strategize for change across organizational dynamics and broader systems.”³⁸

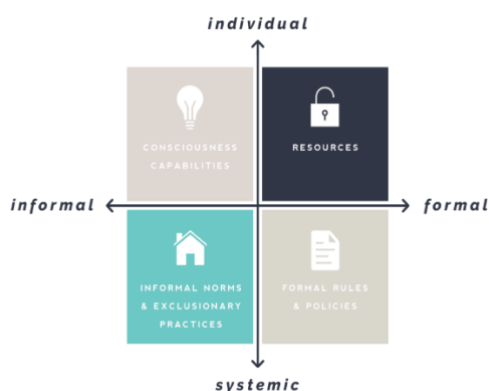


FIGURE 27: GENDER AT WORK FRAMEWORK.

Further, to address some of the challenges and bottlenecks women face, it is essential to understand the context of the country. Legal norms, with regards to the extent to which women are guaranteed equal rights is paramount. As already outlined above, while the number of reserved seats for women were quite high in comparison with other countries in the region, very few women won seats outright. The quest to find female candidates has also been difficult, with the last two presidential elections, having no single female nomination. The number of candidates for parliamentary elections and that of the provincial council has remained constant over the last few elections, although many women face many problems in becoming candidates. Most women do not have adequate access to campaign finances and have very limited freedom of movement. This is a result of both the precarious security situation as well as the inability

of women to travel without being accompanied by a Mahram. Women have also faced enormous criticism and violence for participating in political processes. A few female candidates have been killed or attempts have been on their lives. Female candidates’ campaign posters are frequently defaced, and women were frequently critiqued for participating in elections.

Presidential Candidates			
Year	Total	Total Female	No of Females
2004	18	1	5.5%
2009	41	2	4.8%
2014	11 ³⁹	0	0%
Provincial Council Candidates			
2004	3,201	285	8.9%
2009	3,180	333	10.6%
2014	2,713 ⁴⁰	296 ⁴¹	11%
Wolesi Jirga Candidates			
2018	2565	418	16%

FIGURE 28: NUMBER OF FEMALE CANDIDATES IN THE ELECTIONS SINCE 2004

Women as voters faced just as many problems with women unable to register due to not having the required documents and being discouraged by family members to register and/or vote. While women in urban centers have normally been able to register, the voter register has traditionally suffered from an over inflation of women registrants, particularly in the more conservative areas of the country.

Notwithstanding, the 2018 and 2019 elections were landmark elections in that both commissions had female leaders at their helm. Ms. Hawa Alam Nuristani (IEC) and Ms. Zuhra Bayan Shinwari (ECC). In addition, two of the four international non-voting Commissioners were women. This was an encouraging sign, although as seen under effectiveness the number of women in both institutions was rather low and very little progress has been seen in attracting more women to the institutions, particularly at the more senior level.

³⁷ Gender at Work, <https://genderatwork.org/analytical-framework/>.

³⁸ Aruna Rao and others, Gender at Work: Theory and Practice for 21st Century Organizations (Oxon and New York, Routledge, 2016).

³⁹ 27 candidates originally applied.

⁴⁰ 3059 candidates originally applied to become candidates.

⁴¹ 308 female candidates had applied.

While there was no specific component focusing on gender, the project endeavored to focus on the promotion of gender equality within the EMBs through increased employment on senior and other TAskeel positions. The section under effectiveness discusses and illustrates how many women and what percentage worked in both EMBs.

The project also aimed to ensure that operational plans and regulations would include special provisions for women with the aim to facilitate their engagement as votes and as candidates. The project provided technical inputs from a gender perspective in the drafting of the Polling and Counting Procedures. The project also provided technical support in development of talking points and presentation on "Gender in election observation, monitoring and reporting" targeting prospective observers, monitors, media representatives and candidate's agents. As stated above the IEC has a specific gender unit, and the UNESP gender advisor conducted a review of the Unit. The project supported the IEC Gender Unit to draft an action plan and budget for the presidential election. A similar review was undertaken at the ECC of the gender unit. Efforts were made to ensure gender related outreach materials were promoted. Targeted Public Service Announcements were also produced encouraging female votes and candidates to register in both elections.

Under Output Three gender coordination was also a focus, whereby UNESP conducted a gender coordination meeting with the UN Women Political Empowerment Advisor on violence against women in election (VAWE) activities, including political empowerment training targeting female candidates. The project also conducted a coordination meeting with the IEC Civil Society Liaison Officer on the feasibility of meeting with Muslims trained in religious law and doctrine (mullahs) and Muslim scholars (ulemas). Furthermore, on 14 October 2018 the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) released a press statement to communicate that participation of women in Afghanistan's electoral process is vital to ensure that parliamentary elections are inclusive and credible.

Capacity building of women was relatively high. 40 percent of the female Tashkeel staff benefitted from capacity building initiatives. In addition, 15 percent of the female Tashkeel staff participated in the capacity building initiatives conducted in the EMB. Cumulatively for the two EMBs, 32.3 percent of the 191,922 trained temporary staff who received

trainings related to public outreach, VR, polling, counting, EDR and results processing were women. Although the percentage of women remains lower, there is evidence of inclusion and participation of women in electoral processes. In IEC, 32.3 percent of the 191,395 trained staff were women (61,893 women). In ECC, 17.1 percent of the 527 trained staff were women (90 women).

Several gender awareness trainings also took place, whereby the project delivered such training to a total of 696 participants of which 189 (27.15%) were women.

There is no doubt that there were concerted efforts to bolster women's participation in the electoral process as well as ensuring gender training and awareness in both institutions. Nonetheless, it is evident that the number and quality of activities were insufficient to bolster a paradigm shift in the attitudes of the institutions towards more gender inclusion as well as having the ability to sufficiently chip away at the patriarchal fabric of society to enable a paradigm shift in women's participation in the political process. The number of women who registered was slightly down from the 2014 process (with 36.3 percent of women who participated in the VR process). This meant that as compared to 2014, approximately 34% of women were registered overall (in 2014 it stood at 40%). The preliminary results revealed that approximately 31% of the votes were cast by women.

Notwithstanding the efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming across the board, the current position of the gender unit within the IEC structure is reflective of the lack of priority that the EMB has afforded to women's political participation. The unit has no overall decision-making powers and therefore no managerial delegation. Furthermore, while the gender unit has two gender officers, the overall mandate falls under a different department. While during the electoral process itself, the intervention did witness a mainstreaming of activities whereby gender equality was always taken into consideration, this is no longer evident, and gender and the overall positioning of the gender unit weakens its position and its ability to promote gender equality within the institution.

Furthermore, while the intervention was to promote the recruitment of women civil servants, the intervention had absolutely no leverage over the civil service, who they would bring forward to work in either the IEC or the IECC. Nonetheless, in the lead up to the elections, several coordination meetings with women's organizations and groups did take

place. Some of these meetings were still ongoing prior to the fall of the country, however issues are only discussed, and little has been done to bring any of the subjects discussed in the gender coordination meetings to the forefront and to take action to address the issues at hand. This included recruitment and staff retention, and violence against women both in the electoral process as well as in the EMBs and how these could be prevented or at least

Young women and men are often not involved in electoral processes to an extent that reflects the number of them and their potential contribution. A range of measures have increased the participation of youth in public life, including youth quotas on candidate lists, the alignment of voting and eligibility ages, greater access to financing and capacity-building for young politicians. However, barriers remain, in particular for young women, who remain underrepresented and disproportionately excluded. Member States are encouraged to explore ways in which to connect with young people, including through innovative means, in order to create positive opportunities for their participation in elections. A/76/266, para 49.

reduced.

Furthermore, largely absent from the intervention document is any reference to youth. According to the United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA) nearly 70% of the population of Afghanistan is under 25, and as an active part of society, especially on social media networks, an opportunity was lost to include these in dialogues and to perhaps influence civil society in ensuring greater accountability and transparency of the process. The United Nations and the Secretary General emphasize the importance of including youth and given the high number of youths in the country, a more nuanced approach to promoting youth, especially young women would have been necessary.

Minority groups and persons with disabilities were largely ignored in the results framework and there were very few specific activities focusing on these groups.

The intervention does not really follow the working principles of the rights-based approach by empowering rights holders to claim their rights and supporting the state as the duty bearer to fulfil its obligations. The fact that the intervention is very much focused on the EMBs and much of the support is technical, it fails to link the technical process to the rights-based approach. While the intervention is in fact Afghan-led and the advisors were mentors rather than advisors, there are still examples

whereby on a small scale, the beneficiaries could better contribute to decision making. The support provided has the potential to bolster the knowledge and access of information of the key stakeholders, however the intervention still needed to provide essential capacity building, networking opportunities and workshops on integrity, inclusiveness as well as provision of essential tools to increase key groups' participation in the democratic debate.

6.8. CONCLUSIONS

Relevance:

Conclusion one: The overall relevance of the project was rated as very satisfactory. The design of the project did ensure the ownership of the key beneficiaries, however the politicized context meant that external factors hampered some of the results, especially at the horizontal level, being owned by the two EMBs. Notwithstanding, there was strong evidence of Afghan led results including a strong ownership of the process by the government. While this was an important step for the Afghans it meant that UNDP was not always able to control the parameters of the project.

Conclusion two: The project was found to be consistent with the beneficiaries' requirements although a longer-term strategy needed to have been included to fulfil the needs of both the beneficiary institutions. Furthermore, while the project aimed to support the electoral process, the design of the project, given its technical nature, could do little to mitigate the chaos that ensued in the results process. The projects approach did little to dissuade political figures from running a mockery of the system.

Conclusion three: The overall design was concomitant with the timespan that was allotted to the process. A failure by the international community to galvanize money for the entire electoral cycle and a strong focus on the elections per se, meant that although elections were well supported, little time was available for building and sustaining adequate institutional knowledge as well as promoting a more transparent electoral process.

Conclusion four: The design of the log frame was wieldy and over complex. While the intention was for the project to be flexible in its design, the use of activities as indicators limited and sometimes hindered effective monitoring of the results and the indicators chosen did not necessarily denote the overall result that each output aimed to address. The monitoring of indicators was quite cumbersome, and information was not readily

available. Linkages between the projects monitoring of results with the two beneficiary institutions was also quite weak.

Effectiveness

Conclusion five: The criterion of effectiveness is deemed to be satisfactory. While not all targets were achieved, the necessary activities to carry out the elections were indeed held. Given the complexity of the political and security situation in the country and that the country was on the brink of collapse, the project was paramount in assuring the holding of elections in both 2018 and 2019 in complex circumstances.

Conclusion six: Output One which supported the IEC was pivotal in ensuring that IEC had the capabilities to organize an election. While on the job learning and/or mentoring were pivotal to the success of the elections, the design of this output lacked a more forward-thinking strategy to build the overall structure of the IEC for the long term. Much of this was contingent on timelines as the project worked to a tight timeline. Nonetheless, the original design of the project only envisaged several key activities to build the institutional capacity, and these were only implemented towards the end of the project. Furthermore, capacity assessments although conducted, did not feed into the project until almost two years after the presidential elections.

Conclusion seven: Output two which supported the ECC was weak. Too little funds were allocated for this output, meaning that very little institutional building could be done. The ECC had previously suffered from a dearth of funds and capacity was low. Furthermore, the importance of ensuring adequate capacity to ensure a more transparent and effective results process was paramount for the legitimacy of the electoral process, but it was felt that the ECC's role in the process was overlooked in the level of support it received. ECC was particularly critical of the support that it received and the quality of the case management system which has not yet been utilized to the extent it was intended.

Conclusion Eight: While an important number of activities were conducted and the stakeholders were informed of the electoral process and most indicators were achieved, the overall communication strategy was rather one sided. The erosion of trust of both the EMBs and the electoral system has been continuous over the last electoral cycles, and both the EMBs did not enjoy a high level of trust. While the level of trust had improved since the end of the last electoral cycle, it was not enough to produce a conducive environment to hold

elections. The overall approach to provide information rather than ensuring even greater transparency by interacting with the different stakeholders meant that complaints and critiques of the IEC and ECC were only forthcoming in the results process. A solid relationship, particularly between the PIECs /PIECCs were not built with neither the local community, political parties, candidate, or civil society. This has resulted in hostility towards the EMBs and has paved the way for spurious accusations of fraud to escalate as well as a mistrust in the overall electoral system which key political figures have been able to run a mockery of.

Conclusion Nine: The support to the voters list was paramount not only for the two elections it supported but for the overall sustainability of the process itself. The desire to have a voter register tying voters to individual polling centers has been long lived. It plays an important role to address, mitigate, and reduce localized fraud, which has been seen on a large scale in the previous elections. The introduction of the voter's register is a huge feat. While it still needs to be cleaned, given the short timelines, the complex nature of introducing it into a country riddled with security constraints, the current voters register was an important step in enabling the Afghan elections to be more in line with international standards. Notwithstanding, after the take-over of the country by the Taliban regime, the status and whereabouts of the register is not known. The security of the data is also unknown.

Conclusion Ten: The elections could take place despite all the challenges, particularly in the operationalizing of the BV system. While this system was meant to facilitate the process, its late introduction meant that it slowed down the overall efficiency of the process. This also resulted in disenfranchisement of some of the voting population. Notwithstanding, the elections were lauded for their administrative prowess albeit with challenges in the result process, thereafter, resulting in the dismissal of all the commissioners for both EMBs. As a result, the overall announcement of the results was delayed, and process became protracted.

Conclusion Eleven: While there was much contention around the results process and the proclamation of the winner, elections were able to take place in difficult security conditions and several interlocutors rated the presidential elections as the best yet. For both output five and six, the importance of the new register was highlighted and how this had mitigated a lot of the localized fraud. Nonetheless it has been acknowledging that this has

also resulted in a more centric commitment of fraud. Nonetheless while results were contested, confidence in the electoral process most definitely increased since the aftermath of the 2014 presidential elections.

Efficiency

Conclusion Twelve: The efficiency of the project is rated as satisfactory. The integrated approach of the project between UNAMA and UNDP was paramount, although there were some misunderstandings in the latter part of the project whereby lines were blurred as to the overall coordination of the project. Monitoring and evaluation was deemed satisfactory and donors felt that they were generally well informed. The reporting was of good quality but the design of the intervention with so many represented indicators which cut across more than one output led to double dipping in reporting and did not always illustrate the overall result of the individual output.

Impact

Conclusion Thirteen: The impact of the project on the overall objective was seen as moderately satisfactory. It is important to note that the holding of the two elections was a significant achievement given the complexities of both the political and security situation. While the EMBs did gain more public trust in the aftermath of the 2014/15 process, the elections were not held to be legitimate or transparent by most of the interlocutors. This was of course outside of the purview of the project. While the administration of the elections up until election day was held to be relatively satisfactory, the results process was not, and this has led to disappointment with the system. So much so, that voter turnout decreased by 25% in the 2019 elections. The election process is tended to be seen as first step in gaining power but is not the ultimate denominator in the decision-making process. Potential parliamentarians as well as presidential candidates tended to allege fraud and incited their followers to not accept the results. In general, the election commissions were deemed as partisan in their decisions and not transparent in their communication. This has led to mistrust in the system and acts as an enabler for politicians to run a mockery of the system.

Sustainability

Conclusion Fourteen: The sustainability of the process is deemed as moderately satisfactory. While the project was on a reliable trajectory towards building stronger institutions, this was not possible due to the fall of the country to the Taliban in August 2021. The legacy of the project is currently held in

the documentation that exists and the capacity that has been built over the years of an important cadre of individuals. After the elections of 2018 and 2019, many of the assets has already been donated to the IEC/IECC (thus becoming GoIRA assets), nonetheless according to sources, after the take-over of the GoIRA by the de facto government, some of these physical assets have either been lost, destroyed or their whereabouts are now unknown. To this end, harnessing on the key documents of the projects and personnel who have served under the UNESP and ELECT I and II is vital to ensure that institutional memory is not lost forever.

Gender and human rights

Conclusion fifteen: the overall gender marker of two was not seen to be justified given the design of the project. While the low status of women in Afghanistan is acknowledged, it was considered that the projects design could have taken a more strategic approach to gender ensuring that activities were based on a substantive gender analysis. The results reported upon were not seen through a gender lens, and the overall targets targeting the number of women who registered and were nominated resulted in gender targeted results rather than gender responsive results. While there have been some slight improvements in the number of women working in the IEC, registration figures and nominations have remained almost static. The fact that district council elections were cancelled for not achieving sufficient nominations, means that more needs to be done. Efforts by the project were done and a few important documents were produced, (see annex IV) however the cultural context weighs heavily and thus the project did little to impact on women's political participation.

Conclusion sixteen: The project document lacked any reference to vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities and the youth, these two groups are important to the process given the high percentage of both youth amongst the population and PWDS in the communities. It should be noted however, that these groups were included in some activities, but required a more strategic and focused approach to highlight the issues these groups face.

6.9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations deriving from the project, while the majority are actionable points for possible similar projects in the future, the evaluators considered it important to include some recommendations which would be necessary to improve on the current document, acknowledging

the fact that some of these recommendations are momentarily irrelevant given the current context. It should be noted that if elections were miraculously put back on the table again, the lessons learnt exercises already undertaken and the one recommended below, should be heeded, as the current hiatus in electoral activities currently will only lead to the reinvention of the wheel should

elections be called. This needs to be avoided at all costs, and thus somehow ensure that lessons learned, and resources (human particularly) would be available to ensure that a future UN project would not start from scratch or repeat some of the well documented mistakes of the past projects.

Recommendation	Linked to Conclusion/criterion	Recommendation addressed to	Comments on Recommendations	Priority Status
Ensure that all documentation from all UNDP electoral support projects is archived.	Sustainability	UNDP	This is essential given the current status of the project and the danger of information being lost. It should be as representative as possible, not only including the documents of the UN but also from IEC and ECC in order to ensure that all documentation is archived. The current ToR is for only 22 days, it might take longer to ensure that all election projects are included.	High
Document Lessons learnt of electoral support in the last 15 years	Effectiveness / Impact	UNDP/EAD	While there have been several reports on the electoral process over the years which have critiqued the election process as well as some of the results of the various election projects, a robust meta evaluation of ELECT I, II, PIP and UNESP has not been conducted. Carrying out an assessment of the overall effectiveness and impact of the election support to Afghanistan could play a key role in identifying lessons learned and best practices which could be referred to for future projects (of a similar nature)	High
Creation of a database of electoral staff and consideration of opening up the electoral roster to highly experienced Afghan electoral experts.	Sustainability	UNDP	The various projects have built an important cadre of election experts and staff with knowledge on various aspects of the process. Many of these persons are currently outside of Afghanistan, but there are of course still persons living in Afghanistan. Should there ever be another election, it would be important to be able to garner the support of persons who are already experienced and to be able to contact them in the shortest time possible. Given the sensitivities of collecting names, advice should be sought from the UNDP Myanmar office how they collected databases of personnel and ensure a safe environment and host for the names.	Medium
Ensure that a clear mandate is drawn up between both parties to ensure operability and to avoid misunderstandings between the UN agencies	Efficiency	UNDP/UNAMA	Interlocutors suggested that in the latter half of the project, there were some misunderstandings between the two agencies as to who had the overall coordination role. A MoU should be	Medium (should a similar project or new project come into being)

			clearly set up prior to the start up the project to clarify roles, responsibilities.	
Promote the use of the UN Electoral Roster for recruitment for electoral projects	Efficiency	UNDP/EAD	Election projects are timebound, and delays to the startup of election projects are often directly affected by recruitment times and the availability of suitably experienced personnel. This is a common critique of election projects around the world. The access to the UN Election Roster would ensure a quick turnaround and ensure that personnel are highly experienced and essential time is not wasted on the highly lengthy recruitment process.	Medium
A long-term capacity development approach which builds not only on the capacity of individuals but is able to develop the institutional capacity of the EMBs	Effectiveness – Output One	UNDP/IEC	The institutional capacity at the end of August 2021 were still both weak, some of this is structural and inherent of the system. It is important to work with the institutions to instigate change and have not only a strategic plan but a plan of reforms that can be implemented over a five-year period within the electoral cycle.	Should be automatically incorporated into the design of a similar project as part of its strategy
More investment in a strategic and sustainable approach towards building the institutional and individual capacity of the ECC and the PIECCS	Effectiveness – output two	UNDP/ECC	A more robust long-term strategy on building institutional and individual capacity both at the national and provincial level. It would be important to ensure clear institution building strategy as well as a far stronger financial and human resources investment.	Should be incorporated into a new project should ECC ever exist again
Carry out a series of dialogues at the provincial and local level between IEC /ECC and key stakeholders.	Effectiveness – output three and impact	UNDP / UNAMA	The communication strategy developed with the support of the project was more of an informative nature whereby it was hoped the provision of information to key stakeholders would improve transparency. However, at the end of the day this did little to build relationships and trust and made the information sharing unidirectional. The holding of a series of dialogues on key issues, such as women, PWD youth and political parties directly with the PIEC and IECC would eventually build a more robust relationship and could potentially lead to more buy in by the political parties as well as setting the rules of the game well in advance. UNDP could consult with UNDP Bolivia in order to see how this worked. Furthermore, given UNAMAs presence in the field, they could have been the coordinating agency in the field.	Should a new project document ever be written (dependent on the desire to hold elections) or for use for similar projects
Endeavour to understand the current status of the voters register	Effectiveness – output four and sustainability	UNDP / UNAMA and de facto government	One of the key successful products of the project was the voters register. Since the fall of the country, the current status of the voters register is not clear. Given the huge investment, sensitivity of the data and the fragility of losing key software to keep the register alive, diplomatic quarters	Medium/High

			should endeavor to enquire about the current status of the voters register.	
Designation of a key high-profile person independent from the project to support the peace/transition process	Impact	UN agencies /International Community	In Bolivia, a highly skilled accepted diplomat was recruited to act as a go between key political parties, government, and the election commission. It is essential that it is someone who has the political and diplomatic clout to enter talks with key actors. While such a designation could be seen as interference, the UN has a neutral political role to play so it essential that such a diplomat has the clout to convene the key stakeholders.	Medium (should a new project be established)
Align tracking of project indicators with those of the IEC and ECC to facilitate tracking and efficient monitoring of results	Efficiency	UNDP/IEC/ECC	Given the difficulties that were sometimes experienced to access data, and that all indicators were relevant to IEC/ECC activities, a better alignment of monitoring and evaluation practices including advisory and technical support should be afforded to the monitoring departments of the EMBs.	Medium (should a new project or a similar project be established)
Design of the project should have clear indicators which illustrate the success of each output. (Activity indicators should be separate from output indicators)	Relevance (Design) and Efficiency	UNDP	The overall framework was too wieldy and the inclusion of activities as indicators overwhelmed the tracking system and meant that if a particular qualitative amount was not achieved, it meant that the output was off track. A maximum of two to three output indicators should exist per result – such indicators should combine both qualitative and quantitative data and should be an adequate measure of the success of the output. Outputs where possible should remain the same throughout the lifetime of the project, and outputs should be removed or completely replaced in the reporting system if they are no longer valid.	
A strategic approach to engaging women in the process is needed informed by an appropriate gender analysis.	Gender and human rights	UNDP / UN Women /AWN	A gender analysis should be undertaken in order to understand the key challenges to women's participation, and this should feed into the project document. Gender specific outcomes with regards to shifts in mindset should be considered and not only gender targeted results. All data should be disaggregated and external expertise from UN agencies such as UN Women and national organizations such as AWN should be utilized more to address the challenges that women face both as voters and as candidates.	High (if the project takes place or a similar project)
More focus on vulnerable groups such as Persons with disabilities and youth	Gender and human rights	UNDP /UNICEF and other key actors	A focus on vulnerable groups such as PWDs, and youth was largely missing. Activities as well as a specific output denoting their needs was needed. Inclusivity is very difficult if a project does not also provide a focus on these groups. A human rights analysis would be needed to gauge the types of	High (it is essential that a new project includes youth especially given the youth bulge in the country.

			challenges that are faced by these persons.	Likewise given the sheer number of PWDs in Afghanistan, a focus on this group is also needed.
--	--	--	---	---

ANNEX I – EVALUATION MATRIX

CRITERIA	EVALUATION QUESTION	INDICATORS	SOURCE OF EVIDENCE	METHODOLOGY
Element	Judgement Criteria	Including baseline and targets where	Documentation Review	Data collection methods /
RELEVANCE	1. To what extent did the project design and objective respond to the needs of the direct and indirect beneficiaries?			
Ownership	Extent to which the action design ensured the ownership of objectives by the key beneficiaries through the TOC and intervention logic	Level of involvement of the implementing partners officials in action design Consistency of action design with institutions policies Integration into the action's intervention logic of needs as expressed by beneficiaries and in line with previous support	- Baseline data report - Project documents - policy documents -	- Review of project documentation - Review of key beneficiaries' policy documents and strategic priorities - KII with beneficiaries (IEC and IECC)
	How much support did the Government provide to the project to garner national ownership?	What activities did the government undertake to ensure ownership of the project? Were there any constraints/challenges to ensuring ownership	- Project reports - Articles on the electoral process	- Review of project documentation - Review of key beneficiaries' policy documents and strategic priorities - KII with beneficiaries (IEC and IECC)
	To what extent was UNESP able to garner national ownership of the activities?	The level of satisfaction of staff The extent to which knowledge was transferred in key areas of support	- Results from Survey - Reports	- Surveys of IEC and IECC
	Existence of good practices	Examples of good practices Number of incidences where project was not able to deliver on enhancing national ownership	- Results from Survey - Reports	- Surveys of IEC and IECC
Rationale	Extent to which the objectives of the project are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities (SDGs) and partner's and donor's policies and priorities.	Consistency of the action intervention logic with UNDAF, UN policy, UNDP strategic objectives including Gender Policy and in line with human rights and respective goals outlined in the Agenda 2030	- UNCF - UNDP strategic documents - CPD	- Review of documentation - Interviews with UN country office and project document

		Alignment with key development strategies Consistency with human development needs of the country and intended beneficiaries Alignment with the needs of donor policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SDG Plan (Agenda 2030) - EU and US policies as well as key donors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews with development partners
	Extent to which the action design considered lessons learnt from previous support to the electoral process in Afghanistan	action design was explicitly informed by successes and failures of previous UNDP programmes in support to electoral process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Amendments to the project - Evaluations of previous projects – PIP, UNDP ELECT II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of documentation - Interviews with UN country office and project and implementing partners
Design	Was the project design effective to address the issues identified to be address by the Project	TOC/Intervention Logic addressed key issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Results Framework - Project Document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk Review
	Is the project life span sufficient to achieve its goals?	Number of activities not done due to time limitations /security concerns/political constraints Quality of implementation affected by time constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reports - Primary Data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk Review -
	Are the activities relevant to enable the project achieve the intended objectives or results?	Number of adjustments to project activities due to the context Extent to which the outputs and outcomes address the specific developmental challenges of the country Appropriateness of the selected method of delivery to the development context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk Review
	Robustness of the action's intervention logic	Causal links foreseen between inputs, activities, expected results and objectives proved realistic through delivery. The scope and complementarity of the action's component were commensurate with expected outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intervention logic - Revisions /amendments of Project Document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of project documentation - KII with Project Staff and key beneficiaries
	Consideration given to Human Rights and Gender Equality issues through all components of the action and its contribution to the civic and human rights of target groups?	The Intervention Logic promotes a right-based observation Gender Equality is mainstreamed in the Intervention Logic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Identification/formulation report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of project documentation - KII Project Team

		Indicators are gender disaggregated where relevant.	- Monitoring and evaluation framework	
Assumptions	Validity of assumptions and risks as initially identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial assumptions realized Adequacy between risk identification including planned mitigation measures and actual obstacles in delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intervention Logic (initial) Intervention Logic (revised) Project reporting Monitoring and evaluation reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of project documentation KII baseline documentation, Project Team, UNDP CO, DP

CRITERIA	EVALUATION QUESTION	INDICATORS	SOURCE OF EVIDENCE	METHODOLOGY	
EFFECTIVENESS	2. To what extent have project objectives and results been achieved? What were the key challenges and enabling factors?				
The Results	Extent to which the project achieved progress against the established indicators under outcomes one to seven (output eight activities were suspended due to the dissolution of the IEC/IECC and elections in general)	See project indicators and to what extent they have been achieved to date – are they on track to be achieved	- Project documentation - Domestic observer reports	- Comparative Robust desk review of UNDP project documentation - Interviews of KIIS i(IEC and IECC) and other Un Agencies, Local Government, project staff, ,Implementing partners and civil society etc - -	
	Extent to which the project managed to increase the capacity of the IEC/IECC to administer credible electoral processes	Percentage of relevant staff who are able to draft simple legislative bills/amendments to bills Increased capacity individual mps to initiate private member bills and motion Increased percentage of CSOs, Academia, Research Institutions that participate and engage	-		
	Extent to which the project contributed to mainstreaming gender in all functions of the electoral process?		-		
	Extent to which project has elevated cooperation between relevant institutions?	Number of meetings between key institutions Effective collaboration and communication amongst UNDP, donors, UNAMA, IEC and ECC	-		
	The extent to which the Project outreached to marginalized groups (ie Persons with disabilities (PWD), returnees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), minorities	Alignment of project according to a civic and human rights perspective Level of participation of participants in project planning, implementation and follow up Examples of positive or negative discrimination Transparency of the implementation Existence of accountability mechanisms	- Narrative reports - Statistical data		
	What were the key challenges and enabling factors?	(assessment derives from the above)			
	In which area was the action most successful in contributing to foster	(assessment derives from the above)			

CRITERIA	EVALUATION QUESTION	INDICATORS	SOURCE OF EVIDENCE	METHODOLOGY
EFFICIENCY	3. To what extent have resources (financial, Human and technical) been allocated strategically and were they managed effectively?			
Use of Resources	Extent to which the activities and outputs could have been delivered with fewer resources without reducing quality and quantity.	Sufficient number of staff allocated to the project on a full-time basis Quality of the staff and the experience Impact of Covid 19 and Security on recruitment	- Financial and narrative reports - Original budget - Other similar interventions approaches	- Robust desk review of the project documentation including financial reports and Terms of Reference - KIIs with the UNDP project staff and development partners - KII with key beneficiaries
	Extent to which UNDPs approaches, resources, models, conceptual framework are relevant to achieve the planned outcome	Sufficiently sensitive to the political and development, security and Covid 19 constraints of the country Efficiency and cost effectiveness of the	- Narrative reports	- Robust desk review of the project documentation including financial reports and Terms of Reference - KIIs with the UNDP project staff and Development partners - KII with key beneficiaries
	Extent to which the rate of delivery and issuance of the budget were timely and sufficiently effective to achieve the planned results.	Expenditure of the overall budget each year is in line with scale and scope of expected results Number of Delays in activities due to be delayed spending of budget Extent to which adequate resources were mobilised?	- Financial and narrative reports - Annual Work Plans	- Robust desk review of the project documentation including financial reports and narrative reports - KIIs with project staff - KIIs with UNDP, Development partners and key beneficiaries

	Extent to which bottlenecks or challenges existed and hindered resources being used appropriately.	The budget and workplans were approved on a regular basis and in line with the workplans established work plans are delivered on time and implemented Strategies to put in place to close the resource gaps, and how have these been implemented?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual work Plans - Narrative Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Robust desk review of the project documentation - KIIs with Project staff, development partners and key beneficiaries
Organisational efficiency	Extent to which the management/governance mechanisms established were sufficient to oversee the programmatic and financial management of the intervention.	Governance/management mechanism established and adhered to Efficient oversight of project Budget within established parameters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Board Meetings - Narrative Reports - Financial Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Robust desk review of the project documentation - KIIs with project staff, UNDP, development partners and Key beneficiaries
	Extent to which are workplans realistic and are they delivered in a timely manner.	Feasible workplans are developed and implemented Workplans are considered realistic and relevant Workplans are developed and approved on time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial and Narrative Reports - Training Reports - Annual Workplans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review of the Project documentation - KIIs with project staff, UNDP and key beneficiaries
	Extent to which the project design, management, human resource skills and resources were adequate?	Key weaknesses identified Key strengths identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial and Narrative Reports - Training Reports - Knowledge products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review of the Project documentation - KIIs with project staff, UNDP and key beneficiaries
Monitoring Efficiency	Extent to which the log frame was utilised to guide implementation and as a monitoring tool.	Baselines, indicators and targets were established Results based management reporting was utilised Monitoring systems in place to ensure that Projectis managed effectively for proper accountability of results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrative reports - Log Frame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review including Log frame, desk review of narrative reports - KIIs with UNDP, Project Staff and DPs
	Extent to which the monitoring of the results was conducted in an effective and efficiency way?	Key results were described in the narrative reports The existence of a monitoring and evaluation framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrative reports - Log Frame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Robust desk review of the project documentation, log frame - KIIs with UNDP staff and DPs
	Extent to which risks were managed effectively?	The effectiveness of management to manage the risks and to inform and adapt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrative reports - ATLAS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documentation review

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key interviews - Analysis of risks
	Extent to which the action was able to adapt to evolving needs and context, particularly Covid 19., security and political factors.	Implementation of a risk management strategy Challenges were referred to in reports and Project Board meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrative reports - Project Board reports - Log frame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Robust desk review of the project documentation, log frame - KIIs with UNDP, DPs, and key beneficiaries
	The extent which the reporting on the implementation of donor assistance was adequate.	Adherence to the templates established at the beginning of the mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Narrative reports - Templates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documentation, log frame - KIIs with project staff and DPs

CRITERIA	EVALUATION QUESTION	INDICATORS	SOURCE OF EVIDENCE	METHODOLOGY
SUSTAINABILITY	4. To what extent did the beneficiaries take ownership of the project? Will they be able to sustain the results of the intervention (programmatically, politically and financially)?			
	Extent to which the beneficiaries have endorsed the results of the intervention thus far.	Extent to which there is a development of systems and procedures in the two elections commissions to ensure established procedures are continued Extent to which the beneficiaries and beneficiary institutions understand and credible and participatory elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Documentation - Narrative Reports - Beneficiaries - EOM reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIS with key beneficiaries as well as external actors such as CSOs and actors who observed the elections - Desk review of relevant documentation -
	The extent to which the capacities of the electoral commissions have been strengthened to sustain the results of the project	The contribution of the support to ensure sustainability beyond the UNDP interventions The extent to which capacity building initiatives/trainings are sustainable and long term effects Examples of mechanisms put in place to support the electoral commissions to sustain improvements made through the UNESP		
	What needs to be changed to ensure sustainability? What financial, economic, social, environmental, and institutional capacities of the systems are needed to sustain the benefits?	Extent of the changes needed to be made in the current set of governance partnerships to promote long term sustainability of the results		
	Extent to which mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to carry forward the results attained on women's empowerment within the electoral process	The number of positive actions aimed at women in the electoral process Number of women at decision making levels of the two commissions The number of women who put their candidature forward for both elections in comparison to former elections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Election reports - Knowledge projects - Project Documentation - Narrative Reports - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIS with staff members and key beneficiaries as well as external actors - Desk review of relevant documentation
	Extent to which sustainability can be achieved given the key considerations of political, security context			

		Existence of national plans/reforms to promote inclusive electoral processes (development, approval and implementation thereof) within the electoral commissions		
--	--	--	--	--

CRITERIA	EVALUATION QUESTION	INDICATORS	SOURCE OF EVIDENCE	METHODOLOGY
Impact	5. To what extent did the project contribute to legitimate, transparent and inclusive governance at all levels that enables progressive realisation of human rights?			
	To what extent were the two EMBS able to implement elections which were deemed to be more legitimate, transparent and inclusive	IEC and ECC have a strategic and/or operational plan that is fully implemented and are able to overcome planning or implementation challenges.” The extent to which public perception held the elections to be more inclusive, and transparent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Documentation - Narrative Reports - Beneficiaries - EOM reports - Surveys - News Articles - Interviews with civil society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIS with key beneficiaries as well as external actors such as CSOs and actors who observed the elections - Desk review of relevant documentation -

CRITERIA	EVALUATION QUESTION	INDICATORS	SOURCE OF EVIDENCE	METHODOLOGY
GENDER AND HUMAN RIGHTS	6. How well has the action addressed the issues of human rights concerns, gender inclusion, women's equality and empowerment across all aspects of the intervention's design, development, implementation and its management?			
	Extent to which the action has ensured that gender issues and participation of vulnerable/disadvantaged groups are mainstreamed in support of inclusive and participatory electoral process	Space allocated to gender and vulnerable/disadvantaged groups participation in the commissions and its activities Space allocated to gender and vulnerable/disadvantaged groups 'participation in training/key knowledge products/outreach (methodology documents for the elections	- ProDoc - Narrative Reports - Training /workshop Reports - Key knowledge products -	- Desk review of knowledge products - KIIS with persons trained, recipients of workshops etc
	Extent to which the rights-based approach has been followed in the identification/formulation documents?	Five principles of the RBA have been applied	- ProDoc - Narrative reports	- Desk review to ascertain if reference has been made - KIIs with UNDP -
	Extent of the impact the intervention has on the permanent and real attitudinal and behavioural change conducive to HR and GE by the beneficiaries of the action?	The extent to which gender and other issues are covered in the activities and key outputs of the action and attitudes are more gender transformative	- Narrative Reports -	- Desk review of documentation including relevant articles, UN agencies, UN Women - KIIs with key beneficiary institutions, CSOs, Women's Groups, other relevant CSOs
	Extent to which the assigned gender marker represents the reality of the project	The number of gender specific results	Intervention logic Overall documentation	- Desk review - Interviews and analysis of intervention logic
	Extent to which the gender has been addressed in the design / identification/formulation / monitoring of inclusive democratic governance projects?	The inclusion of gender sensitive markers Adequate monitoring of the impact of women in the results Gender disaggregated data Use of innovative tools	- ProDoc - Narrative reports	- Desk review to ascertain if reference has been made - KIIs with UNDP -

Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021
1.1 A comprehensive Strategic Plan is designed and adopted by the IEC, including an M&E plan.	Off Track – this indicator was postponed to 2019	Off Target – shifted to 2020 to incorporate recommendations of NAM	Off target – shifted to 2021	Designed but not adopted due to overthrow of GoIRA
1.2 Number of reviews/assessments of the comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan in line with the IEC's Strategic Plan.	Off track – dependent on 1.1.	Off Target – not conducted – linked to the Strategic Plan which is yet to be developed.	Dropped in 2020	not planned
1.3.1 Percentage of recruited Tashkeel staff in relation to the approved IEC organigram (disaggregated F/M).	On Track T:77% M: 94% F: 6%	On target	N/A – not planned for 2020. 0.3% increase in staff recruited. Overall recruitment is at 72.3%	See graphs below
1.3.2 Percentage of IEC Tashkeel staff who have received induction and technical training and are therefore able to effectively fulfil their functions (disaggregated F/M).	Off Track M: 52% F: 18% - focus on temporary staff took priority in 2018, however 141 staff at the IEC were trained.	Off Target – put on hold capacity building programme and focused on recruitment of staff	Off target . training are ongoing	???
1.4 Availability of an Institutional Cooperation Framework.	Completed (this was formally 1.3)	On target	Not planned	N/A
1.5 Extent to which the IEC is compliant with the Afghan public financial management system (Scale: not compliant, somewhat compliant, fully compliant).	On Track (somewhat compliant)	On target	Not planned for 2020	Not planned
1.6 Comprehensive asset management, logistics and transport procedures are updated, approved and implemented by the IEC.	On Track – partial progress has been achieved in procedural update	On target	Dropped in 2020 – ATS Database is being revamped	Not planned
1.7. 1.7 Number (or %) of IEC operational plans and procedures that incorporate specific needs of women.	On Target – Completed			
1.8 Availability of a comprehensive and credible list of polling locations for	On track	On target – Completed	Not planned	BoC approved

elections approved and published by the IEC. .				tentative list of 7,385 PCs
1.9 Availability of finalized boundaries for the Wolesi Jirga, district council and provincial council constituencies published by the IDLG and IEC.	Dropped in May 2018	Not planned	Not Planned	Not planned
1.10 Availability of revised and approved regulations, procedures and plans for (1) voter registration, (2) candidate nominations, (3) polling procedures and (4) results management are adopted and implemented by the IEC.	1.9 in 2018 - Completed	On target	Not planned for 2020 – Results management procedures used until February 2020.	No commitment from GoIRA to hold elections in 2021 made
1.11 Availability of approved budgeted operational plan for the next elections incorporating (1) voter registration, (2) candidate nomination, (3) polling operations, (4) counting operations, results management & announcement, (5) comprehensive electoral budget (Score: 1-5).	1.10 in 2018 Completed	On target	Not planned for 2929	Budgets are prepared but GoIRA non commitment
1.12 A functional elections security coordination mechanism in place.	1.11. in 2018 – completed	On target	n/A no run off. Coordination mechanism used until February 2020.	No commitment from the GoIRA on provision of security was made

Indicator		2019	2020	2021
2.1 A comprehensive Strategic Plan is designed and adopted by the ECC, including organigram and TORs.	Off Track – relegated to 2019	Off Target – shifted to 2020 to incorporate recommendations of NAM	Shifted to 2021	Not finalised due to overthrow of the GoIRA
2.2 Availability of an Institutional Cooperation Framework for the ECC.	Completed	On target – MoUs signed with IEC and other national institutions	Not planned for 2020	See above
2.3.1 Percentage of recruited Tashkeel staff in relation to the approved ECC organigram (disaggregated F/M).	On Track T:89% M: 81% F:19%	On target – put on hold as ECC worked on expanding staffing structure	Not planned for 2020	T-91% F: 9% M: 91%
2.3.2 Percentage of ECC Tashkeel staff who have received induction and technical training and are therefore able to effectively fulfil their functions (disaggregated F/M).	On Track 50%	Off target – prolonged adjudication of 2018 WJ elections complaints	On target – target for women not achieved – no female staff in some units	T: 40% F: 5% M: 35%

			targeted for trainings	
Percentage of women employed at ECC.	Dropped in May 2018	Not planned	Not planned	Not planned
2.4 Number of new regulations on the conduct of the complaints process drafted, adopted and published on time.	On track 14	On Target – Completed	Not planned for 2020	0
2.5 Number (or %) of ECC operational plans and procedures that integrate programme specific needs of women.	On track 30%	On target	Not planned for 2020	0
2.6 EDR Case Management System in place.	Completed (Please see below)	On Target – EDR case management in use?	Completed (See below)	N/A
2.8 Availability of budgeted operational plan for the adjudication of electoral complaints for the upcoming elections, approved by the ECC.	Completed	On Target – completed	Completed in February 2020	N/A
2.9 Percentage of electoral complaints, which are timely adjudicated by the ECC as per the national electoral legal framework.	On Track (85%)	On target – completed for e-day complaints. ECC is adjudicating complaints related to preliminary results.		N/A

Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021
3.1.1 Percentage of people/eligible voters reached through IEC's public TV and Radio information campaigns (disaggregated F/M).	On track 79.7%	On target – 55% reached through the TV and 22.9% through the radio (Asia Foundation Survey)	Not planned	N/A due to uncertainty about electoral events
3.1.2 Percentage of people who declare themselves (a) informed and (b) satisfied with IEC's and ECC's role in the electoral process (disaggregated F/M).	On track 43.3%	On target 80.9% were aware of upcoming presidential elections (Asia Foundation Survey)	Not planned	Public perception was halted
3.2 Percentage of people who declare their intention to register for the next election cycle.	67.87 On track	On target – 75.1% of afghans registered to vote	Dropped in 2020	Not planned
3.3 Percentage of people/eligible voters reached through IEC public information campaigns (about the functions of the	Dropped in may 2018	Not planned	Not planned	Not planned

entities they are voting for, the importance of making an informed choice, and their rights and responsibilities according to the law as voters.				
3.4 Number of Afghan civil society organizations delivering common civic and voter education (disaggregated by geography vulnerable groups).	Dropped in May 2018	Not planed	Not planned	Not planned
3.5 Percentage of women (a) registered, (b) nominated (c) voted	On Track a. 34% b. 16.21% c. 44.36%	On target – preliminary results at least 31% of the 1,824,401 valid votes were cast by women.	Not planned	Not planned for 2021
3.5.1 Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Regulations, SOPs and TOR are in place to facilitate IEC stakeholder engagements with political parties, observers, monitors, media and international actors (new indicator).		On target – completed	Not planned	Not finalized due to fal of GoIRA
3.6. Number of political parties, electoral contestants and civil society groups that participate in public consultation/stakeholder engagement events with IEC.	On Track 1,199	Not planned	Not planned	190

OUTPUT 4: A POLLING CENTRE SPECIFIC VOTER LIST FOR THE NEXT ELECTION IS PRODUCED BY THE IEC.

Indicator		2019	2020	2021
4.1. Percentage of materials (items) for voter registration, as per the IEC operational plan, procured on time.	Completed	On Target – completed	Not planned for 2020	Voter list cleaning was ongoing
4.2. A credible polling centre specific voter list for the upcoming elections is finalised by the IEC.	Completed 66%	On target – 10.4% (74 out of 711) VCs were closed for security reasons	Not planned for 2020	Was on track prior to fall of GoIRA
4.3.1. Number of gender sensitization training sessions.	Off track - 1 Gender advisor only recruited late in 2018. Training focussed on VAW	On target – completed	Not planned for 2020	Activities interrupted
4.3.2. Number of gender sensitization training beneficiaries (security personnel, IEC personnel, etc.)	Off Track 6 Gender Advisor only recruited in late 2018. One training held focusing on	On target - completed	Not planned	

	violence against women in elections conducted prior to WJ Election			
4.4. Specifications of voter registration materials, VR list exhibition materials and voter registration training materials developed for timely procurement. [new indicator]	N/A	N/S	Not planned	No decision on modality of VR yet (e tazkira or paper based tazkira?)

OUTPUT 5 THE IEC AND ECC PROVIDE CREDIBLE ADMINISTRATION OF AN ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION FOR THE WOLESI JIRGA AND DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS, RESPECTIVELY.

Indicator		2019	2020	2021
5.1 Percentage of Polling Centres/Polling Stations receiving electoral materials for the Wolesi Jirga elections. [amended]	Completed 91.78%	Not planned for 2019		No commitment from GoIRA to hold elections in 2021.
5.1.1. Percentage of procured equipment (US\$ Value), as per the IEC operational plan. (Note: As required and requested by the IEC, delivered by the Project as per the IEC operational plan.)	Completed 100%	Not planned for 2019		IEC had not approved Operational Plan/obtained Ministry of Finance budget.
5.2 Percentage of media complaints adjudicated by the Media Committee in a timely manner [indicator removed, tracked under 8.2].	Completed	Not planned for 2019		Not planned
5.2.1 The IEC Media Committee is in place, according to the Electoral Law [indicator removed, tracked under 8.2].	Completed	Not planned for 2019		Not planned
5.3 Percentage of candidate nominations for the (Ghazni) Wolesi Jirga elections vetted by the IEC (disaggregated M/F). [amended]	Completed	Not planned for 2019		No commitment from GoIRA to hold elections in 2021.
5.3.1. Candidate vetting (verification) procedures are in place for the (WJ) Ghazni Wolesi Jirga elections as approved by the IEC. [amended]	Completed	Not planned for 2019		No commitment from GoIRA to hold elections in 2021.
5.3.2 Procedures on the candidate nomination complaints process are in place for the Wolesi Jirga elections, as approved by the IEC. [amended]	Completed	Not planned for 2019		Procedures were based on the existing election law

5.4 Percentage of Polling Centres and Polling Stations that open for polling on election day, as per the IEC operational plan. [amended]	Completed 94.84% (Please see above)	Not planned for 2019		No Elections
5.4.1 Number of trainings delivered to the IEC temporary polling staff, on counting, polling and results processing procedures for the Ghazni Wolesi Jirga elections. [amended]	Completed Co	Not planned for 2019		No Elections
5.4.1.1 Number of trainings delivered to the ECC temporary staff, on EDR, counting, polling and results processing procedures for the Ghazni Wolesi Jirga elections. [new]		Not planned for 2019		No Elections
5.4.2 Number of IEC and ECC temporary polling staff trained in counting, polling and results processing procedures for the WJ (Ghazni Wolesi Jirga and District Council elections)(M/F). [amended]	Completed 429	Not planned for 2019		No Elections
5.4.2.1 Number of ECC temporary staff trained on EDR, counting, polling and results processing procedures for the Ghazni Wolesi Jirga elections (M/F). [new]		Not planned for 2019		No Elections
5.5.1 Provisional polling results publicized on time (according to the electoral calendar) by the IEC.	Completed	Not planned for 2019		No Elections
5.5.1.1 Procedures for Results Management System and processes are in place, as approved by the IEC.	Completed	Not planned for 2019		No Elections
5.5.2 Final polling results publicized on time (according to the electoral calendar) by the IEC.	Off track - Delays in recount process and high volume of ECC complaints and appeals have resulted in some provinces exceeding delegated time for announcement.	Not planned for 2019		No Elections
5.5.2.1. Data centre (infrastructure, software and training plan for data centre operators) is in place.	Completed	Not planned for 2019		No Elections
5.7. Electronic Case management system for processing electoral complaints is established and fully operational	Completed			

OUTPUT 6 THE IEC AND ECC ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE CREDIBLE ADMINISTRATION OF, AND ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION FOR THE 2019 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

Indicator		2019	2020	2021
6.1. Percentage of candidate nominations for the Presidential elections vetted by the IEC (F/M).	N/A	On target – all 18 submissions from potential candidates were vetted and certified	Not planned	N/A Completed in 2019.
6.2 Percentage of Polling Centres/Polling Stations receiving electoral materials for election day.	N/A	On target – completed	N/A – there was no runoff	N/A Completed in 2019.
6.2.1 Number of IEC and ECC temporary polling staff trained in counting, polling and results processing procedures for the Presidential election (M/F).	N/A	On target – IEC 191,395 (61,893 women) ECC – 527 (90 women)	N/A – there was no runoff	N/A Completed in 2019.
6.2.2 % of Polling Centres/Polling Stations that open for polling on election day, as per the IEC operational plan.	N/A	On target – some PCs could not open for security reasons both prior to polling day as per MoIA security assessments and on polling day due to assessed threat levels	N/A – there was no runoff	N/A Completed in 2019.
6.2.3 Percentage of media complaints adjudicated by the Media Committee in a timely manner, according to the adjudication schedule.	N/A	On target – 55 media complaints received and resolved	N/A – there was no runoff	N/A Completed in 2019.
6.2.4 Number of people accredited for electoral observation (disaggregated domestic observer/ political party monitor/media/candidate's agents; F/M).	N/A	On target- 3,754 coordinators were also accredited	N/A – there was no runoff	N/A Completed in 2019.
6.3.1 Provisional polling results publicized on time, according to the electoral calendar by the IEC.	N/A	On target – IEC received timelines for announcing results	N/A – there was no runoff	N/A Completed in 2019.
6.3.2 Final polling results publicized on time, according to the electoral calendar by the IEC.	N/A	On target – ECC adjudicated complaints against preliminary results	Completed in February 2020	N/A Completed in 2020.
6.3.3 Data center with infrastructure, software and training plan for data center operators is in place.	N/A	On target – completed	Completed in February 2020	N/A completed in 2020.
6.4 Percentage of electoral complaints, which are timely adjudicated by the ECC as per the national electoral legal framework.		On target – ongoing adjudication of 16,551 complaints against preliminary results.	Completed in February 2020	N/a Completed in 2020.

3.5 OUTPUT 7 ELECTORAL LAWS AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AMENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROPOSED ELECTORAL REFORMS.

Indicator		2019	2020	2021
7.1 Number of legal and technical proposals for amendment of the electoral legal framework drafted and submitted to Ministry of Justice.				A concept of the Election Law was sent to the Ministry of Justice.
7.2 Number of legal and technical proposals for amendment of the				See above.

election law related to the reforms to the electoral system drafted.				
7.3.1 Consultation forums conducted with stakeholders to increase their understanding of the proposed outcomes of the reforms.				Disrupted.
7.3.2 Number of people who participate in consultative forums.				Disrupted.
7.4 Number of advisory documents developed on the use of biometrics in voter registration, voter verification and administrative uses of the EMBs.				Doc on VR options submitted to IEC BoC.
7.5 Number of advisory documents developed for the recruitment of staff required for implementing the change in election system and standard use of biometrics by the EMBs.				Disrupted.
7.6 Number of regulations and procedures developed for implementation of new electoral system and processes.				Disrupted.

3.6

3.7 OUTPUT 8 THE IEC AND ECC ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE CREDIBLE ADMINISTRATION OF, AND ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION, FOR THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS AND OTHER RELATED ELECTORAL EVENTS.

Indicator		2019	2020	2021
8.1 Specifications of election materials and equipment to be procured are developed for timely procurement.				No decision of PC elections
8.2 Percentage of media complaints adjudicated by the Media Committee, according to the schedule.				No decision of PC elections
8.3 Percentage of people who declare their intention to register for the election.				No decision of PC elections
8.4.1 Number of materials produced by the IEC and the ECC for civic and voter education public outreach campaigns.				No decision of PC elections
8.4.2 Number of staff trained for implementation of civic and voter education public outreach campaigns (F/M).				No decision of PC elections
8.5 Percentage of candidate nominations that are vetted (disaggregated by election, F/M).				No decision of PC elections
8.6.1 Percentage of Polling Centres/Polling Stations receiving electoral materials for election day.				No decision of PC elections

8.6.2.1 Number of IEC temporary polling staff trained in counting, polling and results processing procedures for the election (disaggregated by election, F/M).				No decision of PC elections
8.6.2.2 Number of ECC temporary staff trained on EDR, counting, polling and results processing procedures for the elections (disaggregated by election, F/M).				No decision of PC elections
8.6.3 Percentage of Polling Centres/Polling Stations that open for polling on election day, as per the IEC operational plan (disaggregated by election).				No decision of PC elections
8.6.4 Field Operations and Logistics Action Plan, Strategies, and Guidelines are in place to facilitate conducting of polling on election day.				No decision of PC elections
8.6.5 Number of people accredited for electoral observation (disaggregated domestic observer/political party monitor/ media/ candidate's agents; F/M)				No decision of PC elections
8.7.1 Provisional polling results publicized by the IEC.				No decision of PC elections
8.7.2 Final polling results publicized by the IEC.				No decision of PC elections
8.7.3 Data centre with infrastructure, software and training plan for data centre operators is in place.				No decision of PC elections
8.8 Percentage of electoral complaints, which are timely adjudicated by the ECC as per the national electoral legal framework.				No decision of PC elections

IEC Electoral Stakeholder Engagement 2018	
6 National Election Forums (NEFs).	
CSOs	53
Representatives from political parties	224
Other entities/ with political stakeholders, media, civil society and observer groups.	34
Total	311
29 Provincial Election Forums (PEFs).	
provincial representatives of the political parties	140
CSOs	210
Other entities/women's networks, provincial council members, community councils, heads of Nahias, line ministries, UNAMA, and the local media	538
Total	888
Total NEFs and PEFs	1,199
Additional representatives of various governmental departments, community councils, minority representatives, elders and influential figures, UNAMA, NATO RS and the donor community.	572
Grand total	1,771
8 IEC Electoral Coordination Meetings	
1 IEC Meeting with Religious Scholars	
Election Day Communication	
Over the three WJ Election days, the IEC held 6 press conferences	6
Over the three WJ Election days, the EEC held four press conferences:	4
4 ECC Electoral Consultation Meetings	
Representatives from women's groups,	19
Representatives of CSOs including accredited national observers, political parties	135
18 ECC Open Sessions	
Appeals discussed in these sessions,	379
50 Public Service Announcements (PSAs)	
50 PSAs (Dari, Pashtu and Uzbek), were produced by UNESP for IEC throughout 2018 and broadcast on 21 television channels, 70 radio stations and published on IEC website and social media accounts. Fifteen (15) PSAs were produced in the three national languages with UNESP support and broadcasted on 12 television channels and 20 radio stations.	
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram followers number N/A	

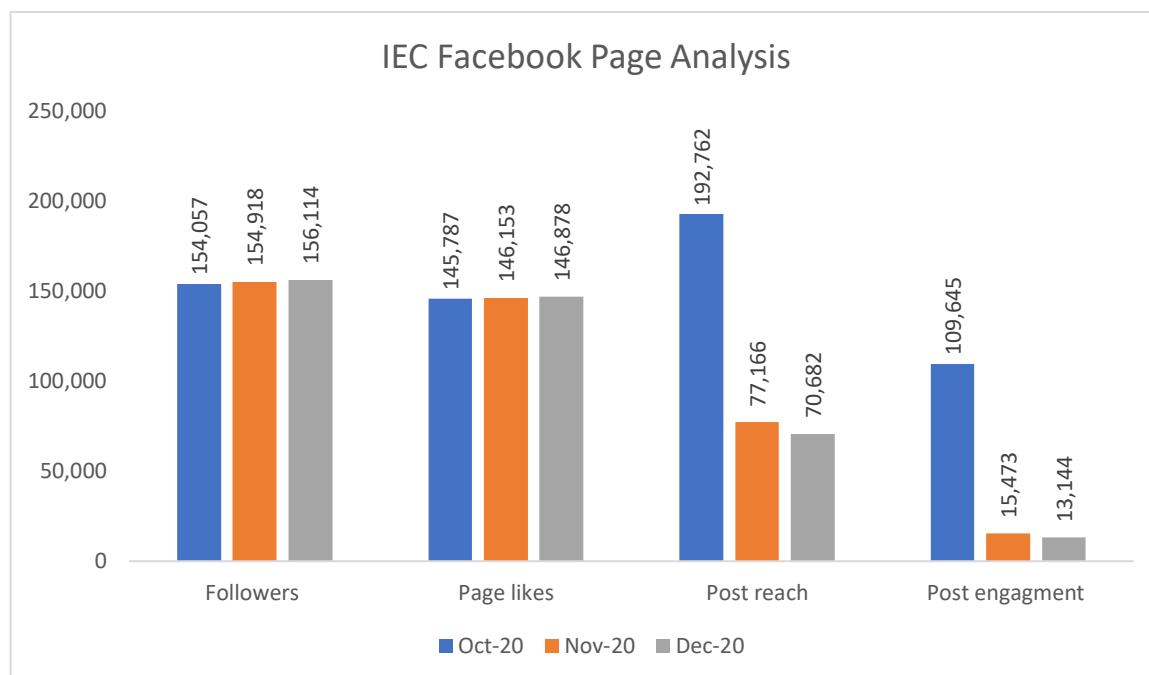
IEC Electoral Stakeholder Engagement 2019	
82,577 Public Outreach Grassroots Meetings	
43 Public Service Announcements (PSAs)	
4 Consultative meetings	
3 National Election Forums (NEFs)	
8 consultations meetings	
2 meetings of IEC	
20 Press conferences	

19,944 Twitter Followers, 1,089, tweets, and 39,754 profile visits
145,726 Facebook Followers (6 % women); 298,205 Posts. .
ECC
45 Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
Twitter followers increased by 2,856.7 percent (67 to 1,981), Cumulatively, ECC has posted 256 photos and videos on its page
Facebook with a 42.9 percent increase in number of followers (16,874 to 24,112)

IEC Electoral Stakeholder Engagement 2020	
Public Outreach Campaign	
116 meetings through the IPECs	4641 (1330 women)
48.9 % increase in the follower of Twitter (from 19,944 to 29.7k)	224

7.1 % increase in the follower of Facebook (from 145,726 to 156,114). Post reached 70,682 compared to 298,205 in December 2019

According to the social media overall all analysis, from November to December 2020 there was a 0.7 % increase the number of people following the Facebook page from (154,981, to 146,153). In addition, the post reached decreased by 8.4 % (from 77,166 to 70, 682), post engagement decreased by 15.1 % (from 15,473 to 13,144)



ECC		
4 Press conference and six daily live streamed media briefing. In addition, ECC streamed the announcement of decisions on the 6,377 appeals live on Facebook with more than 11,000 viewers during the live stream		
The social media analysis shows that compared to the previous year, on Twitter there was a 43.3 % increase In followers (from 1981 to 2838)		
The social media analysis shows that compared to the previous year, there was a 9.8 % increase in number of followers (from 24,112 to 26,464) of Facebook. Post reach was 15,517 compared to 55,937 in December 2019. % increase in number of people following the Facebook page (from 226,186 to 26, 464) while the number of people who like the Facebook page increased by 0.8 % (from 25,480 to 25,689). Post reach decreased by 33.1 % (from 23,192 to 15517) post engagement decreased by 31.8 % (from 398 to 2,715). Tweet impressions (visibility) increased by 18% from 56,34 to 6,650 and profile visits increased by 24. 3 % from 247 to 307.		
Description	Facebook analysis	Twitter analysis

	20-Oct	20-Nov	20-Dec	20-Oct	20-Nov	20-Dec
Pages views	644	647	492			
Followers	25908	26186	26464	2755	2815	2838
Page likes	25243	25480	25689			
Post reach	1342	23192	15517			
Post engagement	3905	3983	2715			
Tweet impressions				5771	5634	6650
Number of Tweets				10	13	19
Profile Visits					247	307

IEC Electoral Stakeholder Engagement 2021			
Facebook			
IEC Website and Social Media: During the reporting period the number of followers of the IEC Facebook page reached 159,564 (increase of 2.2 per cent). The number of page likes also went up from 146,878 to 149,603 (increase of 1.9 per cent). At the same time post engagements dropped from 109,645 to 7,062 (by 93.6 per cent). Total page views constituted over 10,000.			
Description			
Pages views			10000
Followers	159564		Increases of 2.2%
Page likes	Went up from 146645 to 149603		Increase of 1.9%
Post engagement	Dropped from 109645 to 7062		by 93,6
ECC Website and Social Media: With technical support of UNESP, in 2021 the ECC continued to update the content of its social media platforms. On Facebook, there was a 4.3 per cent increase in number of followers (from 26,464 to 27,593) and a 3.7 percent increase in the number of people who liked the page (from 25,689 to 26,630). Also, post engagement decreased by 34.9 percent (from 3,905 to 2,544). The total number of page views was over 2,000. The ECC Twitter witnessed 37 tweets, receiving 14,950 impressions. The decline on EMBs social media engagement could have been attributed to political and security situation.			
Description			
Pages views			2,000
Followers	from 26,464 to 27,593		Increases of 4.3%
Page likes	from 25,689 to 26,630		Increases of 3.7%
Post engagement	from 3,905 to 2,544		decreased by 34.9
The ECC Twitter witnessed	37 tweets,		receiving 14,950 impressions.
1 National Election Forum:			
On 20 January 2021, the ECC and IEC, with coordination support from UNESP held a National Election Forum on the proposed amendments to the Election Law. In attendance were representatives of the two EMBs, political parties, civil society organizations, the media and the international community			
2 Press Conferences			
Press-conference on the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) Report, conducted on 6 February 2021.			
Press-conference on completion of the work on amendments to the Election Law and submission of the draft to the Ministry of Justice for review and action, conducted on 8 March 2021			

IEC REGULATIONS, CODES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES 2018		
1	Regulation on Voter Registration and Preparation of Voters List Based on Citizenship Tazkera	08.01.2018
2	Regulation on Validity Period, Archiving and Destruction of Sensitive Electoral Materials	20.03.2018
3	Regulation on Establishing, Duties and Authorities of the Media Committee (MC)	17.04.2018
4	Regulation on Candidate Nomination for the 2018 WJ and DC Elections	06.05.2018
5	Code of Conduct for Candidates	14.05.2018
6	Regulation on Managing Campaign Finance of Candidates During the 2018 Wolesi Jirga and District Councils (DCs) elections,	25.07.2018
7	Regulation on Campaign During the 2018 WJ and DC Elections	25.07.2018
8	Regulation on Polling, 2018 WJ and DC Elections	28.07.2018
9	Regulation on Counting of Wolesi Jirga and District Council Elections	29.07.2018
10	Regulation on Tallying, Announcement and Publication of Results of the WJ and DC Elections	29.08.2018
11	Regulation on Regulating the Mass Media Activities During the 2018 WJ and DC Elections	15.09.2018
12	Regulation on Presence of Special Guests in the Polling Centres for Observing the Various Process of the 2018 WJ and DC Elections	16.09.2018
13	Regulation on Audit, Recount and Invalidation of Votes of the 2018 WJ and DC Elections	17.9.2018
14	Regulation on Candidate Nomination for the 2019 Presidential Elections	15.12.2018
15	Regulation on Nominating Vice-President in case of death, suffering from an incurable disease and/or ineligibility of Vice President candidates.	15.12.2018
16	Code of Conduct for Candidates in the 2019 Elections	15.12.2018
17	Voter registration Procedures	

18	Procedures for Military Voter registration	
19	Summary of VR procedures	
20	CN Procedures for WJ elections	
21	Ballot Lottery Procedures	
22	Polling and Counting Procedures	12/9/2018
23	Procedures for use of Biometric Voter verification devices	7/10/2018
24	Tally Centre Operation Procedures	15-10-2018
25	Procedures for Intake of materials	15-10-2018
26	Audit and Recount Procedures	19-10-2018
27	PCs Assessment Procedures	
28	Guidelines for DROs and DDROs (District Registration Officers and Deputy District Registration Officers)	
29	Guidelines for intake of VR books at Provincial offices	
30	Guidelines for Sorting and Checking the Documents of Ca	
31	Guidelines for DEOs and DDEOs (District Electoral Officers and Deputy District Electoral Officers)	
32	Accreditation Guidelines	
33	Guidelines for Voter Registration Update process	4/12/2018
35	Guidelines for recruitment of temporary staff	17-2-2018
ECC REGULATIONS, CODES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES		
ECC Legal Documents		
MOUs		
1	MoU ECC-IEC	Signed on 25 December 2017
2	MoU Human Rights Commission	Signed on 2018

3	MoU Attorney General Office	Singed on 07/July 2018
4	MoU Security Sector	NA
5	MoU ECC-CSOs	Signed with 17 CSOs, started from 30 January 2017 to 31 October 2018
	Regulations	
6	Regulation on Quarantine, recount and invalidation of votes	Enacted on 23 September 2018
7	Regulation on disqualifying ineligible candidates	Enacted on 4/1/2018
8	Regulation on investigation and validation of votes	Enacted IN 2018
9	Regulation on Adjudication of Complaints arising from Balancing Polling Centers	Enacted on October 2017
	Procedures	
10	Procedure on recruitment of temporary staffs	Enacted on August 2018
11	Procedure on Vetting Commission	Enacted on 21 June 2018
12	Procedure on adjudication of complaints and objections	Enacted on April 2018
	Guidelines	
13	Guideline on regulating PECC Offices affairs	Enacted on August 201
IEC Regulations, Guidelines, Procedures, Codes of Conduct, and Plans 2019		
Regulations		

1	Issuance of accreditation to political parties, independent candidates, monitoring and observer organizations as well as the media;	2019
2	VR top-up	2019
3	Presence of special guests at PCs;	2019
4	Internal IEC activities;	2019
5	VR top-up, with biometric voter registration (BVR) [amended]	2019
6	VR top-up, Ghazni VR and VL5 [amended];	2019
7	CN for PC elections	2019
8	Recruitment of temporary staff	2019
9	Media Committee	2019
10	Organizing media activities	2019
11	Electoral campaign for 2019 presidential elections	2019
12	Accreditation [on issuance of accreditation letter to political parties, candidates, monitoring and observer organizations and media] [amended]	2019
13	Financial affairs of electoral campaigns	2019
14	Polling for the 2019 presidential elections	2019
15	Vote counting in 2019 presidential elections	2019
16	Audit, recount and invalidation of votes of 2019 presidential elections;	2019
17	Tallying of results of presidential elections	2019
18	Implementing Decisions of ECC/Joint Committee/Special Court	2019
19	Announcement of Final Results of Elections; and	2019
20	Nominating Vice-President in case of death, suffering from an incurable disease and/or ineligibility of Vice President candidates	2019
	Procedures	2019
21	VR top-up	2019
22	VR for Ghazni WJ elections;	2019
23	Conducting of internal elections for Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary of IEC	2019

24	Presence of observers, monitors and media in open sessions;	2019
25	VR top-up [amended];	2019
26	VR for Ghazni [amended]	2019
27	VR intake	2019
28	Recruitment of temporary staff	2019
29	CN for PC elections	2019
30	CN for Ghazni WJ election	2019
31	Registration of presidential candidates	2019
32	Verification of presidential candidate documents;	2019
33	Packing of CN documents for presidential elections	2019
34	Verification of presidential candidate's supporters list	2019
35	Ballot lottery for presidential election candidates	2019
36	VR intake	2019
37	Political campaign [Election] finance internal Procedure;	2019
38	Polling and Counting	2019
39	Packing	2019
40	Hiring of polling staff	2019
41	Provincial intake of materials	2019
42	NTC operations	2019
43	Audit and Recount	2019
44	Digital Tallying and Verification System; and	2019
45	Issuance of accreditation letter and identification card for monitoring, observation and preparation of report	2019
Guidelines		
46	Sorting and checking of documents submitted by the Presidential candidates;	2019
47	Packing of CN documents	2019
48	CN for PC, DC and Ghazni WJ elections	2019
49	Transfer and Correction Form	2019
50	DEO	2019
51	Using QR code readers for audit and recount	2019

52	Audit and recount	2019
53	EDSS application during audit and recount	2019
54	Audit and recount checklist	2019
55	Intake of Tamper Evident Bags (TEBs)	2019
56	containing recount forms;	2019
57	Determining the order of candidates on the ballot paper for 2019 PC, DC and Ghazni WJ elections;	2019
58	Objections and corrections against voters information on preliminary VL	2019
59	Storage of sensitive materials not delivered to PCs	2019
60	Packing of training materials; and	2019
61	Filling in the headquarter (HQ) checklist	2019
Plans		
62	Presidential, PC and DC elections	2019
63	Ghazni WJ election	2019
64	Presidential election [amended]	2019
65	Operational Plan for VR Top Up [amended]	2019
66	Operational Plan for VR in Ghazni [amended]	2019
67	FOP Operational Timeline and FOP Action Plan; and	2019
68	Ballot Allocation Plan.	2019
	Codes of Conduct	
70	Commissioners and Head of Secretariat	2019
71	Affidavits ⁷ for: (1) Media; (2) Observers; and (3) Political Parties.	2019
72	Memorandum of Understanding signed with (1) ECC	2019
ECC Regulation 2019		
1	Duties and Authorities of the Provincial ECC (PECC)	2019
2	Duties and Authorities of the ECC	2019
3	Regulation on addressing affairs related to Audit, Quarantine, Recount and invalidation of votes	2019

4	Procedures	2019
5	Procedure on adjudication of Electoral Objections and Complaints	2019
6	Procedure on adjudication of complaints related to VR	2019
7	Procedure on Adjudication of electoral cases	2019
8	Utilization of the Electronic EDR System	2019
9	Procedure on Recruitment of ECC permanent staff	2019
10	Procedure on Recruitment of Temporary technical staff	2019
11	Procedure on composition duties and authorities of the joint committee	2019
12	Procedure for Joint Committee approved by both Commissions	2019
13	Guidelines	2019
14	Recruitment of PECC Commissioners	2019
15	Plans	2019
16	Operational Plan for 2019 elections	2019
17	Operational Plan for 2019 presidential election (amended)	2019
18	Code of Conduct	2019
19	Code of conduct for ECC Commissioners	2019
	IEC Regulation, Guidelines, Procedures, Code of Conduct, and Plans 2020	2020
	Regulation	2020
	Procedure	2020
1	Joint Committee approved by both Commissions	2020
2	Polling and Counting for possible presidential run-off election	2020
	Timeline	2020
3	possible presidential run-off election, and	2020
4	Ghazni WJ election	2020
5	Operation plan for (1) Ghazni WJ election	2020
6	Coded of conduct for (1) IEC staff to be involved in special audit and recount as part of implementing the decision of the ECC for the 2019 presidential election	2020
	Concept Paper	2020
7	DC, PC, Ghazni WJ and Municipal election	2020
8	updating of the voter register	2020
	IEC Regulation, Guidelines, Procedures, Code of Conduct, and Plans 2021	

	N/A	
--	-----	--

IEC and IECC

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

General Information. <u>To be filled out by the interviewee</u>	
Date:	
Location: (Place or type of medium utilised for interview)	
Organization	
Title/Position in Organization/Institution	
Name:	
Gender:	
Relevant outputs of the project:	
For how long (in years) have you been involved in UNESP (any previous UNDP electoral projects)?	
Start & End time of interview	

Introduction and the purpose of the interview:

- Introduce yourself as an independent consultant who is carrying out a final evaluation of the project and explain that you would like to find out about her/ his view and experience of the project.
- Please explain that their input to the evaluation is very important as their answers will contribute to the analysis in the report which will highlight the positive and less positive aspects of the project, as well as looking at lessons learned and recommendations for the future.
- Please explain that there are no right or wrong answers and it is their specific opinions that we would like to understand.
- Please ask them permission to include their name in the list of persons interviewed, but please explain that the answers they give are completely private, and no-one will know that the answers were given by them. (If they do not want their name included, we will just mention the department and the institution.
- Please explain to the person being interviewed if they do not understand a question, they can ask you and you will help to explain it better.
- Please let the interviewee know that the interview will take approximately 45 mins to one hour.
- Ask them if they are happy to start?

A. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Please elaborate your cooperation with the project.
2. In which output area have your organization partnered with the project?
3. Have you received any capacity development support from UNDP and if so, how has this strengthened your organization?

B. PROJECT RELEVANCE

1. According to your knowledge and understanding, what did the project seek to address?
2. In your view, did the project design address the context, needs and priority of intended target groups?
3. Has the project been able to reach all target groups that it had intended to reach?
4. Would you comment on how the issues the project sought to address were identified? [need to probe for responses vis a vis ownership of the issues by the beneficiary institutions in the process of identifying those issues]
5. How did the Government promote the overall ownership of the results?
6. How effective was the UNESP in garnering national ownership of the activities?
7. Were there any incidences where you considered that UNESP was unable to enhance national ownership, if so why?
8. Do you think that the project considers gender equality, women's rights and minority and vulnerable groups adequately? Do you have any comments or suggestions to ensure more consideration of any of these groups?

C. IMPLEMENTATION

1. Have any planned activities not been implemented and if so, what have been the biggest challenges?
2. What have been some key learning points you have gathered as you carried out your activities? Have you had any feedback from participants involved in the activities? And adapted?
3. Has the project been able to reach all target groups that it had intended to reach?
4. Were there any unintended negative consequences of the project implementation?
5. Could the same results have been achieved in another way?

a. PROJECT EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

1. In your view, were each of the interventions the project sought to address adequately provided for? (look for any perceived gaps in the financial allocation/human resources etc)
2. According to your assessment, were the allocated resources utilized to achieve the intended objectives/outcomes (look for variances and explain)
3. Were there any incidences whereby some interventions/objectives/outcomes had to require and utilise more resources than provided for? State these
4. In your view, were all the interventions implemented on time as planned? (a) Yes (b) No
5. If No, would you please state the interventions which were delayed and the reasons for the delay
6. Would you comment on the effect of the delays stated in (a) on the rest of the project?

7. Do you consider that the organisation structures, management, planning and implementation processes were effective and efficient?

8. Did the project adequately identify risks and adapt accordingly?

D. IMPACT

1. Would you share with us the changes that have come as a result of the project?

Would you mention any changes that you may not link to the project (as a result of exogenous factors)

2. What would be your general comments regarding the effects of the project on the beneficiaries? Do you consider that the project contributing to a more credible process?

3. What avenues did women and vulnerable groups have to provide feedback on the project, or otherwise influence how and what the project was delivering?

4. What challenges of access for participating women and vulnerable groups were identified, monitored and addressed?

5. Is there evidence that the project advanced any key national human rights, gender or inclusion policies with regards to the electoral process?

6. How do you think the Afghan population perceived your work?

7. Overall, which were the most important or relevant changes you have noticed as a result of the project?

E. SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

1. In your view, what measures did the project put in place to ensure that the interventions or effects of the project could continue after the project ended?

2. What would you consider to be the factors that would compromise the continuity of the results of the project interventions and effects? Given the current context in Afghanistan, what are your thoughts about the overall sustainability of the project?

3. What are the key lessons learned?

F. CONCLUSION

1. We have come to the end of our discussion; would you any other comments/suggestions/recommendations to add?

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS

General Information. <u>To be filled out by the interviewee</u>	
Date:	
State	
County	
Village	
Type of Organization	
Title of Respondent	
Gender:	
Could you describe for how long (Days/Month/years) have you been involved in the project?	

Introduction and the purpose of the interview:

- Introduce yourself as an independent consultant who is carrying out a final evaluation of the project and explain that you would like to find out about her/ his view and experience of the project.
- Please explain that their input to the evaluation is very important as their answers will contribute to the analysis in the report which will highlight the positive and less positive aspects of the project, as well as looking at lessons learned and recommendations for the future.
- Please explain that there are no right or wrong answers and it is their specific opinions that we would like to understand.
- Please ask them permission to include their name in the list of persons interviewed, but please explain that the answers they give are completely private, and no-one will know that the answers were given by them. (If they do not want their name included, we will just mention the department and the institution.
- Please explain to the person being interviewed if they do not understand a question, they can ask you and you will help to explain it better.
- Please let the interviewee know that the interview will take approximately 45 mins to one hour.
- Ask them if they are happy to start?

Interview questions for UNDP Project Staff/UNAMA and UNDP Country Staff

1. To what extent did implementation match your vision for the project? Why/why not?
2. Has the project been able to reach all target groups that it had intended to reach?
3. How has the changing political, security and health (covid 19) context impacted on the programme implementation?
4. Which aspects of the project, and which of the approaches used were most successful in bringing about change and why?
5. How was the partnership and coordination among the UNDP/UNAMA and other UN agencies and implementing partners, national and local partners?
6. How were implementing partners / service providers held to account for equitable and sensitive delivery of services / benefits?
1. What was the composition (gender, ethnicity, etc.) of project staff of implementing partners and does it reflect the diversity of project stakeholders?
2. What avenues did women and vulnerable groups have to provide feedback on the project, or otherwise influence how and what the project was delivering?
3. Is there evidence that the project advanced any key national human rights, gender or inclusion policies in the area of employment?
4. Have you observed any unintended impact (could be negative as well as positive) of the project?
5. Overall, which were the most important or relevant changes you have noticed as a result of the project?

Interview questions for Civil Society/international organizations working on Elections

1. What do you consider the main challenges the electoral process in Afghanistan?
2. Are you familiar with this project? Is the project relevant to contributing to a more effective, transparent, accountable and inclusive electoral process? Among the activities conducted under the project, which of them were most relevant and why? Were there any less relevant activities?
3. In your view what could be the long-term impact made by the project activities?
4. Have you noticed any unintended consequences, whether negative or positive of the project? Give examples
5. In your view, how did the project activities contribute to increasing the credibility of the electoral process. Can a differentiation be made of the two different elections? I.e. presidential, parliamentary etc?
6. In your opinion, has the project contributed to a more effective and credible electoral process in Afghanistan?
7. In your opinion how as the project enhanced the capacity of the two electoral commissions to administer credible elections?
8. In your opinion do the IEC and IECC engage more effectively in strategic leadership, transparency and external engagement
9. How has this project contributed to bringing changes in cultural barriers, mindsets and traditional practices forming obstacles for women to ensure effective participation in all areas of the electoral process?
10. Given the current context, In which areas (if any) do you think future similar projects should focus on in the short-term (1-2 years) and longer term (3 years and beyond)?

Interview Questions for Donors

1. Please confirm the period you were involved with the project and in what capacity?
2. Were your views/inputs considered in the project design stage?
3. How satisfied are you with the communication procedures and mechanisms with the project and with UNDP/UNAMA?
4. Did you receive narrative and financial reports in a timely manner?
5. How satisfied were you with the results achieved by the project?
6. What have been the biggest challenges in the project?
7. What have been the biggest achievements in the project?
8. What were your development priorities and how did the project fit into these?
9. What are your long-term priorities and country strategy for Afghanistan and the electoral process (if any)?
10. Why did you choose to support a UNDP project? What do you perceive UNDP's comparative advantages to be? Did you feel that you are getting value for money with UNDP?
11. Would you support a UNDP project again in the future? If not, why not?

UNDP UNESP Evaluation

April 2022

Draft Data Collection Tool/Survey

Respondent Information

1. Respondent Name:
 2. Respondent Designation:
 3. Respondent Gender: Male/Female
 4. Respondent Department:
 5. Respondent Email:
 6. Respondent Phone #:
 7. Date of Survey:
-

1. Could you briefly describe what type of support/training you have received from UNESP?
 - 1.
2. How would you rate the quality of assistance that your institution received from UNESP?
 - a. Very good
 - b. Good
 - c. Fair
 - d. Poor
 - a. Very poor
 - b. N/A
3. How would you rate the quality of UNESP trainings you participated in?
 - c. Very good
 - d. Good
 - e. Fair
 - f. Poor
 - g. Very poor
 - h. N/A
4. In your view, how effective was the UNESP assistance to your office/institution as it relates to your needs?
 - a. Very effective
 - b. Effective
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Moderately effective
 - e. Not at all effective
5. To what extent did the capacity building program of UNESP help your institution to effectively perform its duties?
 - a. Very much
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Very little
 - e. Not at all
6. In your opinion, how sustainable were the benefit of the capacity building programs your institution attended?
 - a. Very sustainable
 - b. Somewhat sustainable
 - c. Sustainable

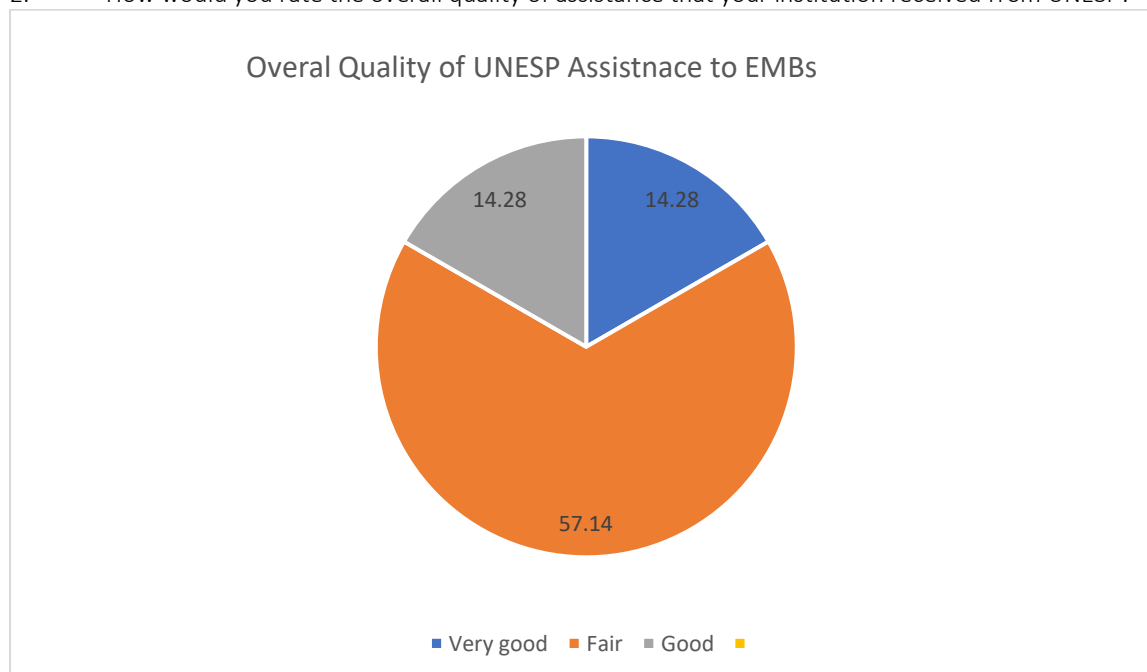
- d. Not at all sustainable
7. Rate your level of belief with how effective the trainings were as it relate to improving the everyday work of your institutions.
- a. Very effective
- b. Effective
- c. Neutral
- d. Somewhat effective
- e. Not effective
8. How satisfied were you with the quality of the trainers of UNESP who provided the training?
- a. Extremely satisfied
- b. Very satisfied
- c. Neutral
- d. Dissatisfied
- e. Extremely dissatisfied
- f. N/A
9. How much of the information you received from the UNESP training do you think was new to you?
- a. All (100%)
- b. Most (75%)
- c. Some (50%)
- d. A little (25%)
- e. None (0%)
10. How much of the information of the UNESP trainings do you believe was related to your scope of work?
- a. All (100%)
- b. Most (75%)
- c. Some (50%)
- d. A little (25%)
- e. None (0%)
11. Rate your level of confidence that the skills or knowledge obtained during the UNESP trainings positively impacted the legal and electoral knowledge of Afghan electoral officials?
- a. Extremely confident
- b. Confident
- c. Neutral
- d. Somewhat confident
- e. Not confident
12. What is your overall assessment of how the UNESP training resulted in conducting incredible elections?
- a. Excellent
- b. Very good
- c. Good
- d. Bad
- e. Very bad
13. To what degree do you believe that the UNESP project managed to increase the capacity of the IEC/IECC to administer credible electoral process?
- a. Strongly believe
- b. Somewhat believe
- c. Neutral
- d. Not believe
- e. Strongly not believe
14. To what extent were you involved in designing of UNESP project?
- a. Very much
- b. Somewhat

- c. Neutral
 - d. Very little
15. How much do you believe that conducting of elections were possible without UNESP project financial assistance?
- a. 100%
 - b. 75%
 - c. 50%
 - d. 25%
 - e. 0%
16. How much do you believe that conducting of elections were possible without UNESP project technical assistance?
- a. 100%
 - b. 75%
 - c. 50%
 - d. 25%
 - e. 0%

1. Could you briefly describe what type of support/training you have received from UNESP?

1. Technical Support during election operations. Technical Support during training facilitation.
2. it was not effective
3. The project was usually financing the training of directors and provincial staff and field staff.
4. In the beginning the assistance was good but later it became very weak. The assistance in the information section and IT started late. In terms of hiring in the advisors, it was completely useless since the hired the advisors who were not useful
5. I received advisory support, procurement and logistics support, mentoring support and short term trainings.
6. Leadership, Communication and protocols, IT programs, management.
7. CIPs(procurement)

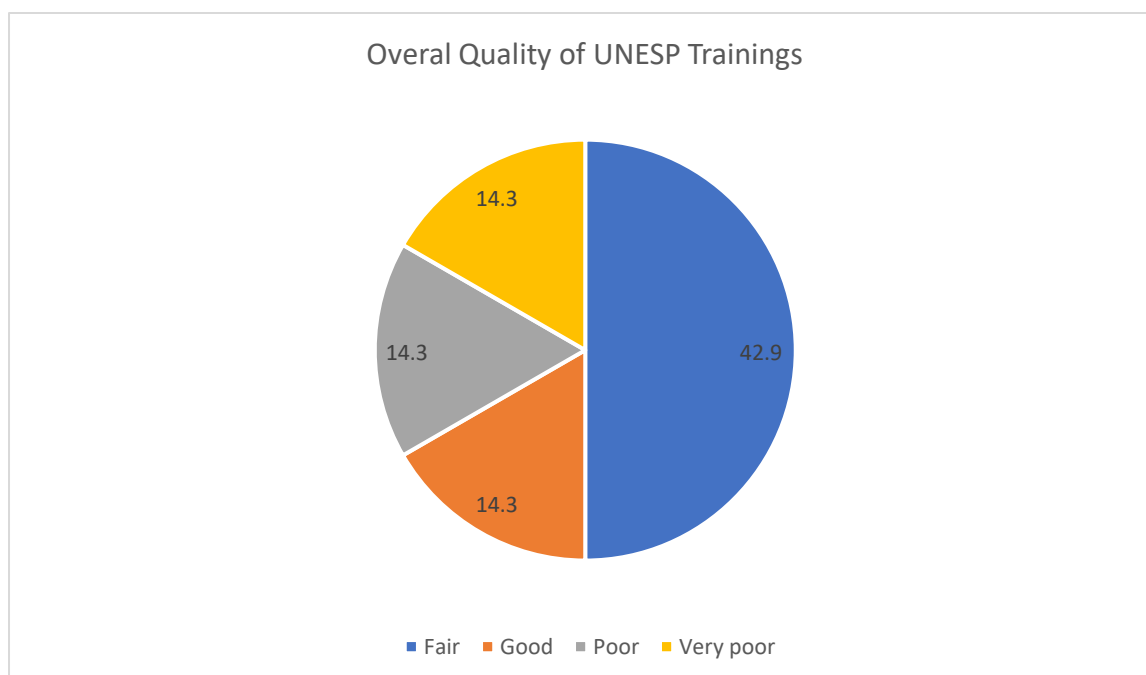
2. How would you rate the overall quality of assistance that your institution received from UNESP?



Additional Comments of Respondents:

1. From technical point of view, I am satisfied, but from advisory point of view and capacity building point of view I am not satisfied.
2. Was not responsive
3. The trainings were usually carried out by the staff of the EMBs Training Departments with collaboration of international consultants. The major problem in these trainings was not paying the transportation and financial cost to the participants who were coming from the fields
4. Because the requirements/needs of the commissions were ignored
5. Financial and procurement support was effective and fast, but mentoring and trainings were too short and sometimes irrelevant.
6. Because there were some misunderstanding between ECC and UNESP, on plans and requirements of ECC.
7. It could be better and UNESP could held many effective trainings.

3. How would you rate the quality of UNESP trainings you participated in?

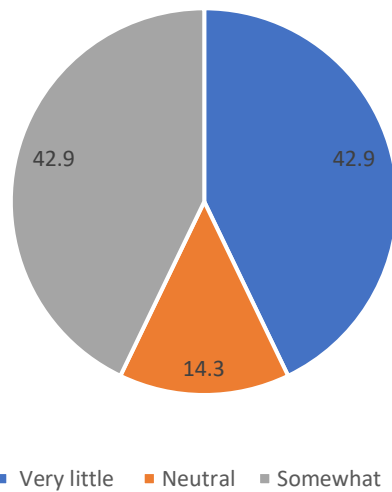


Additional Comments of Respondents:

1. I personally didn't receive any particular training but we had some training programs for our PECC staff which from my point of view did not meet the high quality standards.
2. Didn't accept responsibility
3. The training programs were held at the right time and the materials provided for the training programs were good.
4. We expected something new from the project, but the training were repeated and repetitive again.
5. I needed expert and long term trainings, but most of the trainings were short and general. However, the short term trainings were effective for everyday jobs of temporary staff.
6. The trainings were organized according to the necessity of each department.
7. It was online training, if it would be in class it would be great.

4. To what extent did the capacity building program of UNESP help your institution to effectively perform its duties

Extent to which the UNESP capacity building programs help EMBs to effectively perform its duties

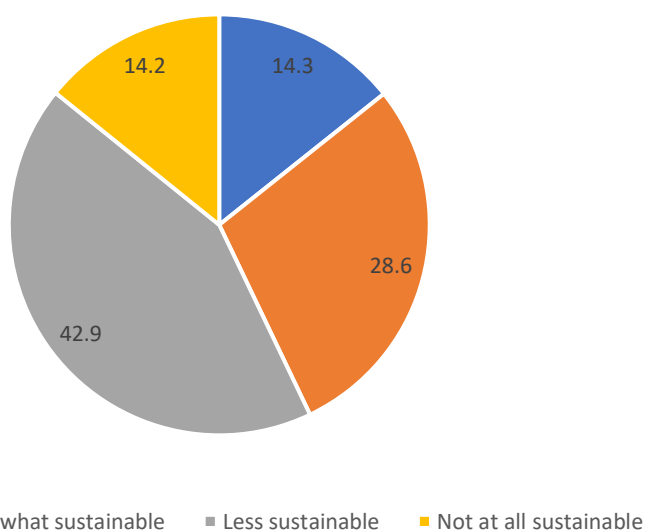


Additional Comments of Respondents:

2. They were just receiving or gaining salaries
3. Most of the times the trainings were somehow useful in terms of implementation of operational programs
4. most of the times the trainings were repetitive and repetitive
5. The UNESP trainings were very effective in performing daily tasks. However, they did not have lasting impact as IEC had limited permanent staff and temporary staff were leaving at the end of each electoral cycle.
6. In some departments, somehow there were some difficulties

5. In your opinion, how sustainable were the benefit of the capacity building programs your institution attended?

Sustainability of the benefits of UNESP trainings

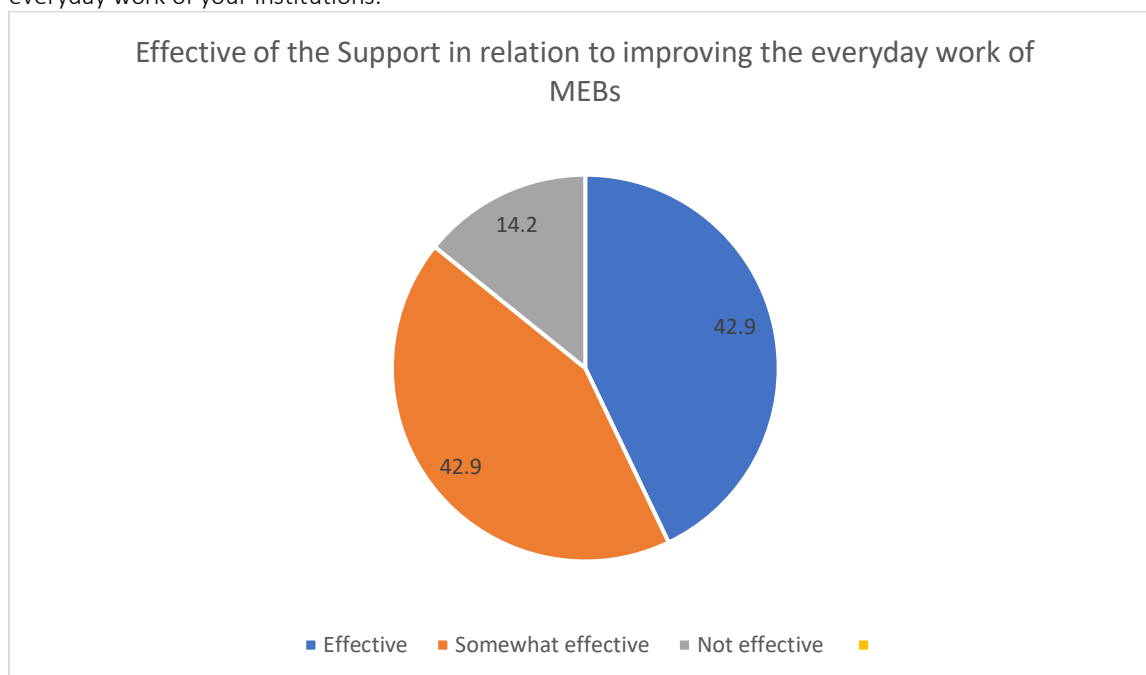


Additional Comments of Respondents:

2. It was not effective
3. As the trainings were conducted for short times

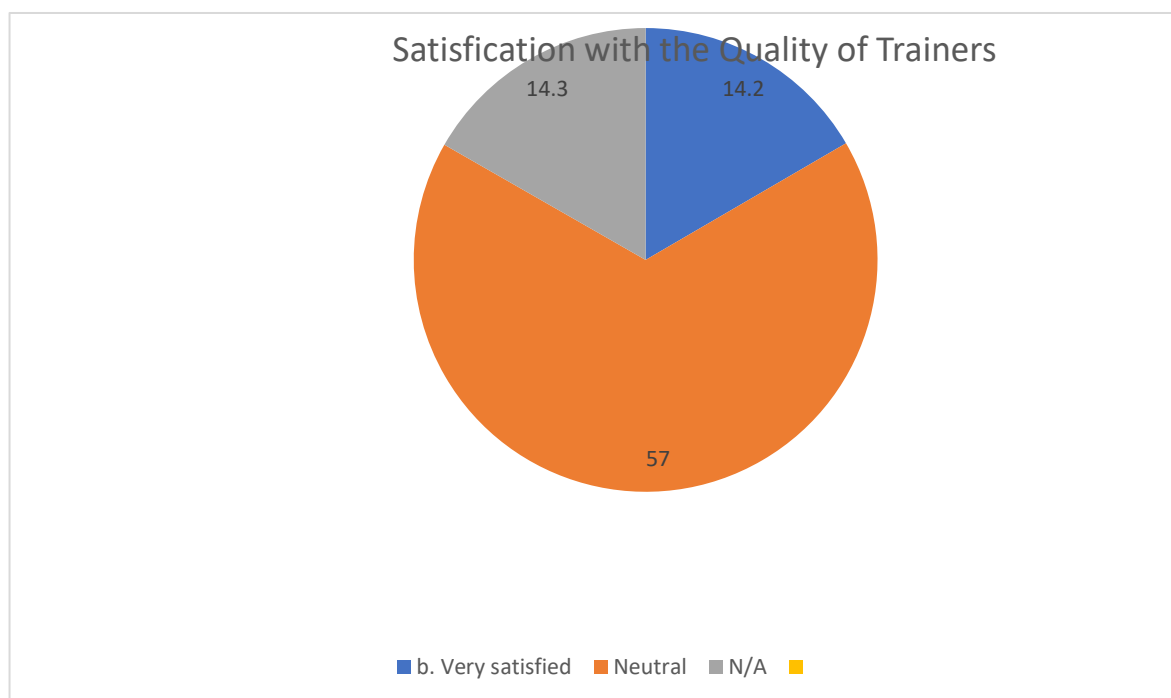
4. Since the training were repetitive
5. As IEC had limited permanent staff and had high staff turnover and the temporary staff were leaving at the end of each electoral cycle, therefore, the IEC could not keep the knowledge and experience for the next election.
6. There was some issues which were not sustainable.

6. Rate your level of belief with how effective the trainings/support were in relation to improving the everyday work of your institutions.



Additional Comments of Respondents:

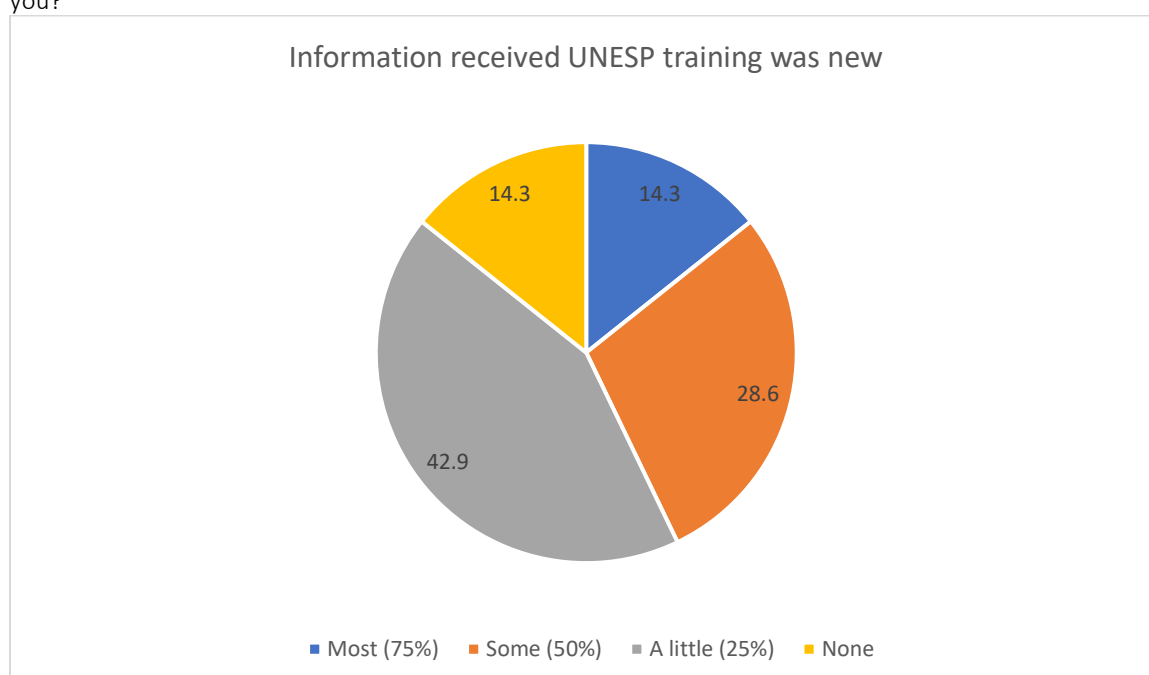
1. Trainings are overall beneficial and even in worst cases it will contribute to the improvement of employee performance.
 2. I don't believe
 3. They were conducting some of the trainings (not all) in the areas that were not much needed.
 4. Because some of the staff didn't have work experience.
 5. Without UNESP advisory, financial and procurement support, it was not possible for IEC to conduct elections. While the advisory support and mentoring were effective, the trainings had less impact.
 6. In some level it was effective
7. How satisfied were you with the quality of the trainers of UNESP who provided the training/support?



Additional Comments of Respondents:

1. UNESP did not provided ECC with International trainers. I personally didn't receive any training from UNESP side.
2. I am not satisfied
3. Most of the trainings were conducted by the employees of commission
4. Because the subjects/topics were repetitive
5. The recent trainings for social media and website content were very effective while other trainings were general, short and limited.
6. Trainers were qualified.

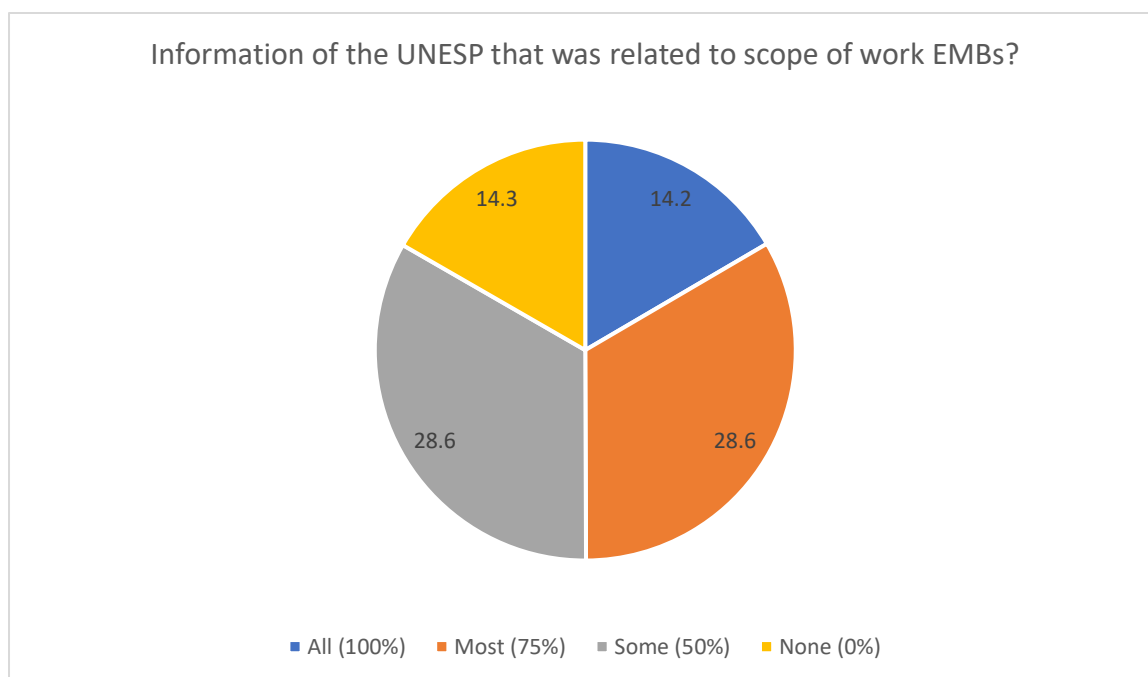
8. How much of the information you received from the UNESP training/support do you think was new to you?



Additional Comments of Respondents:

1. Was not useful
2. Usually, for each election, they were conducting similar trainings
3. Because the subjects were repetitive
4. Some were 100% effective and new while some trainings were general and were not relevant and expert level.
5. Because it's the right answer
6. The materials were new and the course was held in a good manner.

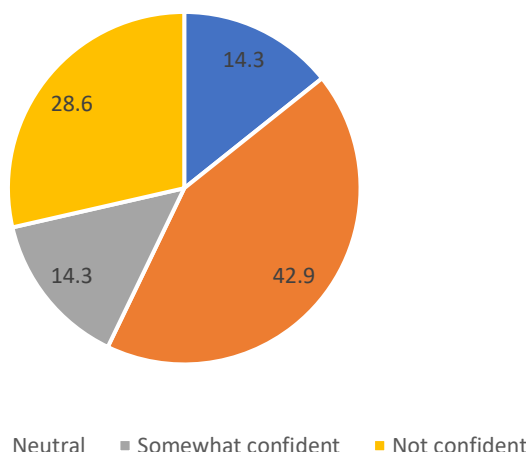
9. How much of the information of the UNESP trainings/support do you believe was related to your scope of work?



Additional Comments of Respondents:

1. it was not effective
 2. There were not much trainings in the field of operation, and they training were repetitive
 3. it was repetitive for us
 4. The trainings in 2020 were 100% related to scope of work while earlier trainings were general.
 5. We were asked before training to suggest the trainings title.
 6. Because it was related to my job and I learned there things and received a certificate.
10. Rate your level of confidence that the skills or knowledge obtained during the UNESP trainings positively impacted the legal and electoral knowledge of Afghan electoral officials?

Level of confidence that the skills or knowledge obtained during the UNESP trainings positively impacted the legal and electoral knowledge of MEBs officials?

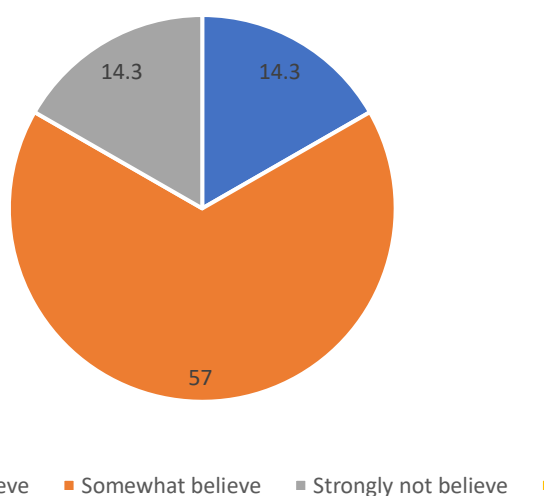


Additional Comments of Respondents:

1. Zero
2. Most of the training programs were conducting for lower ranking employees. I don't have information that how much effectiveness the training had for high officials of commission
3. I don't know
4. The long term trainings especially the master's degree programs impacted positively, but limited staff received them.
5. In some stage you do your job with the confidence after the trainings

11. To what degree do you believe that the UNESP project managed to increase the capacity of the IEC/IECC to administer credible electoral process?

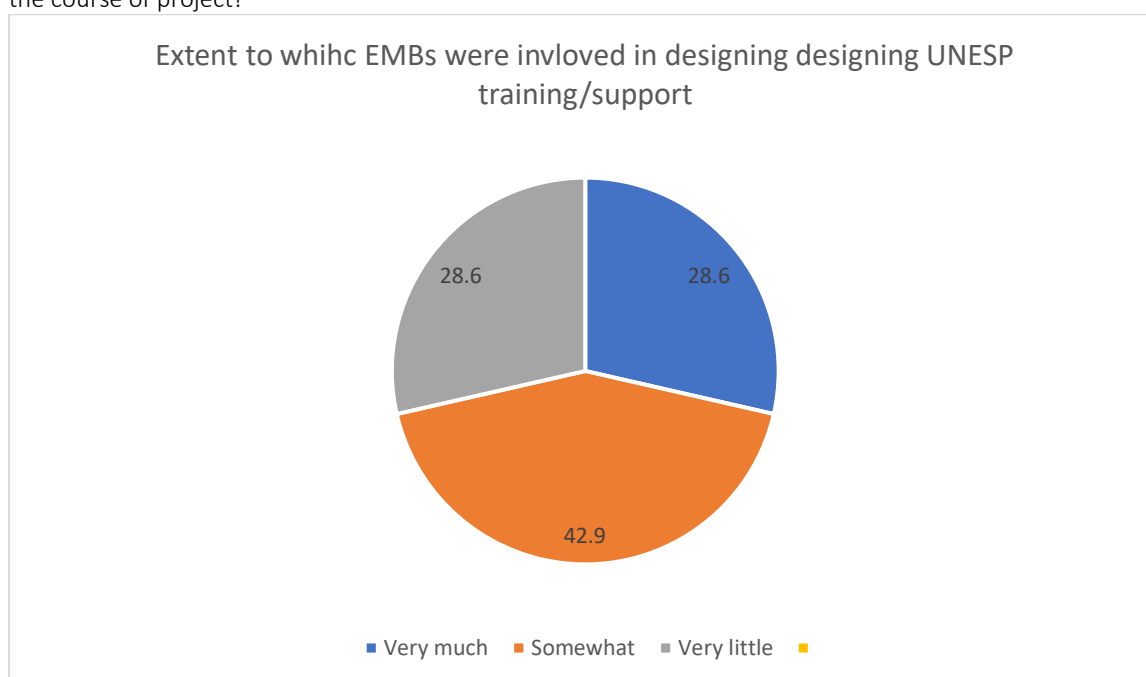
Degree of belief that the UNESP project managed to increase the capacity of EMBs to administer credible electoral process



Additional Comments of Respondents:

1. I strongly believe that the effect of Financial and technical support of UNESP project on the operational capacity of both electoral bodies was uncontested.
2. Zero
3. The training programs had impact in terms of capacity building of employees.
- 4.
5. As the UNESP advisors were doing the job side by side with IEC counterparts, it had positive impact on administering the electoral process.
6. Because I think it's the right answer.

12. To what extent were you involved in designing of the training/support that was provided to you during the course of project?

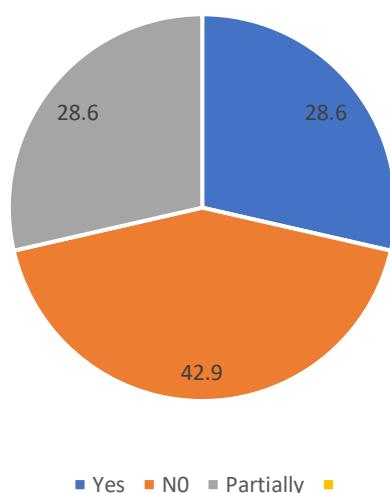


Additional Comments of Respondents:

1. I was involved in nearly all of ECC's legal and technical trainings for its HQ, Provincial staff, also trainings for Civil society organizations, political parties, and other stakeholders.
2. Less
3. the training programs were planned by the commission training department
4. Since I was participating in some of the meetings
5. The UNESP were considering the trainings based on the request of IEC staff. However, the IEC staff needed expert advice about what trainings were most needed.
6. There was some specified level of communication in this sphere

13. Do you believe that the elections would have been able to take place without the support of the UNESP project?

Belief that the elections would have been able to taken place without the support of the UNESP project



Additional Comments of Respondents:

1. It was not possible without UNESP's technical and financial support or their capacity building, advisory and strategy making that election will be held.
2. Yes
3. The project had a significant financial impact and also played a role in the provision of election materials, as situation of procuring the electoral materials in Afghanistan was not conducive
4. As there was not 100% support
5. The Afghan government did not have enough fund for elections and the government procurement system could not support urgent requirements of the project. In addition, Afghanistan did not have electoral experts. Without the above support it was impossible for IEC to conduct elections.
6. Because in the last years there were experienced officers in electoral institutions

14. Can you highlight three positive things that you learnt during the support of the UNESP?

1. I was familiarized with different election cycles, electoral dispute resolution, and election systems.
2. It was not positive
3. Preparing the electoral materials and cooperation of international advisors in the electoral process, and receiving budget.
4. There was not any new thing
5. 1. Managing procurement of the program,
2. Planning and timely implementation of the projects,
3. Social media and website management,
6. Management, communication and time management.
7. I have only obtained one training(CIPs paper 2). Which is very useful for me.

15. Can you highlight any negative points to the support you received from UNESP?

1. Nepotism, procrastination during project's goal achievement, lack of good coordination between electoral bodies and UNESP, lack of transparency in expenses of project, poor management (especially after 2020) and lack of quality international advisors and trainers.
2. Personally, I am not satisfied

3. Lack of coordination between the commissions and the project in relation to the major contracts of the commission that were taking place internally and externally. Failure to execute the budget on time, which was mostly happening in the last parliamentary elections
4. We needed high qualified staff for our capacity building but their advisors and trainings were useless and they were wasting the time
5. IEC was supported at election time, but there was limited fund in between elections, Long term voter education program have not been considered, Survey and research was not conducted before each electoral cycle to plan based on data.
6. Didn't organized any trips abroad to exchange experiences
7. No

16. Can you highlight any lessons learned for the UNESP project?

1. A project will not be successful in the absence of: a good coordination, honest dedication, continuous follow up, quality Human Resource, quality management, valorization of suggestions of your partners and transparency.
2. Zero
3. I don't remember it now
4. Management
5. I learned that IEC needed sufficient information and data to draft realistic planning. Post-election campaigns were essential for managing the public perception. Long term voter education program was vital to change behavior of the voters. Long term strategy and funding was needed.
6. Beginning of work on making strategic plans, but not completed yet.
7. I have only obtained one training(CIPs paper 2) which is very useful for me.

17. Do you have any additional comments on the support that you received?

1. Existing of projects like UNESP for supporting a national projects like elections is inevitable. No election will be held without help of such projects in Afghanistan. I would Suggest if possible UNESP should also think about how to retain the electoral human resource capacities and how to use them in case if election is not possible in Afghanistan because already they have invested a lot on them.
2. It had no effectiveness
3. No
4. In the second round (when the contract was renewing again) we objected a lot but nothing happened.
5. IEC staff could receive expert level long term trainings in between elections and short term trainings and mentoring during electoral period.
6. We want support of UNESP in establishing electoral institutions in Afghanistan
7. No

- Annex – 1 ECC Bulletin 28 – ECC – July 2020
- Annex 1 - IEC Bulletin 26 [English] -IEC- August 2020
- Asia Foundation – A survey of the Afghan People – Afghansitan in 2021
- Colin Cookman - Assessing Afghanistan’s 2019 Presidential Elections – Peaceworks August 2020
- Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs – Electoral Assistance Division – Desk Review – Afghanistan July 2020
-
- ECC Bulletin 23 Flash Update 11 [English] - [Jan 2020 MEU]- ECC- January 2020
- ECC Bulletin 24 Flash Update 12 [English] - [Jan 2020 MEU] – ECC- January 2020
- ECC Bulletin 25 Flash Update 13 [English] - [Jan 2020 MEU] – ECC- January 2020
- EUEAT Final Report 2014
- Final Evaluation of ELECT II - 2015
- Final - UNESP MEU for August 2020- UNESP- August 2020
- FINAL - UNESP MEU – UNESP – July 2020
- FINAL - UNESP QPR 2 - UNESP – 2020
- FINAL 2018 UNESP Annual Report – UNESP – February 2019
- FINAL UNESP MEU – UNESP – February 2019
- Final UNESP MEU – UNESP – July 2019
- Final UNESP MEU – UNESP – May 2019
- Final UNESP MEU – UNESP – November 2020
- Final UNESP MEU – UNESP – October 2019
- Final UNESP QPR 3 2019 [with preliminary financials] – UNESP – 2019
- Final UNESP QPR 3 2020 - UNESP – 2020
- Final Report on ECC 2010
- FINALIZED UNESP MEU – UNESP – January 2019
- Finalized UNESP MEU - UNESP- January 2020
- Finalized UNESP MEU – UNESP- October – 2020
- Finalized UNESP QPR 1 2020 - UNESP – May 2020
- First Quarterly Progress Report – UNES- 2018
- Gavin Wise – UN Electoral Support Project (UNESP) Mid-Term Review
- Post Election Stratey Groups (PESG – Preliminary Report – July 2005
- Revised UNESP Prodod -Project Extension to June 2022 _Signed Copy. UNESP-2022
- (Revised) Project Document for UN Electoral Support Project Islamic Republic of Afghanistan- UNESP- 2020
- (Revised) Project Document for UN Electoral Support Project Islamic Republic of Afghanistan- UNESP- 2020
- ROM Report – Support to Electoral Assistance in Afghanistan reports C-366884 and C-409043
- Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction – Elections: Lessons from the US. Experience in Afghanistan – February 2021
- Second Quarterly Progress Report for 2018 for UNESP – UNESP – 2018
- Third Quarterly Progress Report for 2018 for UNESP- UNESP 2018
- UNESP Annual Progress Report – UNESP- 2019
- UNESP Annual Progress Report – UNESP- 2020
- UNESP Annual Project Progress Report – UNESP- 2018
- UNESP APR 2019 – final – UNESP – April 2019
- UNESP MEU April 2018 Final with Photos – UNESP – 2018
- UNESP MEU August 2018 – UNESP – 2018
- UNESP MEU August 2019 – UNESP – August 2019
- UNESP MEU February 2018 – UNESP – February 2018
- UNESP MEU for April 2019 – UNESP – April 2019
- UNESP MEU for April 2020 – UNESP – April 2020
- UNESP MEU for February 2020 – UNESP- February 2020
- UNESP MEU for May 2020 – UNESP – May 2020
- UNESP MEU for November 2019 [Final] – UNESP – November 2019
- UNESP MEU January 2018 – UNESP – January 2018

- UNESP MEU– UNESP – July 2018
- UNESP MEU – UNESP – June 2018
- UNESP MEU – UNESP – March 2018
- United Nations – Country Programme Document for Afghanistan 2015-2019
- UNESP MEU – UNESP – May 2018
- UNESP MEU – UNESP – November 2018
- UNESP MEU – UNESP – October 2018
- UNESP QPR 1 2019 – UNESP – 2019
- UNESP QPR 2 2019 – UNESP 2019

Notes: All documents were available in electronic form.

ANNEX IX– LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

No	Name	Position	Organisation	Contact Details	Location of Interview
1	Hasibbullah Nasery	Project Officer	UNDP	hassibullah.nassery@undp.org 0799385828	Remote
2	Rudi Ebling	Chief Technail Advisor	UNDP	rudolf.elbling@undp.org	Remote
3	Callist Habaasa	Finance And Administration Specialist	UNDP	callist.habaasa@undp.org +93 (0) 728178575	Remote
4	Joram Rukambe	Sr. Electoral Operation Advisor	UNDP	jrukambe@gmail.com	Remote
5	Wadzanayi Mushandikwa	Monitoring & Reporting Specialist	UNDP	wadzanayi.mushandikwa@undp.org	Remote
6	Grant Kippen	Chief Electoral Adviser	UNAMA	gkippen@hillbrooke.ca	Remote
7	Ali Alibati	Project Manager	UNDP	ali.albayati@undp.org	Remote
8	Abdullah Ahmadzai	Country Director	Asia Fundación	abdullah.ahmadzai@asiafoundation.org +93 793 606042	Remote
9	Abdallah Aldardari	Resident Representative	UNDP	abdallah.albardari@undp.org	Remote
10	Surayo Buzurukova	Deputy Res Rep Programme	UNDP	surayo.buzurukova@undp.org	Remote

11	Chencho Gya Imo Dorjee	Head of Peace Pillar	UNDP	chencho.dorjee@undp.org	Remote
12	Robert Irish	Chief of Mission	IFES	rirish@ifes.org	Remote
13	Luis Castellar	Chief of Mission PROSES	ECES	luiscastellar@gmail.com	Remote
14	Shafi Jalali	Head Of Public Outreach Department	IEC	jalalishafi@gmail.com +93794550550	Remote
15	Khaibar Sayedi	Head of Field Operations Department	IEC	khaibersayedi@gmail.com +93797474743	Remote
3.1.1 6	Telibert Laoc	Chief of Mission	NDI	tlaoc@ndi.org	Remote
17	Sayed Esmatullah	Commissioner	IEC	mal.esmat1361@gmail.com	Remote
18	Tahmina Paawand	Finance Associate	UNSP	tahmina.paawand@undp.org	Remote
19	Masood Shams	Head of Legal Dept	ECC	dr.masoudshams@gmail.com	Remote
20	Federico Romoli	Political Attache	EU	Federico.romoli@eeas.europa.eu	Remote
21	Habib Rhaman	CEO	IEC	habibnang@gmail.com	Remote
22	Zabiullah Barezai	Chief of Staff	IEC	Zabi.barakzai@gmail.com	Remote
23	Mohammad Hanif Danishyar	Commissioner	IEC		Remote
24	Phillipe DE BARD	Election Expert	EU EEM	phdebard@yahoo.com	Remote
25	Merce Castells	Election Expert	EU EEM	mcastellsv@gmail.com	Remote
26	Awrangzeb	Deputy Finance and Administrative CEO	IEC	awrangzeb123@gmail.com	Remote
27	Asma Nassery	Electoral/Political Affairs Officer	UNAMA	nassery@un.org	Remote
28	Naem Asghari	Executive Director	FEFA	naem_asghari@yahoo.com	Remote
29	Rahmatullah Salehi	Head of Training Department	IEC	Rahmatullahsalehi2017@gmail.com	Remote
30	Naem Ayuzbada	Chairman	TEFA	ayubzada@tefa.org.af +93(0)795 777 747	Remote
31	Maarten Halff	Senior Political Affairs Officer	UNEAD	halffm@un.org	Remote
32	Aziz Rahman Rafee	Director	ACSF	Director@acsf.af	Remote
33	Krisztina Bozso	UNDP	Senior Election	kristinabozso@gmail.com	Remote

			Operations Specialist		
34	Alim Rama	Former Project Manager	UNDP	alimrama@gmail.com	Remote
35	Mariusz Wojtan	Election Expert	ECES	marwoj@hotmail.com	Remote
36	Jocelyn Mason	Former Residente Representative	UNDP	Jocelyn.mason@undp.org	Remote
37	Bjorn blau	Head of Development Cooperation	Danish Embassy	bjobla@um.dk	Remote
38	Thomas Gregory	Project officer	UNDP Myanmar	Thomas.gregory@undp.org	Remote
39	Thomas Crick	Project Officer	UNDP Myanmar	Thomas.crick@undp.org	Remote

