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Evaluation of Electoral Assistance Project “Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone 2022-2023”

United Nations Development Programme
Sierra Leone Country Office

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DISCLAIMER

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

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Project information		
Project Title	Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone 2022-2023	
Atlas ID	00126358	
Corporate outcome and output	<p>Democratic Governance</p> <p>Building on the national priorities set by the Government of Sierra Leone in the Medium-Term National Development Plan (M-TNDP, 2019-2023) and the Government’s Roadmap “Walking out of fragility” (2019) as well as the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda to which Sierra Leone is a signatory; the project aligns with the:</p> <p>United Nations Sustainable Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2024 Outcome 2 (Transformational Governance)</p> <p>United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Programme Document (CPD) 2020-2024 Outcome 2: (Protection and Empowerment of the most Vulnerable)</p> <p>UNDP CPD Output 2.1: Capacities of targeted oversight and accountability institutions (Parliament, HRC, NEC, ACC and IPCB) strengthened to perform their mandates</p> <p>UNDP CPD Output 2.3: Gender-responsive institutional frameworks strengthened for peace, citizen’s voice and participation for social cohesion</p>	
Country	Sierra Leone	
Region	Africa	
Date Project Document Signed	28 July 2022	
Project dates	Start	Planned end
	1 August 2022	31 December 2023
Project Budget	USD \$8,776,083	
Project Expenditure at the time of evaluation	USD 7,281,763 (end 2023)	
Funding sources	UNDP, Government of Canada, Government of Iceland, Government of Ireland, European Union	
Implementing Parties	Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL), Political Parties Regulation Commission (PPRC), UN Women, Judiciary, National Youth Commission, and Civil Society Organizations (through small grant scheme)	

Evaluation information		
Evaluation type (project/outcome/thematic/country programme, etc.)	Project	
Final/midterm review/ other	Final	
Period under evaluation	Start	End
	1 August 2022	31 December 2023
Evaluator	Lawrence Robertson	
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Evaluation dates	Start	Completion
	January 2024	June 2024

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMNet	Advocacy Movement Network
APC	All People’s Congress
APPWA	All Political Parties Women’s Association
APPYA	All Political Parties Youth Association
AWP	Annual Work Plan
A/C	Air conditioning
CGG	Campaign for Good Governance
CoC	Code of Conduct
CPD	Country Programme Document
CPM	Conflict Prevention and Mitigation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CVE	Civic and voter education
DCI	Defence for Children International
DERG	District Election Response Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECSL	Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone
EEAS	European Union External Action Service
EISA	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa
EMB	Electoral Management Body
EU	European Union
EWER	Early warning/early response
FSU	Family Support Unit
GBV	Gender-based violence
GESI	Gender Empowerment and Social Inclusion
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GSCG	Gender Stakeholders Coordination Group
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Rights
HRBA	Human rights-based approach
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IGR	Institute for Governance Reform
IRN	Independent Radio Network
JTF	Joint Task Force
LEEC	Locality Electoral Education Committee
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MoGCA	Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs
MoPADA	Movement towards Peace and Development Agency-Sierra Leone
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
M-TNDP	Medium-Term National Development Plan
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation

NAM	Needs Assessment Mission
NAYCOM	National Youth Commission
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NEC	National Electoral Commission (prior name for EMB)
NERG	National Election Response Group
NEW	National Election Watch
PB	Project Board
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PDA	Peace and Development Advisor
PMU	Programme Management Unit
POPP	Programme and Operation Policies and Procedures
PPRC	Political Parties Regulation Commission
PR	Proportional Representation
ProDoc	Project Document
PwD	People with Disabilities
QA/QC	Quality Assessment/Quality Control
RCO	Resident Coordinator’s Office
RRF	Results and Resources Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEND-SL	Social Enterprise Development-Sierra Leone
SLAJ	Sierra Leone Association of Journalists
SLAWIJ	Sierra Leone Association of Women in Journalism
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SLPP	Sierra Leone People’s Party
SN	Strategic Note
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SMSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
TC	Technical Committee
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIOSIL	United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone
UNIPSIL	United National Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone
UNSCDF	United Nations Sustainable Cooperation Framework
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USD	United States Dollar
VAMP	Violence Against Women in Politics

VAWE	Violence Against Women and Girls
WANEP	West African Network for Peacebuilding
WAYNPEED	West Africa Youth Network for Peace Education and Economic Development - Sierra Leone

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Sierra Leone commissioned an evaluation of the Electoral Assistance Project “Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone 2022-2023,” referred to hereafter as the Elections Project. The project had a planned budget of USD \$8,776,083 funded by UNDP, the Government of Canada, the Government of Iceland, the Government of Ireland, and the European Union (EU). UNDP and its partners implemented the project in Sierra Leone from 1 August 2022, with expenditures of USD \$7,281,763 by end of 2023. The project, originally intended to end 31 December 2023, has been extended to 31 August 2024 to support Sierra Leone’s post-election needs, including for support of the elections review process. The Elections Project team has also managed and coordinated the United Nations (UN) Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)-funded project that supported peaceful conduct of the elections which covered some of the outputs originally included in the Elections Project. These outputs are thus not evaluated here.

The purpose of the evaluation is to learn from the experience of the Elections Project. The evaluation, conducted in January and February 2024 – six months after the June elections – enables lessons to be learned after implementation and assess sustainability shortly after much of the project’s implementation. The evaluation assesses the progress of the project against its intended goals and objectives to date and its prospects going forward. The evaluation will help inform future programming in elections.

Background and Context

Supporting peaceful and transparent, professionally administered elections has been a key pillar of the UN’s and UNDP’s approach in the country since the end of the country’s civil war in 2002, with support for each election since that time. The fifth post-civil war national elections were held 24 June 2023, with the Presidency, seats in the Parliament, and local councils all contested. Notwithstanding isolated flare-ups in acts of intimidation and violence, the vote was relatively peaceful. The independent commission that manages elections in the country, the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL), declared the incumbent president from the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP) Julius Maada Bio re-elected, with 56.17% of the votes cast (just above the 55% threshold required for victory in the first round of the elections. Parliamentary election results found the SLPP won 81 seats and the main opposition party, the All People’s Congress (APC) won 54 seats. An unprecedentedly large number of women were elected after the new Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) Act and under the new proportional representation system used, in which every third candidate had to be female. 30.4% of members of parliament elected were women. These results were widely seen as problematic as ECSL did not report disaggregated data at the polling station level or make the results tabulation system transparent to national and international observers. The APC did not accept the results and boycotted parliament and local councils. An Agreement for National Unity was signed on 18 October 2023, which led to the APC returning to national and local governance bodies, and the creation of an election review process to assess and potentially revise Sierra Leone’s electoral framework.

Description of the Elections Project Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone 2022-2023

The project was created and approved through the UN’s processes and procedures designed to ensure political and programmatic support for electoral assistance. The project was built around three outcome areas derived from Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 and related SDGs, in particular SDG 5 and 10. The project document (ProDoc) developed an approach centered on Capacity, Transparency, and Inclusion. Under Capacity, the project aimed to enhance the capacity of the institutions responsible for the organization of elections in Sierra Leone, such as the ECSL, the Political Party Regulation Commission (PPRC) and the Judiciary, to enhance credibility and trust in the electoral processes. It also aimed to enhance Transparency and Inclusion in the electoral processes by promoting the improved participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities, citizen engagement, information sharing and Information integrity by working with a range of stakeholders, including the Independent Commissions and civil society organisations (CSOs). Consistent with the electoral cycle approach, the Elections Project operated in three phases before, during, and after the elections. Starting implementation in August 2022 was recognized as closer to the election period than is preferred under the electoral cycle approach.

Evaluation Scope and Objectives

The purpose of the evaluation is to examine the contribution of the Elections Project to enhancing the capacity of national institutions and partners to deliver peaceful, credible, and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone. The scope of the evaluation is the activities funded by the Elections Project from August 2022 through 31 December 2023. The evaluation assesses the activities undertaken by the Project, including comparing planned to actual activities and outputs and assessing results to determine their contribution to project outcomes and objectives. The evaluation also evaluates the efficiency of project management, including the delivery of outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness and cost efficiency as well as features related to the processes involved in achieving those outputs and the impacts of the project. The evaluation is organized through six main evaluation questions covering relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and human rights, gender equality, youth, and disability inclusion, with additional specific objectives and sub-questions from the Terms of Reference for the evaluator also addressed.

Evaluation Approach and Methods

The evaluation has been conducted through transparent and participatory processes using a utilization-focused inclusive, gender-responsive design. The evaluation used document review and interviews from two weeks of fieldwork across Sierra Leone in late January/early February 2024. Fieldwork gathered data in person from key institutions and individuals that worked with the project. Interviews were used to gather qualitative information from key individuals directly relevant to the purposes of the evaluation and answering all of the main evaluation questions. Interviews were held with 71 people, including 27 women. Interviews captured perspectives of 15 youth as well as four people with disabilities. Data analysis was largely qualitative, triangulating data from documents with interview data. The analysis identified and accumulated findings, then compared and triangulated them to make conclusions and answer the main evaluation questions. These findings and conclusions were then used to make recommendations and identify lessons learned.

Findings

Relevance: The Elections Project was relevant where it worked towards fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone. Not working as planned areas where key elements from the ProDoc in voter registration, electoral complaints management, webpage development, and the results management system were declined by ECSL reduced the relevance of the project from that anticipated in the design.

Coherence: The project was coherent where it worked towards fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone – but that not working in planned areas impeded coherence.

Efficiency: The project has been efficient where it has worked towards fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone; however, not working in planned areas where ECSL declined planned assistance impeded the efficiency of the project. Some development partners noted that ECSL had declined other earlier assistance in these areas and attributed ECSL’s decision to not being willing and open to international assistance in sensitive matters. The approval of the project on 28 July 2022, less than a year before the anticipated elections had a challenging timeframe for project implementation; however, successfully utilizing most resources planned on the agreed upon outputs in this short time frame demonstrated efficient implementation by the project team.

Effectiveness: The project has been effective in that it largely reached its outputs where it worked towards fostering peaceful, and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone, but not working in planned areas declined by the Electoral Commission reduced the effectiveness of the project (particularly in the area of results management, which was central to issues of transparency and credibility with the 2023 elections). The report text and Annex 6 table summarize the projects progress towards outcomes and outputs.

Partnerships and Coordination: UNDP and the Elections Project worked well with key organisations towards project goals and worked to align expectations as well as align with the work of partners; However, partnerships with ECSL were not strong enough to implement some key planned activities as the ECSL declined some assistance. One development partner noted that there could have been greater coordination and engagement between partners funded through the Elections Project and the PBF within the project, by looping Election Project partners into implementation of PBF-funded activities.

Digitalization: Project support for information and communication technology (ICT) processes with ECSL and PPRC encouraged digitalization, but not working in some envisioned areas as ECSL declined project assistance led to fewer outputs in ICT and less digitalization than anticipated by the ProDoc.

Sustainability: The project was developed and implemented with longstanding UN partners that are responsible for elections and political party competition in Sierra Leone: the ECSL, PPRC, and the Judiciary. The approach in the ProDoc emphasized capacity development and sustainability through working with and supporting these key institutions, building on existing initiatives and the capacity that prior electoral cycle projects and peacebuilding projects had built or strengthened.

Human Rights, Gender Equality, Youth and Disability Inclusion: The project was developed with a human rights-based approach through a focus on inclusion and supporting women, youth, and persons with disability to exercise their political rights. The project, through UN Women as well as UNDP partners, primarily the ECSL Inclusion Department, worked extensively towards GEWE, with impressive progress towards outcomes and outputs envisioned in the ProDoc. The project emphasized reaching a large number of youth, particularly first-time voters, in the country to exercise their political rights through multiple mechanisms and partners. And the project focused on and targeted disability inclusion through support to ECSL, CSO grantees and other partners to expand access to the polls for people with disabilities.

Conclusions

Relevance

- The Elections Project was relevant where it worked towards fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone.
- Not working in planned areas where key elements from the ProDoc were declined by ECSL reduced the relevance of the project from that anticipated in the design.

Coherence

- The Elections Project was designed and implemented using processes led by UNDP, the project CTA, and donors that ensured strong coherence of project activities and linked them with those of project partners and the initiatives of other development partners.
- The ProDoc presented a coherent design to address the main challenges and opportunities towards peaceful, credible, and inclusive elections. Coherence however, was undermined as the ECSL declined agreed upon project support as well as other prospective international assistance in areas critical to the success of electoral processes on grounds they did not see the need for this assistance. Not working on the results management system undermined the coherent design of the Elections Project and left the project not working in this key area, a situation that contributed to affecting the credibility of the elections.

Efficiency

- The Elections Project – through the use of UNDP processes and procedures – used and maintained competitive processes and POPP standards towards efficient implementation.
- Efficiency was challenged by time pressure and the relatively slow start of the project late in the electoral cycle.
- Expenditure rates demonstrate that the project has been able to programme efficiently.
- The project took on some processes in implementation not anticipated in the original implementation plans, such as the payment of temporary ECSL staff for the elections, using UNDP systems which required substantial work and temporary staffing for verification. These processes were costly and created tensions with ECSL as UNDP standards emphasized accountability for donor resources by ensuring the validity of all documents rather than quick processing.
- Holding briefing and training sessions for UNDP’s CSO partners in the Elections Project on the requirements to account for funds under their UNDP awards supported efficient implementation and the delivery of tranches to partners; however, with the short time period for implementation of these grants, the time it took for UNDP to process CSO acquittals and issue the next tranches

to these CSO partners contributed to time pressure on CSOs in implementation from some delays in funds transfers.

Effectiveness

- The Elections Project was largely successful in meeting its targets in the outputs where it was implemented across the three outcome areas.
- Not undertaking activities in the areas where planned assistance was declined by the ECSL led to unmet output targets in these areas and impeded attainment of the Elections Project’s outcome targets (particularly in the credibility of the elections as measured by EOMs and strengthening the results management system to enhance the transparency of electoral results).

Partnerships and Coordination

- Elections Project and UNDP management and staff consistently worked to develop and sustain partnerships with development partners, with government partners in the ECSL and PPRC and with CSO partners.
- Efforts of UNDP and the CTA to ensure coherence in the development and implementation of the Elections Project facilitated strong coordination of project activities with other UNDP and UN projects and with the initiatives funded by other donors.
- Frustrations arose and impeded the partnership between UNDP and the project with ECSL around the areas of planned activities declined by ECSL. ECSL declining assistance and the Elections Project thus not working in critical areas for transparency and credibility like the Results Management System - and the issues in these areas with the elections themselves - weakened the partnership between the UNDP Elections project and development partners with ECSL.

Digitalization

- Elections Project support for technical upgrades at ECSL and for ICT technology for the PPRC furthered the digitalization of processes in these project partners.
- The project had the potential to have had a greater impact on digitalization through more comprehensive engagement with ECSL in this area that included in the ProDoc that the electoral commission rejected in 2022.

Sustainability

- Project support for key partners that have been and will be engaged in all elections in the country supports the sustainability of project achievements.
- The limited time for preparation and implementation of many activities prior to the elections themselves, however, constrained sustainability.
- Further engagement of UNDP and/or project staff with project partners and more time in the electoral cycle to support institutionalization of project-supported activities and developments would further support sustainability.

Human Rights, Gender Equality, Youth and Disability Inclusion

- Elections Project’s work supporting inclusion had notable positive results in human rights, gender equality, youth and disability inclusion in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone in this electoral cycle.

Recommendations

The findings and conclusions of the evaluation suggest key programmatic and operational recommendations for UNDP’s consideration.

1. UNDP should continue to provide support to key partners in electoral processes in Sierra Leone.
2. UNDP should consider developing and funding programming with the goal of working to depoliticise Sierra Leone and reduce the high level of partisanship that is so pervasive and divisive across the country.
3. UNDP and its partners should continue to emphasize and support GEWE.
4. UNDP should use the electoral cycle approach to a larger extent in working to support transparent, credible and inclusive elections.
5. UNDP should work with the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office (RCO) and Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for West Africa and The Sahel to systematically develop and use platforms to link the international community together at the political level to support the successes of technical assistance projects.
6. UNDP should strengthen country-office capacity and processes to support fast, timely high-quality staffing for projects.
7. UNDP should strengthen country-office capacity and processes to systematically train partners in UNDP processes and support timely, fast review and approval of partner proposals/acquittals and rapid transfers of tranches of funds to partners.
8. UNDP should increase its staffing, particularly national staff, for the country office and projects in order to have a higher profile that supports partners in implementation and increases monitoring and evaluation at the project level.
9. UNDP should develop and consider using targets and triggers, including in the risk matrix, towards implementing comprehensive projects like the Elections Project by potentially reallocating funding based on partner implementation within awards.
10. UNDP should use its convening power even more to link partners at the technical level through events focused on learning and extending project results and partnerships.
11. UNDP should develop and promote web pages on UNDP web sites dedicated to elections and governance to expand the use of and learning from elections project experience, products, and partners.

Lessons Learned

Key lessons learned identified include:

1. Consistent with the Electoral Cycle Approach, more time is needed to work with partners prior to and after electoral events towards sustained change.
2. Partners – both from independent commissions, CSOs, and youth – seek longer, larger, lasting UNDP engagements with them towards more peaceful, inclusive electoral processes.
3. UNDP can successfully bring corporate products to benefit Sierra Leone.
4. Reputational risk needs to be continually assessed in Elections Projects and brought to senior management.

2. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Sierra Leone commissioned an evaluation of the Electoral Assistance Project “Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone 2022-2023,” referred to hereafter as the Elections Project. The Elections Project had a planned budget of USD 8,776,083. The project was funded by UNDP, the Government of Canada, the Government of Iceland, the Government of Ireland, and the European Union (EU). UNDP and its partners implemented the project in Sierra Leone from 1 August 2022, with expenditures of USD 7,281,763 by the end of 2023. The project, originally intended to end on 31 December 2023, has been extended to August 31, 2024, to support Sierra Leone’s post-election needs, including for support of the elections review process.

The UNDP Elections Project team has also managed and coordinated the United Nations (UN) Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)-funded project “Promote the creation of an enabling environment for the conduct of peaceful elections and the strengthening of social cohesion in Sierra Leone.” The USD 3 million project began 11 August 2022 for a period of two years, until 10 August 2024. The PBF-funded project, implemented by UNDP and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), covered the outputs of the Electoral Project focused on conflict prevention and management in the elections. The evaluation of the Elections project covers UNDP activities fully or partially funded through Elections Project resources and leaves the assessment of outputs and activities funded through the PBF project for its own evaluation at the end of its period of implementation.

The purpose of the evaluation to learn from the experience of the Elections Project. The evaluation, conducted in January and February 2024 – six months after the June elections enabled lessons to be learned after implementation and assess sustainability shortly after much of the project’s implementation. The evaluation assesses the progress of the project against its intended goals and objectives to date and its prospects going forward. The evaluation will help inform future programming in elections in the country.

The Evaluation Report consists of this introduction that explains the background and purpose of the evaluation. The second section briefly describes the Electoral Assistance Project “Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone 2022-2023.” This is followed by more exposition on the evaluation’s scope and objectives, and then the evaluation’s approach and methods – including a separate section on data analysis. Findings and the conclusions that follow from the analysis of these findings are then provided using the key categories for the evaluation: Relevance, Coherence, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Partnerships and Coordination, Digitalization, Sustainability, and Human Rights, Gender Equality, Youth and Disability Inclusion. Next the recommendations that follow from these findings and conclusions are presented, followed by the lessons learned from the project. Finally, the report includes seven annexes: the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation, the evaluation matrix developed in the inception report, a bibliography, the list of interviews, the data collection instrument used in the evaluation, a signed code of conduct for the evaluation, and a table for the outcome and output data – findings and evaluation assessment.

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The post-civil war political history of Sierra Leone is substantially a story of political party competition between two main parties, the APC and the SLPP. Political loyalties in post-independence Sierra Leone have been polarised along ethnic and regional lines. The two largest ethnic groups, the Mende and Temne, each comprise about 30% of Sierra Leone’s population. The Mende and other smaller tribes in the south and east have traditionally supported the SLPP, while the Temne, Limba and other tribes in the north and the Krio community in the west have traditionally supported the APC (Africa Research Institute 2011). Loyalty to political parties in Sierra Leone is sustained by – and in turn sustains – entrenched patronage networks and corruption.

Socio-economic conditions in Sierra Leone have been difficult for many years. The country has been buffeted by crises. The economy was hit hard by sharp declines in the price of primary export commodities that dominate the formal economy and the Ebola Virus Disease in 2014 and 2015. These twin crises led to a sharp decline in the economy, accompanied by depreciation of the currency, inflation, and continued difficult times in 2016 and 2017 even with a weak recovery in mineral production. The COVID-19 crisis then battered the economy, as did the surge in global commodity prices with and after COVID. Inflation and the depreciation of the currency in the context of these crises has worsened economic conditions in Sierra Leone.

Elections have been closely contested between the two main political parties and their partisan supporters. Successive post-war presidential and parliamentary elections have been won by different parties. In 2002, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and the SLPP won the first post-conflict election. In 2007, Ernest Bai Koroma and the APC won the election; Koroma and the APC then won re-election in 2012. The two major “swing” districts in the country are considered to be Kono in the east and Western Area Rural and Urban (the location of Freetown, the capital). While there are other political parties, they have been mostly peripheral in elections. However, in 2007 a split in the SLPP led to the creation of another party that contributed to victory for the APC (Hitchen 2011). This experience may have contributed to the pressures, the leading parties have put on leaders that have left the two main parties and formed new parties in recent years. The two main political parties have continued to face internal disagreements over leadership, leadership succession, and candidate selection, which has made electoral processes more tense, more unpredictable, and more at risk of violence.

While there has not been large-scale political violence in Sierra Leone since the civil war, every election before 2023 has seen notable incidents of violence which have been accompanied by concerns that violence could become widespread. Some research notes that there is “a popular perception that the use of violence is an acceptable – even legitimate – means of securing power” in Sierra Leone (Africa Research Institute 2011). All post-civil war election results have been controversial and contested - but have ultimately been accepted by the losing parties and presidential candidates. Multiple international observation missions have evaluated all of these elections as credible and/or free and fair – until the 2023 elections.

The United Nations (UN) has been a key international partner in all elections in Sierra Leone since 2002 and has had an important, active role in supporting peacebuilding, development and governance in the country since its eleven-year civil war ended in 2002. The UN and its partners have supported elections reform and development of Sierra Leone’s Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) since that time. Assistance for elections has been provided through the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and its successors, the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), and then through UNDP after the end of the UN Mission.

Supporting peaceful and transparent, professionally administered elections has been a key pillar of the UN’s and UNDP’s approach in the country since the end of the civil war and has remained so, as notable in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSCDF) 2020-2024 and UNDP Sierra Leone Country Programme Document (CPD) 2019-2024.

UNDP implemented its first electoral cycle project “Support to Electoral Reform and the National Electoral Commission” to support strategic planning and reform of the National Election Commission (NEC)¹ and help the NEC prepare for and administer the 2007 elections, the country’s second national election since the civil war. The 2008 general elections demonstrated that Sierra Leone had made important gains in consolidating its post-conflict democracy and progress towards administering its elections.

However, the political situation in the country was widely characterized as fragile, based on political polarization and regional and ethnic divisions, with concerns widespread that the run-up to the presidential, parliamentary, and local council elections due in 2012 could exacerbate political tensions in ways that might lead to violent conflict. These concerns led to the development of a second UNDP electoral cycle project, “Support to the Electoral Cycle in Sierra Leone 2011-2014,” to support the NEC and other electoral institutions as well as build public confidence and support conflict management. UNDP continued to engage with EMBs and other stakeholders after the close of the project in 2015. A smaller, targeted project was dedicated to supporting boundary delimitation by the NEC in 2016.

With Presidential and Parliamentary elections due in 2018, the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and NEC again requested support, which the UN found warranted. This led to the development of a third, smaller electoral cycle project, “Support to the National Electoral Commission (SNEC)” from August 2017 to support the 2018 elections. The project worked towards ensuring that the NEC could deliver inclusive elections in March 2018. The project focused on improving electoral access for people with disabilities and women, helping NEC design and deliver an electoral results management system, and facilitated NEC’s processing of civil registration data into the Register of Voters.

A key difference with SNEC from the prior UNDP electoral cycle project was the absence of a conflict prevention component in the project. A separate project - Conflict Prevention and Mitigation (CPM) during the Electoral Cycle - was developed by the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office (RCO) and funded by the PBF to cover conflict prevention and mitigation activities, including support to planning and training

¹ NEC is the prior name for the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL).

for electoral security actors, improving the mediation abilities for political dialogue of national independent commissions, including the Political Parties Regulation Commission (PPRC), and efforts to establishing early warning systems to prevent electoral violence, including electoral violence against women (EVAW).

The 2018 election led to the country’s second transition of power since the return to multi-party democracy in 1991. As in the prior transition in 2007, analysts suggest the turnover was driven by popular discontent with the government. Resentments were apparent with the incumbent All People’s Congress (APC) government, which had almost decade in power, and its handling of the 2014-15 Ebola crisis, 2016 Freetown mudslide and perceptions of pervasive high-level corruption.

The 2018 Presidential Elections, in both its first and second rounds, were extremely close. On 4 April 2018, the NEC declared the candidate from the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP) Julius Maada Bio the winner with 51.81% of the vote. In an expanded parliament now with 132 rather than 112 elected seats, the SLPP won 49 seats, up from 42 in 2012, while the APC won 68 seats, down from 70, with the remaining 15 seats going to two smaller parties and independents. The 2018 results left Sierra Leone in an unprecedented situation for West Africa, a President in a Presidential system governing without a majority in parliament with opposition APC leaders that had vowed to make Sierra Leone ungovernable if they lost the elections (James 2018). Continued difficult socioeconomic conditions, leadership manipulation and incentives, as well as widespread perceptions that politics is zero-sum were seen as contributing to risks that young people could turn to electoral or post-election violence (Mukunto 2019).

In 2018, President Bio appealed for cross-party cooperation and for the APC to drop its legal challenge against the election results. He met with APC’s presidential candidate Samura Kamara and established a joint commission to investigate the post-electoral violence. Despite the competitive nature of the elections and the close outcomes, the main political parties and their supporters eventually accepted the results. Then in May 2019, the High Court ruled in favour of a SLPP petition alleging electoral fraud by the APC; this ruling led to 10 opposition members of Parliament (MPs) losing their seats and the SLPP awarded 9 of these seats, giving the SLPP a slender majority in parliament – while raising tensions with the opposition.

The potential for conflict in areas represented by the two dominant political parties in Parliament - which they considered “their territory” (EISA 2017) – in the run-up to the 2023 general elections was thought to endure by observers. And risks of conflict are thought to be especially high in regions of the country that are contested by the main political parties (IGR 2018). Since 2018, by-elections had been marred by violence. There were thus substantial concerns about the risks of conflict around the 2023 elections.

The country’s fifth nationwide elections were held on 24 June 2023. For the 2023 Presidential contest, the incumbent President Julius Maada Bio ran for the SLPP against the unsuccessful APC candidate Samura Kamara in a repeat of the 2018 elections. The official campaign period for the elections ran from 23 May to 22 June 2023. Notwithstanding isolated flare-ups in acts of intimidation and violence, the vote was relatively peaceful.

The Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL) declared the SLPP presidential candidate Bio re-elected, reporting that he had received 56.17% of the total votes cast (just above the 55% threshold required for victory in the first round of the elections). The ECSL reported that the APC candidate Kamara had 41.16% of the votes. Parliamentary elections saw the SLPP win 61% (81 seats) and the APC win 39% (54 seats) with an unprecedented 30.4% of women elected as members of parliament in the June 24 polls. These results were widely seen as problematic as ECSL did not report disaggregated data at the polling station level or make the results tabulation system transparent to national and international observers. The APC did not accept these results but also rejected taking the elections to the Judiciary as the APC claimed they did not trust the Judicial system to be free from partisan political influence. The APC declared that it would not participate in parliament and local council proceedings as a consequence.

A 3-month stalemate was overcome as sustained international mediation encouraged representatives of the ruling and opposition parties to begin a national dialogue on 16 October. An Agreement for National Unity was signed on 18 October which led to the APC returning to national and local governance bodies, and the creation of an election review process to assess and potentially revise Sierra Leone’s electoral framework among other resolutions.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE ELECTIONS PROJECT FOSTERING PEACEFUL, CREDIBLE AND INCLUSIVE ELECTIONS IN SIERRA LEONE 2022-2023

The foundational document for the Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone 2022-2023 Project is the Project Document (ProDoc). The project was created and approved through the UN’s processes and procedures designed to ensure political and programmatic support for electoral assistance. Towards the 2023 elections, the GoSL requested support from the UN. The Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) conducted a United Nations Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) in May 2021 which concluded that electoral assistance was needed and warranted. The NAM was used towards developing the Elections Project. Electoral support was not delivered after the end of the previous UNDP electoral cycle project, SNEC, in 2018; no assistance was provided in this area 2019-2021 by the UN, leaving concerns about 2023 high among donors and UN agencies.

Areas Identified for Elections Project Engagement

The Project Document briefly provided context explaining the importance of the 2023 elections for the country and the relevance of UNDP support for the electoral cycle. The sequence of past UNDP electoral support was noted as part of the rationale for assistance towards 2023, as was the ongoing challenges of maintaining peace and social cohesion in the country with rising political tensions between the two main political parties and the country’s inclusion challenges.

The ProDoc further provided explanations for the centrality of women and youth in the country and in the project. Sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls was notorious in the civil war and has been noted to have continued to worrying degrees. Youth were seen as particularly salient in sustaining peace. One argument around the maintenance of peace in West Africa has been that people remember the devastation of conflict, and do not want to return to those horrific times. With rapid population growth, a huge proportion of the population of Sierra Leone are under the age of 35, which thus leaves many of them with little to no direct memories of conflict. This may weaken or end this dampening effect of prior violence. Furthermore, years of civil war and socio-economic inequalities across the country have created a generation of excluded and disadvantaged youth, whose grievances during previous elections have been exploited by political leaders who have sometimes lured the marginalized youth into political violence against their political opponents.

The ProDoc also identified the media as a critical area for engagement, based on the history of political violence incited by hate speech and the spread of false news, which is intensified during elections season. The growth of social media use in the country over the last several years has also been noted as a new and growing risk for accelerating rumour-mongering and aggravating grievances that could incite violence.

Sierra Leone, with the help of the UN and other bilateral partners, has also developed a system of managing elections, including risks of political violence. This system, with the support of the UN and others, successfully managed elections in 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2018. However, the security sector response to both peaceful protests and riotous conduct has frequently been seen as unnecessarily forceful and repressive, characterized by incidents with disproportionate use of force by the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), which led to the noted need to work to support electoral security in the ProDoc.

Approaches of the Elections Project

The Elections Project was built around three outcome areas as derived from Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 and related SDGs, in particular SDG 5 and 10. The ProDoc developed an approach centered on Capacity, Transparency, and Inclusion. Under **Capacity**, the project aimed to enhance the Capacity of the institutions responsible for the organization of elections in Sierra Leone, such as ECSL, the Political Party Regulation Commission (PPRC) and the Judiciary, to enhance credibility and trust in the electoral processes. It also aimed to enhance **Transparency** of and **Inclusion** in the electoral processes by promoting the improved participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities; citizen engagement, information sharing and Information integrity by working with a range of stakeholders, including from the Independent Commissions and CSOs.

The project developed three outcomes, each with outputs beneath them:

Outcome 1: Institutional capacity of electoral stakeholders is enhanced;

Outcome 2: Transparency in the electoral process is enhanced; and

Outcome 3: Inclusion in electoral processes is promoted and citizen engagement is strengthened.

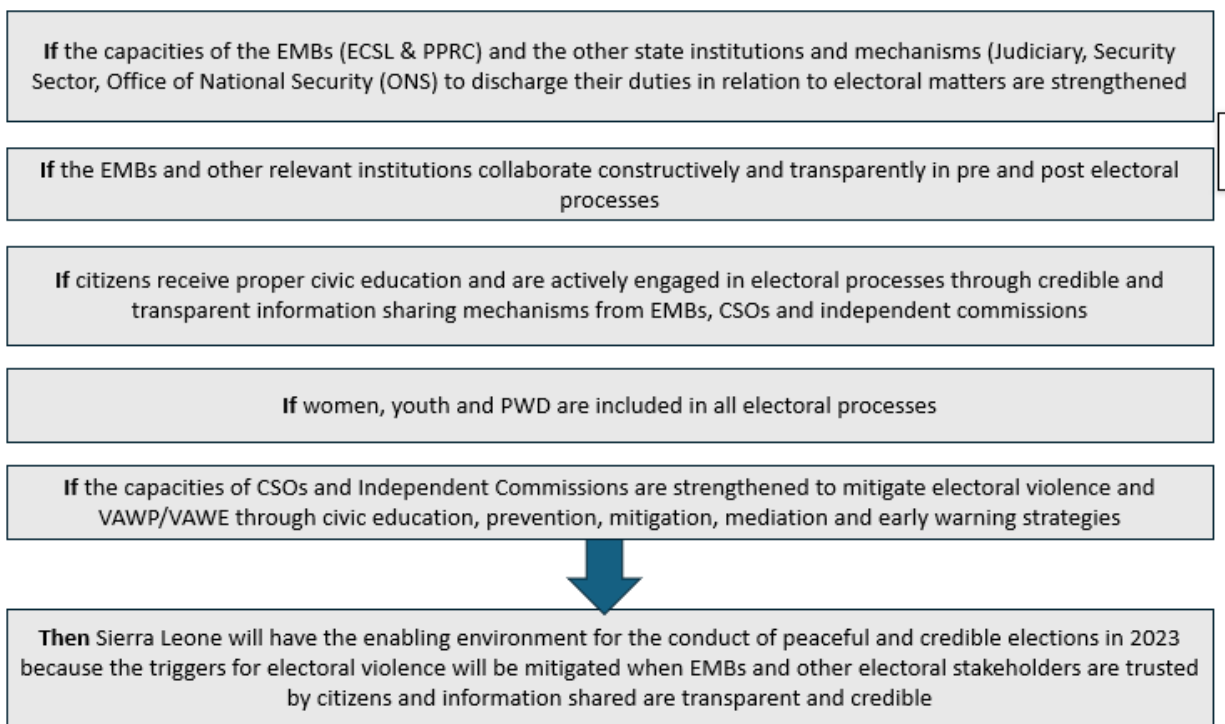
Consistent with the electoral cycle approach, the Elections Project operated in three phases before, during, and after the elections. However, starting implementation in August 2022 was recognized in the ProDoc and in interviews with UNDP to be closer to the election period than is preferred under the electoral cycle approach.

Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (ToC) for the Elections Project is based on the premises of United Nations’ electoral assistance that peaceful and inclusive societies require accountable, transparent, and inclusive institutions at all levels to build trust and foster citizen engagement. Independent, credible, and transparent election management bodies are vital institutions. They and other actors support inclusive participation, the right and opportunity to take part in the conduct of public affairs and to vote and to be elected at periodic elections which further inclusivity, justice and peace.

The ToC for the Elections Project was included in the ProDoc. The ToC can be expressed graphically. Figure 1 below presents the ToC.

Figure 1: Elections Project ToC



Project Stakeholders

The ProDoc noted that the Elections Project was designed to work through and support a wide range of key stakeholders. Support from the project was delivered to support a wide range of partners, including the ECSL, PPRC, Judiciary of Sierra Leone, UN Women, the National Youth Commission, and CSOs. The ProDoc developed an “inclusive governance approach to elections” to work with these stakeholders. Three categories of target groups were “identified as critical to the project’s implementation (p. 20) are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: Categories of Elections Project Stakeholders

Category of Stakeholder	Stakeholders Named	Plans for Project with Stakeholder
Project beneficiaries (national institutions involved in the electoral process)	ECSL, PPRC, Independent Commissions, SLP, the media	UNDP engagement, technical expertise, capacity building and training sessions
beneficiaries (marginalised groups within the Sierra Leonean electorate)	broad categories of women, youth, and persons with disabilities	UNDP and UN Women engagement, technical expertise, capacity building and training sessions
The Public	The Public (in general)	public awareness raising campaigns related to the delivery of credible elections

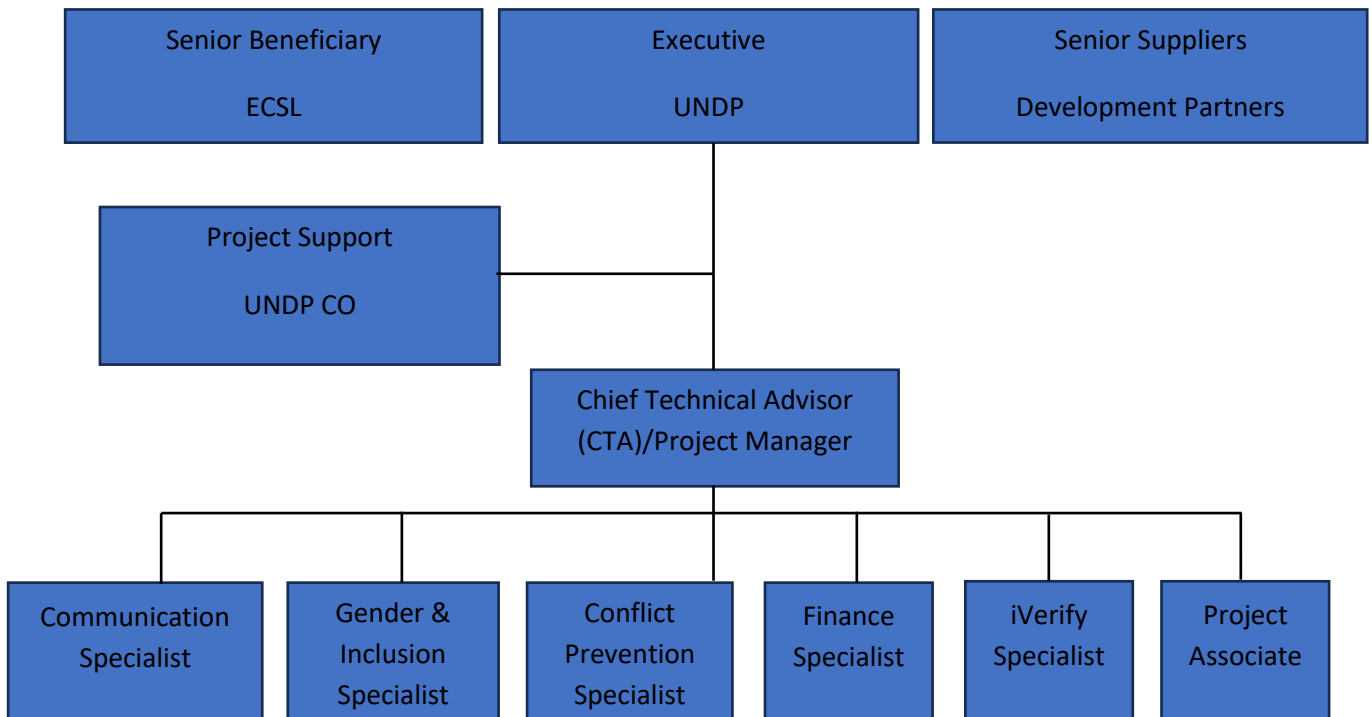
Five CSO partners were engaged by the project to support the ECSL to promote electoral awareness for enhancing participation of first-time voters, women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PwD) in the 2023 elections. These five CSOs were the Campaign for Good Governance (CGG); West Africa Youth Network for Peace Education and Economic Development–Sierra Leone (WAYNPEED-SL); Advocacy Movement Network (AMNet); Movement Towards Peace and Development Agency-Sierra Leone (MoPADA-SL); and Social Enterprise Development–Sierra Leone (SEND–Sierra Leone), which were to work in the Western, Northwest, North, South, and East regions respectively.

Problematically, the ECSL declined project assistance that had been agreed to and included in the ProDoc. The areas where planned assistance was thus not provided were in key areas of ECSL’s work and developed plans to use important modalities to deliver this support, including consultants to support ECSL in voter registration as well as in results management and tabulation. These latter two areas proved to be the most sensitive, critical, and problematic ones in the June 2023 elections and their aftermath, as discussed further in findings. The experience of the 2023 elections and their aftermath in Sierra Leone suggest the importance of the planned assistance in results management and tabulation and validate that including these two areas in the ProDoc targeted important areas in the 2023 electoral cycle.

Project Organogram

The ProDoc also described the organization of the Elections Project, including the positions and roles of the project management unit (PMU) for the project. Figure 2 below sketches an organigram for the Elections Project including the PMU based on the ProDoc.

Figure 2: Project Organogram



5. EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Evaluation Scope

The scope of the evaluation is the activities funded by the Elections Project from August 2022 through 31 December 2023. As the PBF-funded project that coordinated with the elections project will have its own evaluation, the activities and outputs that the Elections Project did not fund as the PBF-project was addressing them, was not assessed in the Elections Project evaluation.

Evaluation Objective

The purpose of the evaluation is to examine the contribution of the Elections Project to enhancing the capacity of national institutions and partners to deliver peaceful, credible, and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone. To do so, the evaluation assesses the activities undertaken by the Elections Project, including comparing planned to actual activities and outputs and assessing results to determine their contribution to project outcomes and objectives. The evaluation also evaluates the efficiency of project management, including the delivery of outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness and cost efficiency as well as features related to the processes involved in achieving those outputs and the impacts of the project. The evaluation endeavours to explain underlying causes and issues that contributed to any outcomes or output targets not adequately achieved.

Specific objectives covered in the evaluation included in the ToR were to:

- Review the performance of the Project interventions in achieving the outputs stated in the programme document and their contributions to CPD outcomes;
- Assess the project’s flexibility in responding to changes during implementation, including changes in the context;
- Assess how the project was able to manage risks (financial, strategic, technical, reputational, etc);
- Review of Project approach and coherence in delivering programme results;
- Assess the factors that influenced national ownership of programme results and their sustainability;
- Assess the knowledge, visibility and communications by both the Project and government counterparts around programme results;
- Assess the appropriateness of the Project strategy, validity of the underlying assumptions to the ToC implementation approach, and programme institutional/management arrangements, the impact of its work with other implementing partners;
- Document key outcomes and any shortcomings, if identified, of project interventions;
- Document good practices and lessons learned from the Project to feed into the next phase of the programme cycle; and
- Proffer concrete recommendations that may be required to enhance the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of a future programme, including its timing in an electoral cycle perspective in the specific context of Sierra Leone.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation uses and is organised through the Organization of Economic Cooperation Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability, augmented by UNDP criteria of partnerships and coordination, digitalization, and Human Rights, Gender Equality, Youth and Disability Inclusion.

Six main evaluation questions, which cover six of the broad OECD DAC evaluation criteria, were developed and approved with the inception report. These six main evaluation questions, derived from the sub-questions in the ToR for the evaluation and the OECD DAC evaluation criteria, are:

Relevance

How relevant was the Elections Project to fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?

Coherence

How has the Elections Project brought coherence to fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?

Efficiency

How efficient has the Elections Project been in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?

Effectiveness

How effective has the Elections Project been in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?

Sustainability

How sustainable are the contributions of the Elections Project to fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?

Human Rights, Gender Equality, Youth and Disability Inclusion

How did the Elections Project support human rights, gender equality, youth and disability inclusion in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?

Sub-questions and other sections of the evaluation report cover Partnerships and Coordination as well as Digitalization.

Evaluation Matrix

As part of developing and finalising the Inception Report, the evaluator developed an evaluation matrix. The evaluation matrix was used in the Inception Report to demonstrate understanding of the evaluation questions and sub-questions by the Evaluator as towards developing approaches to collect and analyse data to answer these questions. The evaluation questions were used in the Evaluation Matrix to develop the methodologies for gathering objective, valid, reliable, precise, and useful data with integrity to be analysed. The evaluation matrix is included below as Annex 2. The evaluation matrix is organised through the six main evaluation questions developed in the inception report that cover six main evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and human rights, gender equality, youth and disability inclusion), including the sub-questions beneath them. The matrix was also used for the other

criteria used in the ToR (partnerships and coordination as well as digitalization) and the sub-questions associated with them.

The evaluation has focused not only on what worked well - and why these activities and techniques were effective – but also what worked less well and why. The independent evaluation provides independent data as well as analyses existing data to help understand lessons learned from implementation and the results achieved by the project, towards making recommendations based on this information and analysis that are useful for UNDP and its partners, including UN Women, development partners, GoSL institutions (including ECSL and PPRC), civil society partners, and people in Sierra Leone.

6. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

Evaluation Approach

The evaluation has been conducted through transparent and participatory processes with UNDP management, the Elections Project team, UN Women, GoSL partners (including the ECSL and PPRC), CSO partners, development partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries. The evaluation has been conducted in accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluations in the UN System.

The evaluation developed a utilization-focused inclusive, gender-responsive design. The evaluation was utilization-focused through an emphasis on addressing and answering the main evaluation questions posed by UNDP/Sierra Leone as well as sub-questions included in the ToR. Inclusion and gender sensitivity was incorporated into the design in two ways: First by considering ways in which activities may have affected men and women differently and the extent that they contribute towards gender equality, human rights and women’s empowerment, and second, through using processes that were inclusive, participatory and respectful of all stakeholders in the evaluation’s fieldwork, including especially ensuring that women from different groups and the disabled were interviewed in the course of the evaluation.

The evaluation used the methodologies of document review and interviews as well as general best practices of evaluation to gather qualitative and quantitative data that focus on the purposes of the evaluation and answering the evaluation questions developed in the inception report based on OECD DAC criteria. The evaluation has two levels of analysis and validation of information: a desk review of secondary data (from written programme documentation and other analyses) and information and independent data collected by the evaluator in two weeks of fieldwork across Sierra Leone in January and early February 2023.

The evaluation design was based on **focusing** on the most important aspects of the project, **triangulation**, **purposive sampling**, and **comparison**. Focus ensured that the evaluation emphasized the most important parts of the project and its major achievements. Triangulation was used both through the triangulation of the two methods used in the evaluation as well as in analysis to compare information gathered through these methods. Triangulation adds confidence to the validity and reliability of the data, findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Purposive sampling was used to select individuals for interviews;

selection focused on the most well-informed people to shed the most light on the activities, achievements and lessons of the project.

Evaluation Stages

The evaluation was developed in stages. After the contract with UNDP was finalised and signed, the PMU provided documents for review. Stage 1 was the desk review of these and other documents on electoral processes and elections in Sierra Leone and the development of a draft and final inception report to guide the evaluation (after UNDP approval of the inception report). As part of Stage 1, to gain a thorough understanding of the Elections Project and develop evaluation approaches, the evaluator reviewed the Project Document, project proposals to the PMU, progress reports by the project, and notes on project steering and technical committee meetings. Stage 2 of the evaluation was remote consultations with the CTA and UNDP on the Project and evaluation’s plans. Both stages were used to develop and finalise the inception report. After approval of the inception report, the evaluator followed the approved methods in the Stage 3 field visit. The evaluator conducted in-person interviews in Sierra Leone with UNDP and the PMU as well as with project partners (including development partners), stakeholders, and beneficiaries for Stage 3 in late January and early February 2024. Stage 4 of the evaluation, data analysis and interpretation, followed data collection through home-based work in February 2024. Finally, Stage 5 of the evaluation has been evaluation report writing and finalisation based on comments from UNDP and the project team, followed by comments from partners and stakeholders.

Evaluation Sampling

As developed in the inception report, the evaluation proposed and used purposive sampling towards selecting interviewees. Because detailed data focused on the Elections Project was needed to analyze to answer the key evaluation questions and sub-questions from the ToR for the evaluation, the selection process was purposive. The sample of people focused on reaching a diverse set of the most knowledgeable people who had an in-depth engagement with UNDP, the project team, and project partners. The list of institutions and individuals suggested and identified in the development of the inception report and reached in the fieldwork emphasized interviewing the most well-informed organizations, Elections Project, partner, development partner, and stakeholders from the organizations that worked most closely with Elections Project activities.

Sampling was also guided by an inclusive approach to make sure that data was collected from people and groups across the country as well as through an approach sensitive to gender, youth and disability. This inclusion of diverse stakeholders and beneficiaries was ensured by choosing to conduct fieldwork with partners and beneficiaries in the South (Bo) and North (Makeni) as well as in Freetown and the Western Area. The evaluator worked with the youth lab and CSO leaders to ensure that interviews with them and their beneficiaries covered people from remote and rural areas as well as urban areas. Youth Lab and CSO interviews were also used to make sure that male and female youth as well as PwDs were interviewed (including young women with disabilities). 71 people (including 27 women, 15 youths, and 4 people with disabilities) are the sample of the evaluation.

Data Collection Procedures and Instruments

Document review was used for the inception report and design of the evaluation, and then analysed towards answering the evaluation questions and sub-questions. The list of documents reviewed and used is included as Annex 2. Documents reviewed include the Project Document, the annual reports and the draft final report, and other project-produced and used materials, such as reports of UN Women and the Elections project’s CSO partners. The quantitative data gathered for use in the evaluation is drawn from documents, particularly the reports of the Elections Project and partner reports. These materials have been used as the source of data on the number and distribution of beneficiaries reached, such as the number of Locality Electoral Education Committee (LEECs) and number of women members of LEECs.

Fieldwork gathered data in person from key institutions and individuals that worked with the project. Interviews were used to gather qualitative information from key individuals directly relevant to the purposes of the evaluation. Interviews focused on how partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries viewed the project and verifying and triangulating data on programme results. Data from programme staff, documentation and stakeholder interviews have been combined to determine the plausibility of the programme model, including the extent that it was properly implemented, sufficiently developed, and whether its activities were appropriate. Findings have been used to examine the contribution of activities to the results of the project, with a particular emphasis on output level results per the ToR.

Semi-structured interviews were held with UNDP senior management and project staff, development partners from the Government of Iceland, Government of Ireland, and European Union, the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone, the Political Parties Regulation Commission, the Judiciary of Sierra Leone, the National Youth Commission, i-Verify partners the Sierra Leone Association of Journalist (SLAJ) and Independent Radio Network (IRN), plus the project’s five CSO grantees (AMNet, CGG, MoPADA, SEND, and WAYNPEED). In addition, interviews were conducted with Youth Lab Grantees and key stakeholders from the EU project that also worked directly with ECSL and International IDEA. Interviews during fieldwork in Bo and Bombali Districts also included some beneficiaries of the CSO partners working in these and neighboring districts. Interviews were held with 71 people, including 27 women, in Freetown, the Western Urban District, and the cities of Bo and Makeni (Bo and Bombali Districts). Interviews included four people with disabilities (three women). Interviews captured the views of 15 youth (8 female, including two young women with disabilities). The list of people interviewed is included in Annex 3.

Data Analysis

Data analysis focused on qualitative analyses through comparisons of data gathered through document review and fieldwork interviews. The data analysis approach was developed and incorporated in the inception report and approved. The evaluation matrix was developed to outline the evaluator’s analytic approaches. Two plans were developed for data analysis. Content and thematic analysis and comparison as well as trend analysis of change over time.

Content and thematic analysis and comparison was used by the evaluator on data from interviews and documents relevant to answering the evaluation questions and sub-questions. The evaluator assessed the notes from interviews and reviewed that data gathered from documents that covered the evaluation criteria and addressed themes in the sub-questions. The evaluator gathered and summed the cumulative

data as well as compared the data from interviews with different individual interviewees and different categories of interviewees (e.g. women, youth, staff of the project, ECSL staff) towards answering the evaluation questions and sub-questions. As part of this analysis, the evaluator assessed the more common data as well as discrepant data to make overall assessment of findings. The evaluator triangulated data from different individuals, categories of informants, as well as across the two methods of interviews and document review in making findings.

Trend analysis was also used to assess change over time. The evaluator assessed the data to consider the evidence for baseline conditions, the status of indicators and conditions relevant to answering evaluation questions and sub questions *ex-ante* (before the interventions of the project). Documents and interviewees described these conditions and provided data on them. Then the evaluator assessed the data to consider the evidence for prevailing conditions at the time of fieldwork from interviews and presented in project and partner reporting at the end of 2023. Analysis for the evaluation then compared conditions at these two points to consider change over this time period as well as the plausibility of project contributions to the identified changes.

As noted in the inception report, most data to be collected would be qualitative information from interviews and document review. The quantitative information gathered and generated by the project and presented in its own reporting was combined with qualitative information from reports and interviews for the analysis.

The analysis focused first on identifying findings, and then analysing them by accumulating and comparing them as well as triangulating findings from different sources. The focus was on the main evaluation criteria areas and answering the main evaluation questions. The accumulation, comparison, and triangulation of findings was also used to address and answer the evaluation sub-questions from the ToR for the evaluator under these evaluation criteria. The analysis of findings was used to reach conclusions, make recommendations, and identify lessons learned.

Ethical Considerations

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, which the evaluator reviewed and used in developing the inception report and the course of the evaluation. Annex 6 attached is the UNEG pledge of ethical conduct in evaluation signed by the evaluator. The evaluator used and considered each principle from these guidelines in the evaluation. Towards integrity, the evaluator explained the purposes and methods of the evaluation to UNDP, partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries throughout its processes and was consistently professional, independent, impartial, and not corrupt. For accountability, the evaluator was transparent with interviewees on the evaluation’s goals and processes and asked for questions and responded to them in all interviews. The evaluator is responsible for meeting the evaluation’s purpose. The evaluator respected the dignity, well-being, and agency for stakeholders, and ensured the participation of marginalised beneficiaries (women, youth, and PwDs, including young women with disabilities), who were treated equitably in interviews. The rights and confidentiality of interviewees and stakeholders have been preserved throughout the evaluation’s processes and in the evaluation report. Interviews made sure to

capture a fair representation of beneficiaries and stakeholders. The evaluator solicited and received explicit oral informed consent from all interviewees to participate in the evaluation on a voluntary basis, with the option to opt-out of particular questions or the whole interview under rules of anonymity and non-attribution (see Annex 3). Finally, towards beneficence, the evaluation and evaluator considered risks and benefits and ensured doing no harm while working towards contributing to peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone through the fieldwork and report writing.

Limitations

Potential limitations to the evaluation’s approach and methods of recall bias, acquiescence bias, limits on attribution, and locating informants were identified in the inception report, which also developed fieldwork and analysis plans to manage these limitations. These limitations were managed in fieldwork and did not prevent the evaluator from gathering and analysing more than adequate amounts of valid and reliable data to compile findings, reach conclusions, and make recommendations that target the purposes of the evaluation through the use of largely qualitative evidence acquired through purposive sampling and triangulation of data from different methods and locations.

7. FINDINGS

Relevance

As defined by the OECD DAC and used by UNDP – relevance is the extent to which the project objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, regional, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.² The main evaluation question to be answered on relevance is: How relevant was the Elections Project to fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone? The evaluation addresses sub-questions towards this question from the evaluator’s ToR using sub-headings that cover these areas. The evaluation finds that the Elections Project was relevant where it worked towards fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone, but that not working in planned areas where key elements from the ProDoc were declined by ECSL reduced the relevance of the project from that anticipated in the design.

Assumptions

The ProDoc was explicit in identifying assumptions. Assumptions were about the risks to the success of the programme and the strategies for the Elections Project’s for managing these risks. Assumptions were that the main risks were “tension and mistrust between the two major political parties” and “the spread of misinformation/disinformation” (ProDoc p.19). Risk mitigation measures were planned based on these assumptions. “UNDP and its partners will work alongside the Resident Coordinator and other Stakeholders to engage in high level mediation to resolve conflict triggers” around these political tensions, the ProDoc noted, as well as adjust the project through the Project Board and PMU. The Elections Project focused directly on supporting civic education as well as fact-checking to address the risks of misinformation and disinformation. Interviews found that these assumptions proved accurate. Tensions between political parties characterized the entire period of the Elections Project and reliable information has been important for Sierra Leoneans around electoral processes. The Elections Project’s risk matrix did not consider partners might decline assistance in areas agreed upon in the ProDoc.

Responding to Priorities

A NAM is part of the UN’s procedures for the formulation of any electoral cycle project. The NAM done in 2021 validated the country’s needs and the appropriateness of UNDP support for meeting them. The ProDoc made a persuasive argument that both the current context of Sierra Leone and the history of UNDP support for elections and electoral stakeholders in the country meant support for the 2023 election cycle was warranted and that UNDP was well placed to provide support. No interviewee or report identified for the evaluation argued that the activities of the Elections Project did not fit the conditions in the country.

Government Priorities

The NAM, ProDoc and interviews for the fieldwork with ECSL noted the relevance of the Elections Project because the activities and strategy responded to the priorities of the Government of Sierra Leone’s Medium-Term National Development Plan (M-TNDP, 2019-2023). The Elections Project fit with cluster

² Definitions here and below are from the OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation publication “Better Criteria for Better Evaluation Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use” (Paris: OECD DAC, June 2019).

goals in area 4, Governance and accountability for results, which included; advancing political development for national cohesion and area 5, Empowering women, children, adolescents, and persons with disability. The Elections Project lined up with target 3 in area 4, “civic education to improve public knowledge on civic responsibilities and obligations and the roles of public institutions” and key policy actions 3, Build the capacity of political institutions, including the Political Parties Registration Commission, and 4, Develop political inclusion and participatory policies. Under area 5, Elections Project support to ECSL, PPRC, and CSOs provided important support to promote gender balance, particularly with the 2023 Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Act that provided a legislative basis for the M-TNDP’s aspirations for legislative frameworks to promote gender balance, including electoral frameworks (p. 138).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Interviews with UNDP, as well as the NAM and ProDoc, noted the clear fit of the project with the SDGs and the relevance of the Elections project to progress in Sierra Leone towards the SDGs (particularly SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions and SDG 5 Gender Equality. Towards SDG 16, the Elections Project outcomes, outputs and activities outlined plans and worked towards Target 16:6, Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels and Target 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. The project supported the ECSL towards collecting sex-disaggregated data on electoral participation and supported the implementation of the GEWE act’s quotas on women in elected office that support indicator 16.7.1 on sex-disaggregated data on representatives in the legislature. Towards SDG 5, the Elections Project fit within Target 5.5, Ensuring women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life, which uses the proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments as indicator 5.5.1.

United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2024

The ProDoc and UNDP interviews recognized that the Elections Project fit the priorities of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The ProDoc explicitly linked to the UNSDCF. The Elections Project fits with Outcome Areas 2 on Transformational Governance and 4 on Protection and Empowerment of the most Vulnerable in the UNSDCF. The Elections Project worked towards key parts of Outcome Area 2 such as “Democratic institutions are inclusive and the representation of women, young persons, and persons with disability in elected processes is institutionalized” (p. 26). And the project worked directly towards Outcome Area 4 by working to empower “the most vulnerable, particularly women, youth, adolescents and children (especially girls), and persons living with disabilities” (p. 28). The project’s work under its outcome 3 (see below) is especially relevant to both of these UNSDCF Outcome Areas.

UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) 2020-2024

The ProDoc and UNDP interviews also noted the alignment of the Elections Project with the UNDP Country Programme Document (2020-2024). Inclusive democratic governance is identified as critical in the CPD, with a pledge that follows for UNDP to “further strengthen electoral management bodies including the

National Electoral Commission (NEC), Political Parties Regulation Commission (PPRC),³ and electoral courts (p. 5). The ProDoc clearly links to the CPD as well as to these key institutions for electoral processes in Sierra Leone. The Elections Project partnered with ECSL, PPRC and the Judiciary towards this goal that is a part of the CPD and provided assistance that was designed to and did build the human and technical capacity of all three institutions.

Development partners

The Elections Project has been generously supported by the Governments of Canada, Iceland, Ireland, and the European Union Delegation. In interviews with development partners, donor representatives stressed importance of peaceful, credible, and inclusive elections for Sierra Leone and for their government’s engagement with the country and its people, including for supporting social and economic development. Donors noted in interviews that they recognized the direct relevance of Elections Project support for their strategies and these goals. The December 2021 Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) of the European Union made Democratic and Inclusive Governance and Human Rights one of its three priority areas (European Union External Action Service 2021). The EU committed to supporting EMBs through the UNDP Multi-Donor Electoral Assistance Basket Fund and did so as part of implementing this programme (EEAS 2023). Development Partners reported engaging with UNDP in finalizing the ProDoc and that their engagement strengthened coherence of the Elections Project, in particular through emphasizing and refining planned assistance to the results management system and voter registration.

Interviews with UNDP management, the project team, development partners, and implementing partners and stakeholders found that all agreed that the Elections Project and its activities were relevant to Sierra Leone and key actors in the 2023 elections. Development partners emphasized the relevance of support for inclusion through the project and the progress made, which some noted has been somewhat overshadowed by the controversies over the transparency and credibility of the election results. Other work by the Elections Project was noted as relevant in many areas, including tackling disinformation and misinformation through the innovative i-Verify process, the outreach to youth through the Youth Lab, and awards to CSOs for voter education and inclusion. The elections project brought iVerify, a methodology developed by UNDP and used in other cases, to Sierra Leone as the challenges and risks of misinformation and disinformation were identified in the ProDoc and highly relevant to the country. iVerify, developed supported through the UNDP Chief Digital Office and the UNDP Brussels-based Task Force on Electoral Assistance, is a fact-checking tool provided and used by national stakeholders to identify false information and prevent and mitigate its spread. Interviewees from UNDP and the iVerify implementing partners stressed the importance of the project’s support for information checking and validation through iVerify for more informed participation in electoral processes and its relevance to the country’s media environment and audience needs around the 2023 elections.

The relevance of the Elections Project design was undermined by not implementing key activities towards critical outcomes of the project and outputs in the ProDoc as ECSL declined project assistance on the results management system (RMS) (Outputs 2.2 and 2.2 a). This change from what had been agreed to with the signing of the ProDoc and despite the project’s attempt to ensure implementation of Output 2.2,

³ The Political Parties Regulation Commission (PPRC) was earlier the Political Parties Registration Commission.

left the project not supporting an area of the EMB, which had been identified as an opportunity and need for improvement in the development of the project and in prior electoral cycle projects. The project board reports, election observer reports and interviews for the evaluation noted that the area of results management proved problematic for transparency prior to and after the 2023 elections. The lack of transparency with the RMS – and the non-release of polling-station level data by ECSL - has led to the issues Sierra Leone faces with the credibility of the electoral results.

Contributions to longer-term development results

Interviews with ECSL, PPRC, and the project’s CSO partners noted important ways that project supports contributed to their capacity strengthening which supports the longer-term development of the country. Project staff and UNDP interviewees noted in interviews that working with ECSL, PPRC, the Judiciary and CSOs was an approach that would strengthen them for future development work beyond this electoral cycle.

Leveraging support for the democratic process

The Elections Project has been useful in leveraging support for the democratic process in Sierra Leone. Interviews noted that UNDP had been able to bring in new donors like Iceland to this process to benefit the country. And the project was used to support essential tasks that donors sought to support even when not included in the ProDoc, such as the payment of temporary polling staff through the Elections Project and adjustment before the elections to support the International Media Centre at Bintumani.

CSO partners and youth lab participants interviewed noted and appreciated how Elections Project support made them more relevant in the electoral processes. Youth lab participants interviewed particularly valued the imprint of UNDP, which raised their profile in the community and supported their efforts to increase youth participation and make youth issues more visible in the elections.

Meeting needs of all genders, PwDs, other disadvantaged and marginalized groups

The Elections Project, documents and interviews noted, clearly was relevant to meeting the needs to both men and women, PwDs, and disadvantaged and marginalized groups. The relevance to women, youth and first-time voters, PwDs, and marginalized groups was a particular stress of the Project’s work on inclusion with ECSL and the project’s CSO partners. Women, youth, and PwDs have been underrepresented in elected offices at the national and local levels. While women are more than half of the population, only 12 percent of the Members of Parliament elected in 2018 were female (NDI 2023). The Elections Project supported landmark initiatives to collect gender-disaggregated data that had not been done in Sierra Leone to date; activities supported ECSL to gather and report gender-disaggregated VR data. However, ECSL did not follow up on this step by gathering and reporting gender-disaggregated data on the elections themselves. This suggests a continued need for Sierra Leone’s development partners to work with ECSL towards systematizing the gathering, reporting on, and use of gender-disaggregated data.

Support for National Legislation/Initiatives Improving Gender Equality and Human Rights

The Election Project’s focus on inclusion played a particularly important role supporting women as aspirants and candidates for office in the elections. The legislature passed the Gender Equality and

Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act in November 2022, which was enacted with the signature of the President on January 19, 2023. Among the law's provisions, the Act established a quota for women in elected positions. And a petition challenging the use of proportional representation, adopted in 2022, was ruled on by the Supreme Court in January 2023. This key ruling came with only 5 months to go before the June elections. Interviews with UNDP, project staff, ECSL, and PPRC noted the particular importance and relevance of project support through UNDP and project partners ECSL, PPRC, UN Women, the project's CSO partners, and the youth lab participants to build awareness and understanding of this landmark change among the population in general and for women in particular.

Conclusions: Relevance

In conclusion, the Elections Project was relevant where it worked towards fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone. Not working in planned areas where key elements from the ProDoc were declined by ECSL reduced the relevance of the project from that anticipated in the design.

Coherence

Coherence is the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or Institution. The main evaluation question to be answered is: How has the Elections Project brought coherence to fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone? The evaluation also answers sub-questions towards this question using sub-headings that cover the areas specifically included in the evaluator's ToR. The evaluation finds that the Elections Project was coherent where it worked towards fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone – but that not working in planned areas impeded coherence.

Coherence with Government Policies

The Elections Project was based on the 2021 NAM. The NAM, the ProDoc notes, “concluded that the organization of credible elections is a necessary condition for the prevention of post-electoral violence, the legitimacy of elected officials, building citizens' trust in governance at all levels (national and sub-national), social cohesion, and prosperity in Sierra Leone. The NAM recommended, among other things, that UNDP implement an electoral assistance project in coordination with other UN agencies to strengthen the capacity of ECSL as well as the PPRC” (p. 5). The NAM also noted the need for “support to other relevant institutions like the Judiciary for electoral dispute resolution and legal reforms; as well as CSOs, including support to interventions aimed at, enhancing inclusion and participation; the prevention and mitigation of electoral violence through the establishment of early warning systems, and advice on combatting hate speech and disinformation on social media platforms” (p. 6) The assessment team for the NAM met with and enlisted Government of Sierra Leone support for an electoral cycle project. And the team met with the key independent commissions (ECSL and PPRC) and the Judiciary to ensure that the project's development and activities fit their priorities and policies. The coherence of the project with the government's policies was validated by the approval of the project by government representatives in the Local Project Advisory Committee (LPAC) and Project Board (PB), which was finalized by the government signing the ProDoc. UNDP interviews noted that peaceful, credible, and inclusive 2023 elections remained a priority of the government over the period of elections project implementation.

ECSL, PPRC, and Judiciary interviewees emphasized the importance of elections related processes for their institutions and the country.

Synergies and Interlinkages with other UNDP Interventions

With the development by UNDP of the PBF-funded project, activities planned within the Elections Project were then funded by the PBF project in implementation. Having the Elections Project CTA as the project manager of both projects ensured coherence, as did Elections Project reporting to UNDP and the EU Delegation, which funded other initiatives to support the electoral process. The project was also able to link with other UNDP projects and their beneficiaries. Particularly, UNDP interventions outside of the Elections Project that the project linked with included activities of bike riders and women-focused CSOs. The Elections Project team and partners coordinated in the implementation of activities around the elections on the importance of participation, inclusion, and peace with these groups.

Synergies and Interlinkages with Interventions of other Development Partners

The Elections Project was based on the 2021 NAM, which notes that in development the team considered the existing and planned other international support for the 2023 elections in Sierra Leone. Towards finalizing the ProDoc, the CTA updated this understanding and the integration of planned activities with those of other development partners. The EU, as the funder of the Elections Project as well as three other interventions, ran an in-depth process with the CTA to ensure that Elections Project interventions were not duplicative of these efforts but instead complemented and extended them.

Coordination mechanisms throughout implementation supported coherence as well. The Elections Project Steering committee and Technical Committee was used to support coherence. Interviews with development partners found that Steering committee meetings were particularly appreciated by development partners not resident in Sierra Leone. The CTA also maintained constant interaction with the technical advisor in ECSL funded by the EU, with the CoP of the International IDEA project, and with the EU Delegation.

The coherence of the Elections Project design however was reduced as the ECSL unexpectedly decided to decline planned and agreed upon project support in critical areas in results management. These areas proved problematic for transparency and credibility with the elections results and contributed to the post-election controversies between the main political parties in the country.

Elections project partners also noted working to support coherence. UN Women noted coordinating with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to ensure that the two organisations avoided duplication in training women candidates and potential candidates. And NAYCOM coordinated the activities of the youth in the regional youth labs to support coherence.

The elections project had a coherent approach towards work with CSO partners, with five grant awards to CSOs to work on voter education and outreach in different parts of the country. The project team also worked to bring the partners together with ECSL to ensure coherence in messaging as well as support and encourage coherence across CSO partners. The Elections Project was also able to successfully network

Youth Lab participants across the country towards stronger, more coherent messaging by active young people around inclusive, peaceful elections. Regional Youth Lab networks however did not consistently remain united across the sometimes remote districts of the region, with youth lab participants from peripheral districts noting that their networks sometimes had operated in ways where they felt left out.

Conclusions: Coherence

In conclusion, the Elections Project was designed and implemented using processes led by UNDP, the project CTA, and donors that ensured strong coherence of the project’s activities and their links with those of project partners and the initiatives of other development partners. Coherence however was undermined as the ECSL declined agreed upon project support as well as other prospective international assistance in areas critical to the success of electoral processes and the Elections Project, since ECSL reported they did not see the need for this assistance as they had government resources for these areas and viewed international assistance as duplicative.

Efficiency

Efficiency is the extent to which the project delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. The main evaluation question to be answered in this section is: How efficient has the Elections Project been in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone? The evaluation addresses sub-questions towards this question using sub-headings that cover the areas specifically included in the evaluator’s ToR. The evaluation finds that the Elections Project been efficient where it has worked towards fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone; however, not working in planned areas where ECSL declined planned assistance impeded the efficiency of the project. The approval of the project on 28 July 2022 left less than a year before the anticipated elections, which was a challenging timeframe for the Elections Project. Nevertheless, even with most staff only coming on board in early 2023, the project managed to implement its activities within its stated timeframe (now extended to support Sierra Leone’s post-election needs).

Implementation within timeframe and cost estimates

The elections project has been implemented within its cost estimates. The Elections Project utilized the budget for the planned two-year project at impressive rates. Table 1 below presents budget utilization figures per activity for 2022 and 2023, compared to the planned budgets for these activities for the two years. Even with project approval 28 July 2022, with more than half of the year gone, and bringing in most of the staff only in early 2023, the project team have been able to successfully expend most of the planned resources (excluding 1.4, implemented through the UN PBF project’s funds; 1.5, not implemented as the EMBs did not commit to establishing a complaint tracking system, and 2.2, the consultant for strengthening the results management system declined by ECSL). Utilization rates were above 85% for all outputs, except 2.1 and 3.4 which reached 63% and 65% respectively at end 2023. Staff costs were only 65% of that expected.

Synergies and Reducing Costs

Staff costs met through Elections Project funds were reduced as funding from the UN PBF project were used to cover half of the cost of the CTA and to cover the costs of the iVerify Specialist. Interviews with project staff noted that these synergies reduced staffing costs met with Elections Project funds. Implementing activities to enhance the capacity of the Security Sector including Sierra Leone Police through UN PBF funding rather than under Elections Project funds reduced spending through synergy. ECSL and the Judiciary not committing to establish a complaint tracking system for the 2023 elections (1.5) and ECSL declining assistance in strengthening the results management system (2.2) reduced costs as these two outputs were not pursued. Elections project resources were thus not expended towards these three outputs, reducing costs.

Over or Under Expenditure on Interventions

Table 1 data below demonstrates little over-expenditure and only under-expenditure in a few areas through 2023 (see below). Project staff noted project spending will continue in 2024 with the project’s extension. This was anticipated to address underspending in these areas, particularly 2.1 Enhance trust and confidence of stakeholders in the electoral process through outreach and strategic communication, where the percentage of the budget used in 2022 and 2023 was 63% of the expected amount. Modest over expenditure in 2022 and 2023 towards 3.1 and 3.2, Increase the electorate’s awareness of the electoral process, including its rights and obligations through voter education as well as Gender equality promoted throughout the electoral cycle respectively, compared to the planned budget was not viewed by UNDP and project management as an issue.

Table 1: Elections Project Budget Utilization 2022 and 2023

Project Outcome	Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Total Budgeted	Expenditure to end 2023	Percentage Utilized
Outcome 1: Institutional capacity of electoral stakeholders is enhanced	Activity 1.1 Strengthen the ECSL’s institutional and human resource capacity for a successful implementation of electoral process					
		\$868,000.00	\$207,772.54	\$1,075,772.54	\$916,493.00	85%
	Activity 1.2 Strengthen the ECSL’s capacity to sustain a credible and accurate voter register and electoral process					
		\$203,500.00	\$2,131,508.08	\$2,335,008.08	\$2,048,958.29	88%
	Activity 1.3. Strengthen the Electoral Dispute Resolution mechanisms to build credibility and trust in the electoral process					
		\$81,000.00	\$212,120.00	\$293,120.00	\$292,739.40	100%
	Activity 1.4. Enhance the capacity of the Sierra Leone Police Implemented through the UN PBF Project					
Activity 1.5 Strengthen the coordination of complaints among electoral management bodies and national institutions Not implemented as no commitment of EMBs to establish a complaint tracking system for the 2023 elections						
Outcome 2 Transparency in the electoral process is enhanced.	Activity 2.1 Enhance trust and confidence of stakeholders in the electoral process through outreach and strategic communication					
		\$107,000.00	\$221,000.00	\$328,000.00	\$205,784.84	63%
	Activity 2.2 Enhance transparency by strengthening the results management system Not implemented as ECSL declined international assistance in this area					
	Activity 2.3 Support to the ECSL in the set-up of a permanent structure serving as a Media and Civic Education Centre					
		\$141,000.00	\$291,581.40	\$432,581.40	\$412,683.00	95%
Outcome 3 Inclusion in electoral processes is promoted and citizen engagement is strengthened.	Activity 3.1: Increase the electorate’s awareness of the electoral process, including its rights and obligations through voter education					
	OUTPUT SUBTOTAL	\$188,388.67	\$360,560.00	\$548,948.67	\$569,519.44	104%
	Activity 3.2: Gender equality promoted throughout the electoral cycle					
	OUTPUT SUBTOTAL	\$434,060.00	\$613,800.00	\$1,047,860.00	\$1,125,156.69	107%
	Activity 3.3 Increase youth participation in electoral processes					
	OUTPUT SUBTOTAL	\$15,202.73	\$226,702.73	\$241,905.46	\$213,070.60	88%
Activity 3.4 Enhance access to the electoral process for people with disability						
	OUTPUT SUBTOTAL	\$47,750.00	\$49,796.91	\$97,546.91	\$63,186.55	65%
	Staffing costs	\$835,830.16	\$606,461.00	\$1,442,291.16	\$939,947.86	65%
	Project office costs	\$134,660.16	\$222,752.32	\$357,412.48	\$258,868.12	72%

Focus on Activities with Expected Significant Results

Project staff and UNDP management noted in interviews as evidence of efficient delivery the fact that the Elections Project had managed to programme almost USD \$7.3 million to many diverse partners in such a short two-year time period around sensitive electoral processes. Project reporting and interviews noted that implementation focused on supporting critical processes in the electoral process with ECSL, PPRC, the Judiciary, and CSO partners. This stress is evidence of focusing project activities on the most significant results – capacity and information to support peaceful electoral processes and the June 2023 elections themselves. Project staff and development partners noted that the need to staff the Elections Project after the approval of the ProDoc slowed the startup of project activities. Country office processes were noted in interviews with Project staff as contributing to a longer period of project start up than anticipated; with only the CTA on board in 2022, the project was not able to develop, manage, and monitor as many activities as it was in January/March 2023 when more staff were on board. However, January/March 2023 was only several months before the elections themselves which challenged efficient delivery. However, the project team was able to successfully focus project resources towards key results in this demanding, short time frame, particularly in supporting inclusion and through the focus on iVerify.

Appropriateness of Allocation of Human and Financial Resources

The ProDoc argued that supporting peace and the elections through a single project would support efficiencies. Then since PBF-funding required a separate project, the PBF project was formulated to work on the peace outputs of the Elections Project. UNDP and project staff interviews asserted that having the PM manage both the Elections Project and the PBF-funded project rather than implementing electoral support as planned as one project using the comprehensive design of the ProDoc did not hamper the efficiency of project operations. The CTA demonstrated the ability to manage and link the activities and strategies of the two projects and work directly with the PBF’s requirements. One development partner noted that there could have been greater coordination and engagement between partners funded through the Elections Project and the PBF within the project, looping Election Project partners into implementation of PBF-funded activities. The project team was able to produce the semi-annual and annual financial and narrative reporting to the PBF. This was not reported on redundantly in the Election’s Project reporting. No evidence emerged from interviews of impediments to efficiency (or effectiveness) from having two projects managed by a single project manager. Financial costs undertaken with Elections Project funds were reduced, as half of the CTA’s salary costs were covered through the UN PBF project.

The planned budget in the ProDoc and the actual allocation of financial resources in Elections Project implementation explicitly considered gender equality, PwDs, and youth. Outcome 3 focused on supporting the inclusion of women, youth, PwDs, and marginalized communities in electoral processes through outputs 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 focused on women, youth, and PwDs respectively. Planned activities towards these outputs focused on these three groups (women, youth, and PwDs): 3.2a emphasized establishing gender and disability stakeholder coordination groups, 3.2b social media mappings targeting women, 3.2c the number of women candidates trained, 3.2d the number of male leaders committed to taking action to promote women’s political participation, 3.2e the number of CSOs engaged in the roll out of national campaign on election and gender equality, 3.3a the number of young people reached through the Youth Lab, 3.3b the number of meetings held with youth groups and political parties committing to

peaceful conduct of the elections, 3.4a the Number of consultations to discuss structure of a tactile ballot sleeve, 3.4.b the Number of persons trained on access to electoral process for persons with disability using sign language interpretation, and 3.4c the Number of polling sites adjusted to facilitate accessibility of people with disabilities to polling stations. USD \$1,401,413.84 was expended in 2022 and 2023 towards the activities under outputs 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4, almost 24% of all programmatic spending by the Elections Project in Table 1.⁴ Project staffing also included a Gender & Inclusion Specialist whose position was dedicated to the inclusion outcome and focused on the outputs and activities focused on women, youth, and PwDs. And project partner UN Women focused project resources on GEWE. The project’s five CSO partners focused on women, youth, and PwDs in their array of activities and the youth labs stressed reaching youth, particularly young women, and youth with disabilities.

Unanticipated events, Opportunities, or Constraints

Changes required in implementation as ECSL declined key component of the program were seen by development partners, UNDP, and project staff as having hindered efficiency as well as coherence and effectiveness. These changes were unanticipated constraints on planned activities and achieving the project’s anticipated results. UNDP and the project team had to adjust to changing ECSL requirements under time pressure as the elections approached. The long post-election controversies over the transparency and credibility of the election results and the post-election boycott by the APC of the courts left some project-supported activities, like support for dispute resolution in the courts, unused as the opposition APC chose not to take the issues the party had with the elections to the Election Courts within the 7-days’ time frame that the Election Courts are in existence under the laws of Sierra Leone.

The flexibility and adaptations of the project were valued by development partners and project partners. However, added interventions were challenging for project efficiency. Examples noted in evaluation fieldwork and comments on the draft report were that paying ECSL temporary staff for the elections through UNDP was challenging; and funding the temporary Bintumani media centre as well as working towards a permanent media centre in ECSL was an inefficient way to support media outreach. Some development partners noted that the Bintumani media center was not effectively utilized as planned.

A quick start up to project staffing and implementation was suggested in some interviews to reduce the risk that components of the planned project would be declined by partners. If elections project implementation had begun closer to the time of the NAM, some interviewees felt that perhaps ECSL would not have declined assistance that had been included in the comprehensive assessment and ProDoc. Some development partners noted instead that ECSL had declined earlier assistance in these areas, which they attributed that ECSL was not willing to be open to international assistance in sensitive matters.

UNDP, project staff, and UN Women interviewees noted that resources were allocated in ways that significantly considered gender equality, PwDs, and youth. The needs of Sierra Leone in all three were recognized in the project design, by stakeholders and partners (including development partners) interviewed, and by the project’s CSO partners interviewed. Project work with ECSL also prioritized the

⁴ Programmatic spending is funding expended towards the activities under the outputs in Table 1; this excludes the spending for project staffing costs and project office costs on Table 1.

inclusion of women, PwDs, and youth. While some ECSL interviewees suggested that a different resource allocation would have been better – having the Elections Project fund ECSL to work with its CSO partners – UNDP, project staff, development partners, and the project’s CSO partners saw working with CSO partners through UNDP’s competitive processes that brought additional impetus from civil society into electoral awareness as a strength of the project.

Measures to Assure Quality

UNDP and basket fund contributors chose to take up the process of paying ECSL temporary polling staff which presented challenges to the efficiency of Elections Project operations after the elections. The Elections Project must follow UNDP processes and procedures that stress quality assurance as laid out in the POPP; these processes fit incompletely with the processes that ECSL had already used to identify and hire these temporary staff and recordkeeping on these temporary staff. As the UNDP Elections Project team followed POPP processes, the many issues they identified with the paperwork and processes ECSL used to hire temporary staff and the available documentation for these temporary staff took months of work for UNDP to sort through. ECSL argued that this was inefficient, as many people on the list of temporary staff were not paid by UNDP, as their paperwork was not adequate to meet UNDP standards. UNDP and project staff recognized, as did donors interviewed, that UNDP’s processes and following the POPP are essential to ensure the accountable use of donor funds which is essential to efficient operations and UNDP’s credibility. The costs of carrying out this process, ECSL interviewees suggested, were not value for money compared to having ECSL provide the payments. However, provision of donor funds directly to ECSL for the payment was not seen as acceptable by donors in terms of the accountability for funds.

UN Women noted coordinating effectively with other providers to ensure that training for potential and actual women aspirants for office was not duplicative of the efforts of other parties. For example, UN Women reported that it coordinated and worked with NDI, who operated with USAID funds, to divide the country geographically for similar trainings for women and avoid risks of duplication.

The Elections Project CTA worked closely with the head of the EU-funded International IDEA project and the international key expert the EU placed within ECSL. Close relations between these three specialists and regular engagement between them was maintained to ensure that the duplication was avoided and that linkages between activities were used to further shared goals.

Monitoring & Evaluation Procedures

Interviews with project staff, UNDP, and development partners noted that the Elections Project team was successful in monitoring and managing activities towards accountability and results. Programme monitoring was noted in interviews with Elections Project managers and staff, as well as by CSO partners. Programme monitoring done by project staff was seen by staff as important for validation, increasing quality, and towards the project’s reporting. The Elections Project wrote and distributed a useful 2023 report summarizing programme achievements, illustrating them with data to support outcome and output results. Monitoring by Elections Project staff was noted by CSO partners interviewed, who appreciated having UNDP staff present at some activities, which helped raise the profile of their organisations and activities in the communities where they work and with the staff of the independent

commissions (ECSL and the PPRC) in the regions where they work. Having an increased public profile with the help of the project and through UNDP presence was important to CSO partners towards supporting their sustainability.

Risk Management

The ProDoc developed plans for project management to address and minimize risks. Risk management issues and methods were identified. This included risks to particular output indicator achievement and/or data (p. 24). The Elections Project ProDoc monitoring plan called for monitoring risks that may threaten the achievement of intended results through a risk log. Discussion of risks identified was to be included in project board agendas as needed in order to make possible course corrections (p. 29). Interviews with project and UNDP management noted that issues of risks were brought from the CTA to senior management for discussion regularly as they arose. These risks developed as ECSL declined areas of planned assistance and as UNDP decided to fund and administer the payment of ECSL temporary staff from the elections.

Conclusions: Efficiency

In conclusion, the Elections Project – through the use of UNDP processes and procedures – used and maintained competitive processes and POPP standards towards efficient implementation. Efficiency was challenged by time pressure and the relatively slow start of the project, late in the electoral cycle. However, expenditure rates demonstrate that the project has been able to programme efficiently. The project took on some processes in implementation not anticipated in the original implementation plans, such as the payment of temporary ECSL staff for the elections, using UNDP systems which required substantial work and temporary staffing for verification. These processes were costly and created tensions with ECSL as UNDP standards emphasized accountability for donor resources by ensuring the validity of all documents rather than quick processing. Holding briefing and training sessions for UNDP’s CSO partners in the Elections Project on the requirements to account for funds under their UNDP awards supported efficient implementation and the delivery of tranches to partners; however, with the short time period for implementation of these grants, the time it took for UNDP to process CSO acquittals and issue the next tranches to these CSO partners contributed to time pressure on CSOs in implementation from some delays in funds transfers.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is the extent to which the project achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups. The main evaluation question to be answered is: How effective has the Elections Project been in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone? Additional sub-questions under effectiveness in the ToR are covered under subheadings below. Interviews with UNDP staff, Elections Project staff, development partners and project partners as well as project reporting emphasized that the project and its partners had largely reached the activity objectives and outputs targeted. The evaluation finds that the Elections Project been effective in that it largely reached its outputs where it worked towards fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone, but not working in planned areas declined by the Electoral Commission reduced the effectiveness

of the project (particularly in the area of results management, which was central to issues of transparency and credibility with the 2023 elections).

The evaluation has assessed the outputs that the project worked towards using Elections Project funding; the evaluation has not assessed outputs that the PBF-project worked towards, which are noted as “not applicable” for purposes of this evaluation. Other outcomes and outputs are also not applicable when the project did not work towards them (as assistance was declined by ECSL or not attempted by the project as the time for the activities came before the project was up and running) or as circumstances in the country made the indicator of the project not informative (based on the behavior of electoral actors which led to the absence of electoral disputes in the courts, as discussed below).

Achievement of Expected Project Results, with Supporting and Impeding Factors

The evaluation has accumulated and analysed data towards assessing the achievement of results by Elections Project outcomes and outputs. Annex 6, Outcome and Output Data -Findings and Evaluation Assessment, outlines for each indicator:

- the outcomes and outputs of the Elections Project,
- the indicators (with baselines when they were not zero) and targets used by the Elections Project,
- the findings of the evaluation on progress towards these indicators based on the draft Final Report and evaluation’s fieldwork, and
- the evaluation’s net assessment based on these data.

The analysis of effectiveness in this section uses and summarizes the data in this table, as well as interview data from the fieldwork.

Outcomes

In terms of the four intended outcomes of the Elections Project, target achievement is mixed. For these four, the evaluation’s assessment is that the elections were peaceful but had limited credibility, one indicator was not applicable, the third partially met, and the fourth met. The project did not work in areas where ECSL declined planned assistance; not working in the area of results management and transmission, and that other projects also did not work in these areas, was seen by UNDP and project staff and management as well as development partners as problematic. To measure the first outcome indicator, “Observation mission reports concluded elections were credible and peaceful organized in conformity with the national legislation,” the evaluation has used the assessments of the EOMs that have published their final monitoring reports. EOM reports note that the elections were lacking in the critical areas of credibility and transparency of the elections, while lauding the peaceful conduct of elections.⁵

The second outcome indicator of the project was “Results management system enhanced transparency of electoral results.” The lack of transparency about the results management system noted by EOMs suggest that the RMS did not enhance the transparency or credibility of the results of the election. The headline result from the first paragraph of the executive summary of the EU EOM report was that “voters’

⁵ Several EOMs have not completed and released final reports as controversies over the elections have challenged some multi-national international missions (the Commonwealth Observer Mission and the ECOWAS/AU Mission) and the main domestic monitoring organization (National Election Watch).

trust in the credibility of elections was undermined by lack of transparency during critical stages of the process, particularly during the tabulation process, and by significant statistical inconsistencies in the results” (p. 6). However, the project was not able to work in this area as planned, as ECSL declined assistance for strengthening the results management and tabulation processes. Thus, the assessment of the evaluation is that this indicator and result are not applicable for assessing the effectiveness of the Elections Project.

The third outcome indicator of the Elections Project was the “number of voters registered.” The number of voters registered came close to the target estimated for 2022 in the ProDoc, thus the evaluation’s assessment is partially met. While the project did not start early enough to engage in the initial steps in VR and support ECSL in these parts of VR, the Elections Project supported the voter awareness campaign on the voter registration, preliminary voter list exhibition process and the collection of voter identity cards in important ways.⁶ The evaluation’s assessment is thus partially met for this indicator.

The fourth outcome indicator, the percentage of women candidates nominated, was met as the changes to the electoral system and GEWE Law led reinforced the Public Elections Act rule that one out of every three candidates nominated for the parliament or local council using the proportional representation system be female was observed. Introduction of the new Proportional Representation (PR) electoral system enabled the support of the Elections Project and other initiatives to encourage the participation and election of women candidates to yield a dramatic increase in the number of women running for office – and an even more impressive rise in the number and proportion of women elected as MPs and councilors across the country.

Outputs under Outcome 1

Towards the nine targets under Outcome 1, “Institutional capacity of electoral stakeholders is enhanced,” the Elections Project exceeded targets for one indicator, met two targets, and partially met two other indicator target, with the other four not applicable as the project did not work in the area where it had planned to, PBF-funds were used towards an indicator instead of Elections Project resources, or the actions of electoral participants made the indicator not applicable. Progress towards these four outputs are thus not assessed in the evaluation.

The Elections Project had solid reasons for not working further towards the first indicator assessed as partially met, 1.1a – the “Number of capacity building sessions and management courses attended by commissioners and secretariat staff”. Elections Project support for the PPRC’s study tour to the Gambia was greatly appreciated and seen as valuable by interviewees from the PPRC, project, and donors. Support for capacity building for ECSL Commissioners and secretariat staff was not timely prior to the elections given the many demands and requirements on ECSL at that time, and the controversies over the election results have impeded training and capacity building with ECSL after the elections. The target of three thus exceeds the one study tour to date, yielding an assessment of partially met.

⁶ The Elections Project supported public outreach and awareness raising on the voter registration process, including procurement of awareness materials (megaphones, loud speakers), posters etc.), provided online applications/search engines for voters to use to check their names on the register, and supplied the ECSL HQ and district offices with printers and generators for the operations and to print voter registration cards.

The Elections Project is assessed to have met the second indicator under the outcome, the “Number of materials procured for the PPRC/ECSL. Although the ProDoc did not provide precise numerical target for this output, the substantial material support delivered by the Elections Project met key broad needs and was noted as appreciated in PPRC and ECSL interviews. Material support delivered to the PPRC included 16 laptop computers (for headquarters and regional offices), an all-terrain vehicle to support field missions, two servers, eight routers for internet connectivity, and chairs and tables for the conference hall, plus a generator, air conditioning units, and tables and chairs for the new PPRC office. The project delivered heavy-duty printers and a laptop, printer and editing software for the ECSL graphic design unit, 18 generators and 18 printers for ECSL regional offices, and installed solar panels to power ECSL HQ, particularly the ICT Unit and Data Centre.

Although the ECSL declined the VR consultant proposed in the ProDoc, Election’s project support to the electoral commission towards collecting gender and disability data in voter registration leads to an assessment of partially met for the indicator “Number of technical expertise provided to ensure quality of a voter register.” Having gender and disability disaggregated data on VR was a first in the country and an important step towards broader, systematic collection and use of disaggregated data that is needed to increase inclusion in Sierra Leone. The Elections Project also supported raising awareness of the VR process and provided an innovative online tool for voters to check their names on the register.

Judicial training reached the Supreme and High Court Judges, magistrates, and court registrars that the Judiciary decided was needed for 2023. The 39 Supreme and High Court judges, 20 magistrates, and 76 court registrars trained exceeded the targeted 120 total, leading to an analysis of exceeded for this indicator target. And the 1.3b target of law compendiums printed was met, through 500 copies of each of the two volumes.

Indicators that were not applicable were 1.3 and 1.4. The APC boycott of the courts as part of the party’s boycott of official structures after the election meant that no electoral disputes were taken to court during the six-month time frame when electoral courts operate, making it not possible to measure and assess 1.3, the “Percentage of electoral disputes resolved in a timely manner.” Activities towards 1.4, the number of high and mid-rank police officers trained on electoral security and prevention of gender-based violence, were undertaken through PBF project funding and thus not assessed in this evaluation.

Two other indicators were for activities that were not implemented, and also thus not measured. The lack of stakeholder interest in electoral complaints tracking meant the Elections Project did not work towards 1.5a, the “number of assessments conducted to identify capacity within the bodies mandated to receive and handle complaints and determine digitalization of some of the complaint mechanisms” and 1.5b, the “number of electoral complaints tracking system installed.”

Outputs under Outcome 2

Towards outputs under Outcome 2, “Transparency in the electoral process is enhanced,” two of the indicators are assessed as met with three not implemented and thus not applicable for understanding the effectiveness of the Elections Project.

For output 2.1a, an Online system designed to increase transparency of electoral results and operations, Elections project support for iVerify was noted by UNDP staff, project staff, implementing partners, and donors as important for increasing transparency and countering disinformation and misinformation in the election campaign and aftermath. The project also improved the PPRC website, although plans for the project to redesign the ECSL web page were declined by ECSL. This support thus met the target of two.

Output 2.3 measured Elections Project support for the Media and Civic Education Centre. UNDP and the evaluation assess this as met. However, as noted by UNDP, project staff, donors, and ECSL, this support and the Media and Civic Education Centre in ECSL has not been as complete or useful (to date) as anticipated by the plan in the ProDoc. The need to support communications around the elections themselves led to ECSL seeking support for a large but temporary Media and Communication Centre at the Bintumani Conference Centre for the elections which the Elections Project was able to adjust to and meet. This left project support for a permanent Centre within ECSL HQ to be done after the elections, which has not yet been completed at the time of the evaluation fieldwork in January 2024.

Project support towards outputs 2.1b, 2.2, and 2.2 a (the number of ECSL dialogues and information sharing meetings, a RMS assessment report developed through the work of an RMS consultant, and technical expertise provided to ensure accuracy and transparency of the RMS) were all assessed as not applicable in terms of evaluating the Elections Project, as ECSL declined planned assistance in these areas. Commissioners interviewed asserted that the Commission planned and used GoSL resources for these areas.

Outputs under Outcome 3

The Elections Project was particularly successful in working towards its outputs under Outcome 3, “Inclusion in electoral processes is promoted and citizen engagement is strengthened.” Ten of the 13 outputs were met or exceeded, with the other three partially met. The Elections Project worked effectively with ECSL and PPRC and worked with its CSO partners as well as UN Women and APPWA to raise awareness of all citizens around the elections through ECSL and LEECs as well as particularly target the inclusive and effective participation of women, youth and PwDs through UN Women, NAYCOM, ECSL’s Electoral Inclusion Department, the five CSO partners grantees, and the youth lab. Elections Project support – part of years-long broader effort to expand women’s political participation by many actors including UNDP and UN Women, contributed notably to stronger participation by women in the electoral campaign as candidates and to successfully electing women councilors and MPs under the new quota system that required that on party lists “for every 3 candidate nominated, one of them shall be female”; this in practice, UN Women interviewees noted, appears to have meant that political parties put in every third place a woman candidate.

The elections project supported briefings and trainings with ECSL to support the LEECs across the country, which helped ECSL form, train, and operate these critical organisations for the voter registration, voter ID card collection, and candidate nomination process. Training was more than anticipated, leading to the evaluation’s assessment of exceeded.

For the second indicator, the Elections Project provided technical support to ECSL to produce and disseminate a large amount of election awareness materials. The mix of materials differed from the few categories targeted in the ProDoc, but the number, diversity, and range of the awareness support from the project is assessed by the evaluation as having exceeded the ProDoc’s targets.

The third indicator, the Number of Gender and Disability Stakeholders coordination groups meetings held at districts, had a target of 9. The project supported the establishment of Gender Stakeholders Coordination Groups in 11 districts of Sierra Leone as well as the establishment of Disability Coordination Groups in 11 districts of the country, clearly exceeding the target.

Indicator 3.2b set a target for the project to establish one social media campaign designed to target women with particular focus on young women and women from rural areas. Project support was not used towards a dedicated social media campaign with this goal; instead to promote the visibility of women candidates, UN Women organized a training workshop for 50 female journalists from 16 and engaged SLAWIJ to run social media campaign and develop animation video on women’s political participation. The evaluation’s assessment is that the assistance, while noted as valuable by SLAJ and UN Women interviewees, differed from that of a social media campaign targeting young women and rural from rural areas. Thus, the indicator is assessed as partially met.

Elections Project support was used to train female candidates and potential candidates for office. The number of women reached in this regard exceeded the target of 250 set in the ProDoc. Training women aspirants and candidates was noted by project team interviews, interviews with UN Women, and civil society interviewees as particularly important, as more women would be elected through the PR system and gender quotas on candidate lists. Having well-qualified, and prepared women to run as candidates for elected office increased the prospects that the women who were elected will successfully manage their responsibilities in office and build momentum for women’s political empowerment and gender equality in the country.

Towards indicator 3.2d, UN Women worked with PPRC and APPWA to engage political leaders to commit to work towards women’s political participation. Numerical targets to reach through Elections Project funding for the number of male political leaders that publicly committed to promoting women’s political participation were exceeded, plus UN Women reached additional leaders through other funding and the He4She campaign.

The ProDoc called for the Elections project to engage five CSOs in the roll out of a national campaign on election and gender equality. The project managed a competitive selection process and awarded grants to five CSOs towards these goals, meeting the target. The five CSOs that managed these awards worked

with additional CSO partners and local stakeholders across regions of the country to promote inclusive participation of women, youth, and PwDs in a host of ways.

Indicator 3.3a is “the number of young people reached through the Youth Lab.” The target of 200 was exceeded, as 298 across Sierra Leone applied, a first step in participation. The members of the five regional Youth Lab networks fostered by the project focused on voter education among the youth and reached uncounted but large numbers of their peers across the country.

Indicator 3.3b similarly was exceeded; the project supported, among other initiatives, five two-day regional workshops for youth on inclusion and peaceful electoral participation, exceeding the target of three meetings for the indicator. The project estimated that engagements they supported with ECSL, the PPRC, CSO grantees, and Youth Lab networks on the peaceful participation of youth, including initiatives funded by the UN PBF project, reached one million young people.

The project also had a target on the “number of coordination meetings held” with a target of 10. Towards measurement, the project counted only its five own meetings with stakeholders (through the LPAC, TC, and SC), leaving the target only partially met. This way of considering the project’s role in coordination underestimates the informal coordination that the project CTA fostered with the independent commissions and development partners.

Finally, with respect to PwDs, the project had three indicators under 3.4. The Elections Project exceeded the target number of meetings to support a participatory design of the tactile ballot for the visually impaired, almost met the target for the number of people to train “on access to electoral process for persons with disability using sign language,” and exceeded the target set for the number of polling sites adjusted to facilitate accessibility of PwDs. Progress made towards these three indicators with the support of the Elections Project demonstrates how seriously the project was designed and implemented to support ECSL and other partners’ outreach to PwDs and the results obtained in this key area of inclusion.

Lessons from Partnership Strategies

Interviews with Elections Project staff noted frustrations with ECSL, a key partner for credible, peaceful, inclusive elections. Although the ProDoc had been developed based on the NAM which had been done with ECSL participation, ECSL declining project support that had been agreed upon which was expected to be important for credible, peaceful and inclusive elections posed problems for the elections and the achievement of project goals. This disconnect between ECSL and the project was seen by staff and leadership of both ECSL and the project as demonstrating some limitations to the closeness of the partnership between the two organisations. A lesson taken from this challenge was that the time period between the NAM, the approval and signature of the ProDoc, and staffing up to implement the Elections Project should be shorter towards improving the prospects for implementing assistance projects as planned. This may be especially important in politically sensitive, time sensitive projects like electoral cycle projects.

Contributions to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, Youth, and PwDs

Three outputs under outcome 3 explicitly covered ways the project supported women, youth, and PwDs. Data on Elections Project activities and effective achievement and/or exceeding of output targets in these areas (3.1a, 3.1b, 3.2a, 3.2c, 3.2d, 3.3a, 3.3b, 3.4a, and 3.4c) where indicators explicitly mark project contributions to GEWE, youth, and PwDs. Interviewees noted that Elections Project support was used by ECSL, UN Women, and CSO partners to make important contributions to expanding information available to women, youth and PwDs on electoral processes, strengthen the position of women as aspirants and candidates for office, as well as to expand access to the polls for PwDs.

Areas with the Greatest Achievements

As Annex 6 and the discussion above outline, the Elections Project was successful in reaching and exceeding most output indicators in the areas where planned activities were implemented. Areas where output targets were exceeded identify areas with the greatest output achievement. These areas are largely in Outcome 3 on inclusion, where project support for ECSL, UN Women and CSOs led to substantial and strong outreach and communications from ECSL through the LEECs to raise awareness about electoral processes across the population, with women aspirants and candidates, and outreach that focused in particular on women, youth, and PwDs (Indicators 3.1a, 3.1b, 3.2a, 3.2c, 3.2d, 3.3a, 3.3b, 3.4a, and 3.4c.)

Areas with the Least Achievements

The project did not have achievements in areas where planned assistance was not delivered. These areas thus have the least achievement: Planned activities were not delivered as ECSL declined assistance in the areas of website design, information meetings and results management, and ECSL and the Judiciary were not interested in developing and using an election complaints mechanism and tracking system. These lacunae proved problematic in the elections themselves. EOM reports note issues with ECSL transparency and the web site, the results management system used by ECSL, and that although there were many complaints expressed by the opposition with the elections, their boycott meant that electoral complaints were not registered and taken up through processes designed to resolve them.

Exceeding the output for the number of judges, magistrates and support staff trained on electoral dispute resolution process (Indicator 1.3b) however was recognized to have not been used in this election cycle as the APC boycott of official processes meant that the opposition party choose not to bring any of its complaints with the elections to the electoral courts. No complaints were filed within the applicable period of operations of the Electoral Courts (Indicator 1.3). The Registrar nevertheless noted in an interview that this capacity building strengthened the Judiciary in ways that were expected to benefit the institution and electoral dispute resolution in future electoral cycles (although the Registrar recognized the training on electoral law would be needed in the next electoral cycle to ensure the preparation of the Judiciary was adequate for the specifics relevant to that election).

Relevance of Approaches Used to Achievements

The Elections Project used multiple different approaches in implementing project activities. Interviews noted the relevance of each of these approaches towards reaching the goals identified in each output.

The analysis of project effectiveness and nearly meeting, meeting, or exceeding indicator targets demonstrates the relevance of the approaches used.

Unintended Results

Evaluation questions were developed to ask interviewees about the existence and character of any unintended results that came about as a result of Elections Project interventions. The evaluator also reviewed project and partner reporting towards identifying results that are characterized in these sources as unintended. No data that showed unintended results were identified through these methods. And based on other sub-questions from the ToR about unintended results specific to women, youth, and PwDs, the evaluator asked some interviewees specifically about unintended results of project interventions on women, youth, and PwDs in a second effort to identify and gather data on unintended results. No unintended results of project interventions were identified on women, youth, and PwDs in the evaluation’s fieldwork.

Conclusions: Effectiveness

In conclusion, across the three outcome areas, the Elections Project was largely successful in meeting its targets in the outputs where it was implemented; not undertaking activities in the areas where planned assistance was declined by the ECSL led to unmet output targets in these areas and impeded meeting the Elections Project’s outcome targets (particularly in the credibility of the elections as measured by EOMs and strengthening the results management system to enhance the transparency of electoral results). Other targets not assessed here, as PBF funds and the PBF-funded project was used towards these outputs, will be evaluated by the forthcoming evaluation of the PBF-funded project.

Partnerships and Coordination

Partnerships and coordination focuses on how and how well UNDP and the Elections Project worked with key organisations towards project goals and worked to align expectations as well as align with the work of other organisations, including partner organisations. Elections project documents and interviews with UNDP staff, Elections Project staff, development partners and project partners for implementation noted systematic and clear ways that the project coordinated with partners and supported partnerships. However, partnerships with ECSL were not strong enough to implement some key planned activities with ECSL (as ECSL declined some assistance in voter registration (1.2), an electoral complaints mechanism (1.5), developing and updating its webpage (2.1), and improving the Results management system (2.2). Commissioners interviewed asserted that ECSL had and used GoSL funds for a software consultant who worked with the ECSL ICT department on voter registration software and the deployment of this system, and this funding and collaboration carried over and continued to cover results management. UNDP and the project team maintained strong partnerships with donors and other international stakeholders in the elections throughout the development and implementation of the project, even with these challenges with ECSL.

Partnerships in Design and Implementation

No main evaluation question was developed under these criteria. Two sets of sub-questions from the ToR for the evaluation are covered under this heading:

- To what extent were partnerships and coordination considerations taken into account in the design and implementation of interventions? How was this concern reflected in the design of the Project component and in the implementation of activities at different levels?
- How effective was the coordination structure? Which structures are relatively effective in supporting the implementation of the project? What lesson can be learned?

The Elections Project was designed through UN processes for Electoral Cycle projects to ensure partnerships with governments and EMBs. The NAM consulted with key partners ECSL and PPRC, the ProDoc was developed and drafted in close consultation with these partners as well as development partners, and then the ProDoc was finalized and approved in consultation with these partners. However, in implementation, program documents note that ECSL declined key activities that had been approved in the ProDoc. Interviews with project team members and stakeholders noted frustrations with the partnership with ECSL and the non-engagement of ECSL with the project in key areas of the ProDoc for the credibility of the elections (consultation and support for the Results Management System). The partnership between UNDP and ECSL was stressed in the run-up to and after the elections by non-transparency by ECSL with the project and other stakeholders around key processes of results transmission and tabulation. The lack of transparency was highlighted as a problem by non-ECSL interviewees. These interviewees also noted that the issues around transparency and the credibility of results tabulation and transmission carried over to other areas and negatively affected donor and UNDP partnerships with ECSL and coordination after the elections and the controversies over the limited and problematic data on electoral results released by ECSL.

The Elections Project worked with NAYCOM to bring together Youth Lab participants and encourage cooperation and coordination across participants, districts, and regions, as well as learning from each other. The Elections Project also brought together its five CSO partners to align activities and facilitate UNDP’s partnership with them in implementing their activities effectively and efficiently, which was particularly important with the short time period for grant implementation and the need for CSOs to work with UNDP to acquit after using tranches of funds quickly to get second and third tranches. Some CSO partner leaders interviewed noted that the project could bring their CSO partners together towards additional initiatives and further coordinate project partners in post-election activities.

Development partners interviewed praised the project for its strong communications with them. The CTA was particularly praised for maintaining close formal and informal communications with donors. This communication was particularly prized by development partners not based in Sierra Leone, which had less information and contact with electoral stakeholders in the country.

UN Women and UNDP noted in interviews that their collaboration and partnership could be tighter. Project staff suggested ways that UN Women could have worked more closely with the Elections Project, and UN Women staff suggested UNDP could have worked more closely with UN Women in the design and implementation of the project. UNDP noted that UN Women had been directly engaged with UNDP in the development and submission of the ProDoc, and the work they proposed under the Elections Project were the activities undertaken by UN Women after approval.

Some development partners interviewed noted that it was a challenge for the Elections Project to “work with actors that are not honest and not transparent.” An implication noted of this problem for partnerships was that the project should consider getting more people and organisations involved in electoral processes so that assistance could be augmented or redirected to other partners based on performance. “Results-based financing” and tranches were suggested as potential mechanisms to use to incentivize partners to work as planned and in comprehensive ways with UNDP projects. Another implication of the problems with partnerships noted by development partners was that UNDP needs to develop and use mechanisms to hold government partners to account for agreed activities and measures. One development partner suggested that UNDP should use “carrots” and another noted that “there are things they want” to encourage national partners to work on issues that have been identified as critical, such as transparency and credibility that are more challenging for these national partners to work on. Towards holding government partners to account and ensuring work in areas that may not be popular or less prioritized by government organisations, UNDP projects could consider shifting resources and working more with CSOs instead of independent commissions in these areas.

Effectiveness of Coordination Structure

The ProDoc set out the governance and management arrangements for the Elections Project, which was governed by the Project Board with the support of the Technical Committee. The ProDoc also noted “In addition to the two formal structures, it is anticipated that the UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative, will have regular consultations and briefings of key partners supporting the electoral process to enhance coordination and take stock of progress” (p. 35). Plans for TC meetings bi-monthly were not done, as interviews found there were not demands from TC members to meet. The TC met once and the PB twice over 2022 and 2023.

UNDP and Project leaders interviewed noted that that there was not an institutionalized forum for political-level coordination. UNDP project support and leadership focused on the technical level. Interviewees noted that there were not regularized ways for the RR or Resident Coordinator to engage with the regional representative of the United Nations Secretary General, the main political channel for the UN to engage with national governments on political issues like elections.

Development partners interviewed noted that they appreciated the regular consultation and informal outreach of the CTA on electoral issues and developments with the project. The CTA also consulted extensively with the UNDP Resident Representative and Deputy Resident Representative during programme implementation.

Conclusions: Partnerships and Coordination

In Conclusion, Elections Project and UNDP management and staff consistently worked to develop and sustain partnerships with development partners, with government partners in the ECSL and PPRC and with CSO partners. Efforts of UNDP and the CTA to ensure coherence in the development and implementation of the Elections Project facilitated strong coordination of project activities with other UNDP and UN projects and with the initiatives funded by other donors. Frustrations arose and impeded

the partnership between UNDP and the project with ECSL around the areas of planned activities declined by ECSL. Not working in critical areas for transparency and credibility like the Results Management System and the issues in these areas with the elections themselves weakened the partnership between the UNDP Elections project and development partners with ECSL.

Digitalization

No main evaluation question was developed under this criteria. One set of sub-questions from the ToR for the evaluation is covered under this heading:

- To what extent were digitization and digitalization considerations taken into account in the design and implementation of interventions? How was this concern reflected in the design of the programme component and in the implementation of activities at different levels?

Digitalization is the process of using digital technologies to create new or improved processes and outcomes. These processes are generally considered to be the use of ICT to make processes and information more accessible and lasting. Digitalization is one of the enablers in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025 that aims to supporting countries to build inclusive, ethical, and sustainable digital societies. The evaluation finds that the Elections Project support for ICT processes encouraged digitalization, but not working in some envisioned areas as ECSL declined project assistance led to fewer outputs in ICT and less digitalization than anticipated by the ProDoc. The project supported the redesign of the PPRC’s web site, which improved the transparency and outreach efforts of the organisation. Project support for the innovative iVerify platform supported digitalization in the important area of fact-checking through work with key media partners.

Digitalization Considerations in Design and Implementation

The project design and the ProDoc envisioned substantial support through consultants and the provision of ICT equipment that would strengthen processes, the technical equipment available, and outcomes at ECSL and the PPRC. Project reporting and interviews with UNDP and elections project staff, development partners, ECSL and PPRC noted supplying ECSL and PPRC with new and upgraded equipment. This included supplying solar power to ECSL HQ and ECSL Datacenter, printers, laptop computers and other IT equipment for ECSL and PPRC and redesigning the PPRC web site. ECSL interviewees valued project support for urgent media and communications needs for ECSL for the elections at the Bintumani Conference Centre. ECSL interviewees looked forward to completing and establishing a more sustainable Media and Civic Education Centre in ECSL HQ with the support of the project during the extension period of activities. PPRC interviewees noted that Project support for the redesign of the PPRC website notably improved PPRC’s outreach and promoted the transparency of its operations.

The Elections Project worked with the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), the Independent Radio Network (IRIN) and BBC Media Action to bring and launch UNDP’s iVerify solution to Sierra Leone. The innovative iVerify digital tool was used by trained media professionals to proactively identify, monitor, fact-check and respond to misinformation, disinformation and hate speech during the elections process and afterwards. The iVerify team processed 265 fact-checking requests that supported a fact-based public discourse across the country during tense political competition around the elections.

Some assistance that could have furthered digitalization was rejected by ECSL. The planned consultant to support ECSL on the results transmission system was thus not done; interviews with UNDP and Elections Project staff and development partners as well as EOM reports noted the lack of detailed and timely data from ECSL on electoral results that could have potentially been provided digitally. The Project supported processes that ECSL could have used to provide gender-disaggregated data on voting, but ECSL did not use these processes in the June 2023 elections, leaving this basic data again not available for Sierra Leone.

Conclusions: Digitalization

In Conclusion, Elections Project support for technical upgrades at ECSL and for ICT technology for the PPRC furthered the digitalization of processes in these project partners. However, digitalization support from the project had the potential to have had a greater impact through more comprehensive engagement with ECSL planned in the ProDoc that the electoral commission rejected.

Sustainability

Sustainability is the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue. The main evaluation question to be answered is: How sustainable are the contributions of the Elections Project to fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone? Sub headings below cover sub questions from the ToR for the evaluation under sustainability. The evaluation finds that much of the design and implementation of the Elections Project worked in sustainable ways to fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone.

Sustainability in Design and Implementation

Towards sustainability, the Elections Project was developed with and worked with longstanding UN partners that are responsible for elections and political party competition in Sierra Leone: the ECSL, PPRC, and the Judiciary. The approach in the ProDoc emphasized capacity development and sustainability through working with and supporting these key institutions, building on existing initiatives and the capacity that prior electoral cycle projects and peacebuilding projects had built or strengthened in the ECSL and PPRC. Interviews with UNDP and project staff noted that starting implementation close to the time of the elections impeded the sustainability approach of electoral cycle programming, as the need to support particular electoral events reduces the emphasis that could be placed on sustainability through a longer-term development approach. The ProDoc argued that supporting peace and the elections through a single project was planned to support sustainability. UNDP and project interviews asserted that having the PM manage both the Elections Project and the PBF-funded project rather than implementing using the comprehensive design of the ProDoc did not hamper sustainability. The 2024 extension of the Elections Project to support the Cross-party Committee on Electoral Systems and Management Bodies Review was noted in interviews as promising towards supporting sustainability, as the Elections project providing a platform for these discussions, more time for the project to support capacity building, and for project support to encourage the discussion of electoral reforms that could address some of the challenges of the 2023 elections all supported sustainability. The flexibility to extend the Elections Project

beyond the possible six-month extension allowed by PBF funding was an added benefit of the Elections Project framework relative to the PBF project time constraints.

Exit Strategies and Sustainability

Following on and building on “the support provided through previous electoral cycles” and “placing capacity building at its core” were central ways that the project worked towards sustainability (ProDoc, p.21). The ProDoc also explained that “peer to peer exchanges” was part of the sustainability strategy of the Elections Project (p. 20). Towards this exit strategy, the project supported the PPRC’s study tour to its peer institution in Gambia. The ProDoc also noted supporting “the cooperation of ECSL with other election management bodies and relevant institutions” was part of the sustainability strategy of the project (P. 20). Interviewees at ECSL and the project noted support from the project for ECSL’s engagement with national stakeholders through the media centre in this regard. UNDP, project staff, ECSL, PPRC and Judiciary interviewees did not expect this to be the end of UNDP support for the electoral cycle and stakeholders in Sierra Leone. While ECSL, PPRC and Judiciary interviewees appreciated Elections Project support, they noted that support came within the framework of support from UNDP for successive electoral cycles and that they had needs following the elections and for future elections that they anticipated would be supported by a future electoral cycle project. These partners did not see the Elections Project as the end or exit for UNDP support to election stakeholders in Sierra Leone.

Partnerships and Sustainability

Partnerships, as noted above in Exit Strategies, were key to the project’s sustainability strategy. The Elections Project partnered with institutions that have proven to be durable. ECSL, PPRC, and the Judiciary are staffed by civil servants. The staff of these institutions have long tenures within them, which encourages the sustainability of Elections Project capacity building and results as they continue to use and develop their relevant professional skills within their organizations. Sustainability, however, in ECSL has been negatively affected by ECSL practices of rotating Director-level skilled staff in ECSL headquarters. Rotations of senior ECSL staff leaders from areas like training and operations to ECSL units where they lack specialization, such as ICT, archives or human resources, were noted in interviews with some ECSL staff, some project staff, and some partners interviewed as having negative effects on sustainability. ECSL practices of rotating field staff to other areas of the country were not noted to have these negative effects on sustainability but instead seen as good practices by ECSL staff and leadership in interviews for the evaluation. The smaller PPRC staff was more stable, furthering sustainability, as specialized staff within the institution were not rotated within PPRC (e.g. the mediation lead continued to lead on the technical area of mediation). Training and exchange participation for these cadres supported by the Elections Project continued to benefit the institution’s capacity, which supports partnership with the project as well as the sustainability of the benefits that flow from professional training and exchange participation.

Stakeholder Engagement and Sustainability

The Elections Project was developed through the inclusive processes of the NAM, which worked with the main partners for the project in the development of the ProDoc. In implementation, the CTA maintained close, regular contact with key partners, as did project staff with the set of partners that they worked with in implementation.

Staff from ECSL in the regions interviewed were concerned that UNDP’s processes for paying temporary polling station staff use would have a negative impact on the prospects for these staff to serve as temporary staff in the future, which would hinder the sustainability of temporary staff. ECSL regional staff interviewed were hopeful that UNDP could still address this issue. Temporary staff, whether new or experienced, require training by ECSL for any electoral event.

Project staff and ECSL staff interviewed noted that maintaining ICT equipment has been challenging for ECSL, and interviewees expected these issues with sustainability to continue after the project as ECSL budgets reportedly are largely for staff costs and operations rather than maintenance.

Mechanisms, Procedures and Policies to Carry Forward Results in GEWE and HR

Elections Project support focused on GEWE and HR, as with Elections Project support in other areas, was conceptualized and developed as part of a sequence of electoral cycle project and continued to work with the same UN and national partners that had the institutional mandate and capacity to work in these areas of focus. UN Women noted fitting the design for their activities under the project within their overall goals and objectives of GEWE. Project support for HR focused on inclusion, particularly the inclusion of women and girls, PwDs, youth and people from marginalised communities through targeting them specifically by partners. ECSL Departments, UN Women, the project’s CSO partners, and youth lab grantees focused by design on inclusion, including through their procedures/policies. Young people, PwDs, and women beneficiaries of CSO activities noted that they had benefitted, and that they expected to benefit in the future from these CSOs continuing to work in this area in future election cycles.

Sustainability Conclusions

In conclusion, project support for key partners that have been and will be engaged in all elections in the country supports the sustainability of project achievements. The Elections Project continued engagements with these partners in areas supported by previous electoral cycle projects with the ECSL, PPRC, Judiciary and CSOs and strengthened their capacity through experience and technology that they expected to use going forward in the next electoral cycle. The limited time for preparation and implementation of many activities prior to the elections themselves, however, constrained sustainability. Further engagement of UNDP and/or project staff with project partners and more time in the electoral cycle to support institutionalization of project-supported activities/technology and developments would further support sustainability.

Human Rights, Gender Equality, Youth and Disability Inclusion

This category under the evaluation examines how the Elections Project supported human rights, gender equality, youth and disability inclusion in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone. The main evaluation question to be answered is: How did the Elections Project support human rights, gender equality, youth and disability inclusion in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone? Findings of the evaluation are that the design and activities of the project clearly worked

with partners in each of these areas and worked towards outputs in human rights, youth engagement, disability inclusion, and gender equality.

Human rights

The ProDoc noted that the Elections Project was developed with a human rights-based approach (HRBA) through a focus on inclusion and supporting women, youth, and the persons with disability to exercise their political rights. Interviews with the Project team found that they implemented the project with this HRBA approach in mind. Key outputs in the ProDoc that focus directly on human rights, such as supporting the capacity of the Sierra Leone Police to project rights in electoral participation and competition, were funded through the PBF project rather than with Elections Project funds evaluated here and thus are left to the forthcoming PBF evaluation. The project’s support for inclusion, through both ECSL and CSO grantees, stressed providing information to voters to help them exercise their electoral rights. And the project’s work with ECSL, particularly on reaching women, PwDs, and youth, was designed to help ECSL be able to fulfill voters rights, particularly women, PwDs, and first-time voters (youth) as well as voters in marginalized communities.

Elections project support for civic and voter education with ECSL emphasized inclusion and stressed the rights of all citizens of age to participate as candidates and voters. ECSL interviewees noted that this inclusion was central to human rights.

Gender Equality

The ProDoc noted that the Elections Project focused on inclusion and supporting women to exercise their political rights. Jointly with UN Women, the Project focused on this area with its engagement with PPRC, ECSL, and APPWA; The UNDP Elections Project team also worked with its CSO partners, ECSL, and the NAYCOM specifically towards GE. Development partners interviewed valued the focus and achievements of the Elections Project on GE from UN Women and UNDP. UNDP gave the project a gender marker of 2 as consultations with the project team identified advancing gender equality as a significant objective. The elections project had five outputs under Outcome 3, Inclusion in electoral processes is promoted and citizen engagement is strengthened, focused directly contributing to gender equality. The analysis of effectiveness shows that the Elections Project exceeded four of these five output targets, with the fifth (3.2b) partially met.

UN Women noted that the changes in the electoral system made by the GoSL through the Public Elections Act, Political Parties Act, and GEWE Act were all enacted in mid to late 2022 which gave limited opportunity for effective public awareness on proportional representation and the quota for women that mandated that one of every three candidates on party lists be female. These changes came only in late 2022, very close in time to the June 2023 election, which left implementing partners little time to explain to the population and particularly to women aspirants and potential aspirants for elected office how these changes empowered women and enabled more women to be elected. UN Women only started implementing Elections Project-funded activities in March 2023, three months before the election. UN Women suggested that many people still do not understand the effects of PR and the requirement that one of every three candidates on a party list be female, which means more education on GE and elections

is needed especially for political parties. Capacity building support to APPWA to develop and implement its multiyear strategic plan and action plan targeted at promoting women’s leadership and participation within the political parties was valued by UN Women interviewees and PPRC interviewees. No unintended effects of the project on GE were identified in the evaluation’s fieldwork.

UN Women, CSO interviewees, and some project staff interviewed noted women candidates for office and potential women candidates for office would have benefitted more from the project if the project had begun earlier and had a longer duration in its assistance to these women. A longer programme of assistance through an electoral cycle approach to reach potential and actual women candidates was also seen by these interviewees as supportive of sustainability, as better prepared candidates were thought to be more likely to be elected, better able to represent their constituents and serve in office, and more likely to be reelected – which would make this assistance towards GE more sustainable. UN Women noted that trained women expected to use their skills and knowledge again in other work as well as to potentially contest elections again. Project-supported work on a multi-party basis with elected women MPs, including on coalition-building as women MPs, was delayed by the post-election boycott by the APC. The extension of the project will help UN Women with addressing this need, now that the boycott is over. UN Women also noted the assistance post-election should also target unsuccessful women candidates for MP and councilor positions towards helping them remain active in civic life and potentially contesting elections again in the future. Women aspirants interviewed with CSOs noted that longer-term UN Women support for candidates and prospective candidates would benefit them and support stronger women’s representation.

Youth

The ProDoc noted the country’s youthful population and that the Elections Project emphasized reaching youth, particularly first-time voters, to exercise their political rights. Project activities particularly targeted youth included work with National Youth Commission (NAYCOM) and ECSL on inclusion, CSO grants, and bringing UNDP’s Youth Lab methodology to Sierra Leone. The Elections Project worked with NAYCOM to workshop UNDP’s Youth Lab platform to encourage youth engagement in electoral processes and encourage innovative ideas on youth participation in the violence-free elections with 50 young leaders (32 men, 18 women, of whom four were PwDs) from across the country. The Project and NAYCOM supported the organization of five regional youth networks, each of which were provided with a grant for activities in districts and chiefdoms towards inclusive, violence-free elections. No unintended effects of the project on youth were identified in the evaluation’s fieldwork.

Disability

The elections project focused on and targeted disability inclusion through support to ECSL, CSO grantees and other partners to expand access for PwDs to the polls. This included working with ECSL in an inclusive process with PwDs to develop a tactile ballot guide for the visually impaired. After consultations between the project and visually impaired voters through ECSL, ECSL adopted the tactile ballot guide. The elections project then printed 8 guides for voters to be distributed to each polling station (120,000 guides in total). The elections project also supported the ECSL/EU governance programme assessment of accessibility of

polling centres to access barriers that could inhibit PwDs access; the project then funded the construction of ramps or the placement of slabs to facilitate access to the polls for PwDs.

Elections project grants to its civil society partners included support to reach PwDs. Each of the five CSO grantees noted a focus on and outreach to PwDs in their grant reports. Interviews with CSO managers, stakeholders, and beneficiaries noted attentiveness to PwDs in their awards and that these activities expanded access of PwDs to be candidates, polling staff, and voters. No unintended effects of the project on PwDs were identified in the evaluation’s fieldwork.

The project also supported ECSL to train the 32 Ad hoc Voter Education Training Officers (AVETOs), who are PwDs themselves, to engage other PwDs across the country with appropriate and disability friendly voter education.

In conclusion, the Elections Project’s work supporting inclusion had notable positive results in supporting human rights, gender equality, youth and disability inclusion in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone for the 2023 elections. The human rights-based approach was mainstreamed into the project’s work, which focused significantly on including women, youth, and PwDs in electoral processes – and had notable successes in expanding the inclusion of women, youth, and PwDs for 2023. Project contributions that worked with changes in the electoral system that encouraged the election of women as councillors and MPs had particularly impressive results and led to women becoming a third of elected councillors and MPs – a substantial increase from the proportion of seats held by women in previous elections.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

The Elections Project was relevant where it worked towards fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone.

Not working in planned areas where key elements from the ProDoc were declined by ECSL reduced the relevance of the project from that anticipated in the design.

Coherence

The Elections Project was designed through an electoral cycle approach that focuses on broad electoral processes rather than the election as a discrete event. The Elections Project was implemented using processes led by UNDP, the project CTA, and donors that ensured strong coherence of project activities and linked them with those of project partners and the initiatives of other development partners.

Coherence however was undermined as the ECSL declined agreed-upon project support as well as other prospective international assistance in areas critical to the success of electoral processes and the Elections Project as ECSL reported they did not see the need for this assistance, since they had government resources for these areas and viewed international assistance as duplicative.

Efficiency

The Elections Project – through the use of UNDP processes and procedures – used and maintained competitive processes and POPP standards towards efficient implementation.

Efficiency was challenged by time pressure and the relatively slow start of the project late in the electoral cycle.

Expenditure rates demonstrate that the project has been able to programme efficiently.

The project took on some processes in implementation not anticipated in the original implementation plans, such as the payment of temporary ECSL staff for the elections, using UNDP systems which required substantial work and temporary staffing for verification. These processes were costly and created tensions with ECSL, as UNDP standards emphasized accountability for donor resources by insuring the validity of all documents rather than quick processing.

Holding briefing and training sessions for UNDP’s CSO partners in the Elections Project on the requirements to account for funds under their UNDP awards supported efficient implementation and the delivery of tranches to partners; however, with the short time period for implementation of these grants, the time it took for UNDP to process CSO acquittals and issue the next tranches to these CSO partners contributed to time pressure on CSOs in implementation from some delays in funds transfers.

Effectiveness

The Elections Project was largely successful in meeting its targets in the outputs where it was implemented across the three outcome areas.

Not undertaking activities in the areas where planned assistance was declined by the ECSL led to unmet output targets in these areas and impeded meeting the Elections Project’s outcome targets (particularly in the credibility of the elections as measured by EOMs and strengthening the results management system to enhance the transparency of electoral results).

Partnerships and Coordination

Elections Project and UNDP management and staff consistently worked to develop and sustain partnerships with development partners, with government partners in the ECSL and PPRC and with CSO partners.

Efforts of UNDP and the CTA to ensure coherence in the development and implementation of the Elections Project facilitated strong coordination of project activities with other UNDP and UN projects and with the initiatives funded by other donors.

Frustrations arose and impeded the partnership between UNDP and the project with ECSL around the areas of planned activities declined by ECSL. Not working in critical areas for transparency and credibility like the Results Management System and the issues in these areas with the elections themselves weakened the partnership between the UNDP Elections project and development partners with ECSL.

Digitalization

Elections Project support for technical upgrades at ECSL and for ICT technology for the PPRC furthered the digitalization of processes in these project partners.

The project had the potential to have had a greater impact on digitalization through more comprehensive engagement with ECSL that the I Commission rejected.

Sustainability

Project support for key partners that have been and will be engaged in all elections in the country supports the sustainability of project achievements.

The limited time for preparation and implementation of many activities prior to the elections themselves, however, constrained sustainability.

Further engagement of UNDP and/or project staff with project partners, [- and more time in the electoral cycle to support the institutionalization of project-supported activities and developments would further support sustainability.

Human Rights, Gender Equality, Youth and Disability Inclusion

Elections Project’s work supporting inclusion had notable positive results in supporting human rights, gender equality, youth and disability inclusion in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone for the 2023 elections.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings and conclusions of the evaluation suggest key recommendations for UNDP’s consideration. Recommendations are grouped in two distinct categories: Programmatic and Implementation. Programmatic recommendations focus on what kinds of programming, UNDP should consider going forward. Implementation recommendations focus on how UNDP should consider doing this programming.

Programmatic Recommendations

1. **UNDP should continue to provide support to key partners in electoral processes in Sierra Leone.** UNDP has been the key provider of support for ECSL, the PPRC, the Judiciary, and civil society towards transparent, credible, inclusive elections since the country returned to multi-party competition in 2002. The Elections Project contributed to important progress in voter awareness, inclusion of women and information integrity in 2023 and UNDP is well-placed to work with stakeholders in Sierra Leone towards addressing the issues that inhibited inclusion, transparency, and the credibility of the 2024 elections. UNDP, through the Elections Project, can continue to work towards these long-term goals now through work with the cross-party committee on electoral systems and management bodies review and going forward with support towards the next electoral cycle in Sierra Leone.
2. **UNDP should consider developing and funding programming with the goal of working to depoliticise Sierra Leone and reduce the high level of partisanship that is so pervasive and divisive across the country.** Reports on Sierra Leone and interviews with stakeholders continue to emphasize the fact that the country has been and is divided on many grounds. A central division is on party politics, particularly between supporters of the two main political parties that have controlled the Presidency and Parliament since 2002 – the SLPP and APC. Divisive politics centered on political party affiliation are seen as risks to the country’s fragile stability and social cohesion. UNDP can consider working with civil society, government partners, and the political parties towards the difficult, sensitive challenge of reducing the salience of political party affiliation and reducing the roles of politics across the country.
3. **UNDP and its partners should continue to emphasize and support GEWE.** Changes to the Public Elections Act, sustained international support for GEWE, advocacy by national stakeholders, and the support of the Elections Project, UNDP, and UN Women are among the factors that have resulted in impressive increases in women’s political participation, particularly in the number of women elected as MPs and councilors in 2023. UNDP and its partners should continue to support elected women, potential women candidates, and women in civil society towards expanding their roles and responsibilities in governance and peace across the country towards expanding women’s roles and the number of women active in public life.
4. **UNDP should use the electoral cycle approach to a larger extent in working to support transparent, credible and inclusive elections.** The evaluation concluded that the Elections Project had important output results in the areas where the project supported Sierra Leone in 2022 and 2023, but that the project staffed up and began full implementation only from January/February 2023, close to the date of the election. Best practices in electoral assistance are to use an electoral cycle approach that works with key electoral partners and stakeholders well in advance of elections, during key electoral processes, and after elections – working across the full cycle of elections. The main implications of

using the electoral cycle approach are to de-link UNDP support programming from specific electoral events and support a longer-term effort before and after elections to institutionalize electoral capacity towards transparent, credible, and inclusive elections in key partner institutions and civil society.

5. **UNDP should work with the UN RCO and UN SRSG for West Africa and The Sahel to systematically develop and use platforms to link the international community together at the political level to support the successes of technical assistance projects.** UNDP develops and delivers technical assistance in elections with key electoral partners and stakeholders; project initiatives focus on the technical level and work with civil servants and CSOs in the administration of electoral processes, including those for political parties through the PPRC. And electoral assistance projects, like the Elections Project, develop and manage platforms to coordinate at the strategic and technical levels like the Project Board (PB) and Technical Committee (TC). However, the PB links development partners that fund the project rather than serve as a structure that includes all international stakeholders in electoral processes. UNDP should advocate for a higher-level platform, potentially led by the UN RC or the UN SRSG, to bring all international stakeholders together at the political level to complement the strategic and technical linkages of donors provided for the Elections Project through the TC and PB. This can complement and work with EU efforts in this direction (in partnership with GIZ with its EPSAO project).

Implementation Recommendations

6. **UNDP should strengthen country-office capacity and processes to support fast, timely high-quality staffing for projects.** UNDP projects need to staff up early to manage implementation effectively, and require a larger staff complement to effectively manage projects with many partners in government and independent commissions as well as civil society. Staffing up quickly and managing effectively from the outset are particularly important for projects with solid prospects for expansion through additional donor support. And quick staffing-up is especially important in particularly time-sensitive projects such as elections. The CO should work closely with project management to competitively hire a mix of well qualified international and national staff to staff projects like the Elections Project. UNDP/Sierra Leone should consider developing protocols to support an early, fast start to project staffing starting with project management and fully incorporate project management into the selection of project staff.
7. **UNDP should strengthen country-office capacity and processes to systematically train partners in UNDP processes and support timely, fast review and approval of partner proposals/acquittals and rapid transfers of tranches of funds to partners.** The Elections Project successfully brought its CSO partners together for orientation and training towards strengthening the capacity of partners to work effectively with the Project and meet UNDP financial and programmatic reporting standards. UNDP standards and requirements are long-term and will need to be conveyed to additional partners going forward. Conveying these standards and training partners, as well as administering awards at UNDP, could be done more efficiently if done on a regular basis by CO staff rather than project staff that are only with UNDP during the duration of a particular project. Project funds can be considered to build up CO capacity in training, finance and contracting in the PMSU to support the timely management of LOAs, contracts, and disbursements of funds.

8. **UNDP should increase its staffing, particularly national staff, for the country office and projects in order to have a higher profile that supports partners in implementation and increases monitoring and evaluation at the project level.** The Elections Project, once staffed up, implemented and monitored its own activities towards its outputs. This brought in an international team on a short term-basis to implement the project. However, UNDP has been and will continue to be engaged in electoral processes beyond the life of the project itself. Towards having a larger staff that works on these issues even when there is not an active electoral cycle project, the CO should consider building up a diverse regular CO staff working in electoral processes and depoliticization. As with finance and contracting, project funds can be considered towards increasing project and CO staffing to support quality project implementation, monitoring, and learning. Staff should blend international and national staff, and ensure that national staff come from diverse backgrounds, different regions of the country, and are non-partisan (not linked to political parties).
9. **UNDP should develop and consider using targets and triggers, including in the risk matrix, towards implementing comprehensive projects like the Elections Project by potentially reallocating funding based on partner implementation within awards.** The Elections Project’s comprehensive design to support peaceful, transparent, credible, and inclusive elections was made less than comprehensive as ECSL declined project support in areas critical to electoral dispute resolution (managing complaints around electoral processes) and transparency and the credibility of elections (strengthening the results management system). UNDP should consider developing mechanisms to reward comprehensive partnerships by providing strong partners with additional resources that demonstrate capacity to implement towards shared goals. As a complement to this positive incentive, UNDP should consider reallocating resources from partners that have not implemented as well or as comprehensively to stronger partners. UNDP should consider making plans for these positive and negative incentives clear *ex ante*. UNDP could consider making these targets/triggers explicit with partners in the design and at approval of the ProDoc, and use the TC, PB and any higher-level platform operating at the political level towards making decisions on reallocating resources.
10. **UNDP should use its convening power even more to link partners at the technical level through events focused on learning and extending project results and partnerships.** The Elections Project has a wide range of independent commission and CSO partners. The project has brought together CSO partners towards sharing and learning. The project could expand its support for linking partners and learning by bringing more partners together (including the independent commissions like ECSL, PPRC, and NAYCOM) towards encouraging them to work together, to jointly learn from activities and experience, and to build knowledge about what works to support electoral processes in Sierra Leone and encourage its replication and extension in future election cycles.
11. **UNDP should develop and promote web pages on UNDP web sites dedicated to elections and governance to expand the use of and learning from elections project experience, products, and partners.** UNDP project teams should identify key best practices and lessons learned as appropriate from project development and implementation and draft and share brief guidance notes through UNDP based on these experiences to support replication and extension. To make sure that the information remains “live”, UNDP should host the site and use both HQ and CO level staff rather than project staff for sustainability.

10. LESSONS LEARNED

Interviews solicited lessons learned from the Elections Project from UNDP and Elections Project managers and staff, as well as from project partners and stakeholders. These self-identified lessons were triangulated with project reported lessons from Elections Project reports and the reports of project partners and triangulated with lessons drawn from the analysis of the findings above.

Electoral Cycle Approach

Consistent with the Electoral Cycle Approach, more time is needed to work with partners prior to and after electoral events towards sustained change. The Elections Project was widely recognized to have been approved, funded, and then staffed to become operational closer to the election date than planned. The timing was also closer to the election date than outlined in the Electoral Cycle approach used by UNDP to guide the development of programming. UNDP, development partners, and implementing partners interviewed in the evaluation noted the need to learn from this experience and start earlier with assistance to key partners in Sierra Leone in the next electoral cycle.

Support for Sustained Initiatives

Partners – both from independent commissions, CSOs, and youth – seek longer, larger, lasting UNDP engagements with them towards more peaceful, inclusive electoral processes. Project partners and stakeholders recognized that building peaceful, credible and inclusive electoral processes across the country is important to Sierra Leone, as well as that their current experience and capacity to support these kinds of electoral processes are not up to the tasks of meeting the country’s needs. The extension of the project to support the post-election review process through the cross-party committee on electoral systems and management bodies review was noted as positive towards this approach and continuing to work with key national partners on electoral processes now when elections are not on the immediate horizon.

UNDP’s Global Products are Useful

UNDP can successfully bring corporate products to benefit Sierra Leone. The Elections Project brought two UNDP corporate products, iVerify and the Youth Lab, to the country through the project. These methodologies and activities were seen as useful by implementing partners and stakeholders in furthering progress in important areas of transparency and credibility for iVerify and youth inclusion for the Youth Lab.

Risk Management

Reputational risk needs to be continually assessed in Elections Projects and brought to senior management. The UN and UNDP have recognized that electoral cycle projects are inherently political and risky; these factors are behind the UN’s requirements for a NAM and the approval of the UN and UNDP HQ in New York for the development and approval of electoral cycle projects. In implementation, however, in addition to the risk log per the POPP, informal processes of information sharing by the CTA with the RR and Deputy RR, the CTA’s communications with UNDP in New York, and communications with development partner countries are used to convey risks and opportunities. Formal or clear ways for CTAs to bring evolving risks to UNDP senior management or methodologies and processes that require

reporting and assessment to help UNDP senior managers make decisions about projects in changing and politically sensitive contexts could be developed and institutionalized that could help UNDP manage evolving risks in politically sensitive projects like electoral cycle projects. Expanded use of the risk matrix, including assessing risks that aspects of projects may be declined by key project partners, could help.

11. ANNEXES

ANNEX-1: EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

United Nations Development Programme

Terms of Reference for Evaluation of Elections Project
Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone 2022-2023



Basic evaluation information

Evaluation Title	Evaluation of Electoral Assistance Project “Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone 2022-2023”
Department/Unit	Democratic Governance
Country	Sierra Leone
Duration	35 working days, spread over 2.5 months starting from mid-January 2024
Type of Contract	One (1) International Consultant
Location	Freetown with travel to the regions

Background

Sierra Leone continues to demonstrate resilience by achieving significant progress in building state institutions and maintaining stability as part of its post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction agenda. Yet, at the same time, the peaceful environment maintained over the past 20 years is facing threats that the government and its development partners should address to avoid a major conflict in elections. The marginal inclusion and representation of women, youth and people living with disabilities in governance and electoral processes poses additional challenges to the holistic development of the country. Some policy actions since 2018 elections – GEWE policy (2020), Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Law (2022) Political Parties Act (2022) Public Election Act (2022), National Youth Policy (2020), the repeal of Part V of the Public Order Act and Electoral Legal Reforms are signals of progressive actions to improve the maintenance of democracy. In line with the Government of Sierra Leone’s request to the UNSG for support to the 2023 electoral cycle and the subsequent Needs Assessment Mission recommendations, UNDP in consultation with state institutions, CSOs and development partners developed the Elections Project document “Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone 2022-2023.”

The Elections Project is articulated around the three outcome areas derived from SDG16 and related SDGs in particular SDG 5 and 10. It seeks to enhance the **Capacity** of the institutions responsible for the organization of elections in Sierra Leone, such as the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone (ECSL), the Political Party Registration Commission (PPRC) and the Judiciary, to enhance credibility and trust in the electoral processes. It also aims to enhance **Transparency** of and **Inclusion** in the electoral processes by

promoting the improved participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities, citizen engagement, information sharing and Information integrity by working with a range of stakeholders, including the Independent Commissions and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). UN Peace Building Funding (UNPBF) provided to UNDP/UNICEF support joint efforts to mitigate electoral violence including violence against women and contribute to the promotion of a peaceful environment in Sierra Leone before, during and after the 2023 elections. Both elections and peacebuilding components of the project are managed and coordinated by the UNDP Elections Project.

Basic Project information		
Project Title	Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone 2022-2023	
Department/Unit	Democratic Governance	
Country	Sierra Leone	
Region	Africa	
Project ID	00126358	
Contributing outcome and output	<p>Building on the national priorities set by the Government of Sierra Leone in the Medium-Term National Development Plan (M-TNDP, 2019-2023) and the Government’s Roadmap “Walking out of fragility” (2019) as well as the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda to which Sierra Leone is a signatory; the project aligns with the</p> <p>United Nations Sustainable Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2024 Outcome 2 (Transformational Governance)</p> <p>Country Programme Document (CPD) 2020-2024 Outcome 2: (Protection and Empowerment of the most Vulnerable)</p> <p>CPD Output 2.1: Capacities of targeted oversight and accountability institutions (Parliament, HRC, NEC, ACC and IPCB) strengthened to perform their mandates</p> <p>CPD Output 2.3: Gender-responsive institutional frameworks strengthened for peace, citizen’s voice and participation for social cohesion</p>	
Project dates	Start	Planned end
	1 August 2022	31 December 2023
Project planned Budget	USD \$8,776,083	

Project Expenditure	USD 1,615,794 (2022) USD 4,866,027.55 (by 1 st Nov 2023) Total: 6,481,821.55 (by 1 st Nov 2023)
Funding sources	UNDP, Government of Canada, Government of Iceland, Government of Ireland, European Union, United Nations Peacebuilding Fund
Implementing Partners	Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL), Political Parties Regulation Commission (PPRC), UN PBF, UN WOMEN, Judiciary, National Youth Commission, CSOs (through small grant scheme)
Supervisor	Chief Technical Advisor

The United Nations’ electoral assistance is based on the premise that peaceful and inclusive societies require accountable, transparent, and inclusive institutions at all levels to build trust and foster citizen engagement. Beyond independent, credible, and transparent election management bodies that are vital in ensuring inclusive participation, the right and opportunity to take part in the conduct of public affairs and to vote and to be elected at periodic elections is harnessed through a wide range of actors that have key role to play in furthering inclusivity, justice and peace.

The project Theory of Change (ToC) is as follows:

- If the capacities of the Election Management Bodies (ECSL & PPRC) and the other state institutions and mechanisms (Judiciary, Security Sector, Office of National Security (ONS) to discharge their duties in relation to electoral matters are strengthened;
- If the EMBs and other relevant institutions collaborate constructively and transparently in pre and post electoral processes;
- If citizens receive proper civic education and are actively engaged in electoral processes through credible and transparent information sharing mechanisms from EMBs, CSOs and independent commissions;
- If women, youth, and persons with disabilities are included in all electoral processes; and
- If the capacities of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Independent Commissions are strengthened to mitigate electoral violence and VAWP/VAWE through civic education, prevention, mitigation, mediation and early warning strategies,

Then, Sierra Leone will have the enabling environment for the conduct of peaceful and credible elections in 2023 because the triggers for electoral violence will be mitigated when EMBs and other electoral stakeholders are trusted by citizens and information shared are transparent and credible.

The Project overall aims to achieve the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: Capacity

Strengthened capacity and preparedness of the ECSL, PPRC, the Judiciary, and ONS to effectively manage electoral processes and in a credible manner through capacity-building and technical assistance.

Outcome 2: Transparency

Enhanced transparency in the electoral process through continued and responsive voter education and stakeholder engagement and strengthened capacity of the media to monitor issues around VAWE/P, hate speech, disinformation, and misinformation.

Outcome 3: Inclusion

Improved participation and representation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities through ECSL’s updating and implementation of its inclusion and participation strategy.

Taken together, these outcomes will contribute to enhance trust in the elections process and confidence in the results.

Key Achievements:

UNDP Sierra Leone, working with EMBs relevant government institutions, CSOs and development partners designed an Elections Project aimed at “*Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections*” in Sierra Leone 2022-2023. The 8,7 million USD project is supported by Government of Ireland, the European Union (EU), the Government of Canada, the Government of Iceland, and UNDP.

Starting from its inception in August 2022, the Project made considerable progress in assisting the ECSL in strengthening its structures for a robust and targeted inclusion of youth groups, women, and persons with disabilities (PwDs) in the electoral process. CSOs engaged by the Elections Project, supported ECSL in promoting electoral awareness through capacity building engagements, peace fora, media programming, town hall meetings, road shows, and drama skits, sporting events reaching an estimated 2,5 million people across the country.

It bears noting that ECSL rejected the Project’s proposal to recruit an electoral results data management, civic and voter education and voter registration experts. Despite the operational and administrative challenges, not to mention the vagaries of the socio-political environment and the untimely introduction of the new Proportional Representation (PR) Block Vote system during the electoral period, the Elections Project cleared all its key milestones.

The ECSL conducted a voter registration process, recording a total of 3,374,258 voters on the roll (1,614,729 male and 1,759,529 female, 22, 385 PwDs. Voter identification cards were distributed to over 2.9 million voters and 3,847 (36 percent women) candidates were successfully registered to take part in the 2023 elections. Where possible, engagement with the Political Party Regulation Commission (PPRC) facilitated unhindered access for political parties in most districts of Sierra Leone to campaign irrespective of strongholds of the parties.

The Elections Project, through UN Women, built the capacity of 90 women aspirants and 260 candidates for the elections and set up a mentorship programme for the first-time candidates, while promoting community level support for female candidates through its flagship *He4She* campaign working closely with traditional and religious leaders.

The Project recorded considerable progress in youth engagement through the ‘*Make Peace Win*’ campaign led by the National Youth Commission (NAYCOM) and supported a capacity strengthening programme for judges on the electoral dispute resolution.

The iVerify platform, operationalized by the Project, in partnership with the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), the Independent Radio Network (IRIN), and BBC Media Action, addressed disinformation and misinformation in the electoral process and provided credible fact-checked information to the public. Launched on 5 April 2023, iVerify successfully fact-checked more than 265 stories, including 40 during election week, and played a widely recognized role during the 2023 campaign. The iVerify consortium partners organized a 2-day lessons learned workshop on 14-15 September with a strong call to ensure the sustainability of the fact-checking platform. Sierra Leone’s fifth nationwide elections were held on 24 June 2023 with the official campaign running from 23 May to 22 June 2023. Notwithstanding isolated flare-ups in acts of intimidation and violence, the vote was relatively peaceful throughout the country, as attested to by the various observation missions including the National Elections Watch (NEW), the Economic Community for West Africa (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), the Commonwealth, the European Union Observation Mission, and the Carter Center.

According to results announced by the ECSL, the SLPP presidential candidate, Julius Maada Bio, was re-elected with 56.17% of the total votes cast, while the APC candidate, Samura Kamara, obtained 41.16% of the votes. The parliamentary elections saw the SLPP win 61% (81 seats) and the APC win 39% (54 seats) with an unprecedented 30,4% of women elected as members of parliament.

Preliminary reports presented by the 2023 election observation missions underscored that the voting was conducted in a peaceful atmosphere,⁷ however indicated shortcomings by the ECSL in its mission to deliver transparent and credible elections and raised concerns about the opacity of the tabulation methods and the results management system. Official results were called into question, especially following accounts of operational challenges, observed irregularities and discrepancies in the tallying of votes. The perceived high-handedness of security agencies, limited response to isolated cases of violence during the campaign, and a surge in inciteful speech, also cast doubts on the credibility and integrity of the vote.

The APC rejected the outcome of the elections and declared that it would not participate in parliament and local council proceedings, nor seek redress through the courts due to its distrust to the Judiciary. Its officials further demanded the resignation of key officials of the ECSL, Judiciary, Office of National Security (ONS) while also calling for the publication of results of each polling station.

Following a 3-month stalemate, representatives of the ruling and opposition parties began a national dialogue on 16 October. The meeting was facilitated by the former Vice-President of the Republic of the Gambia, Ms. Fatoumata Jallow, the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion, under the

⁷ EUEOM, Preliminary Statement, General Elections – 24 June 2023

joint auspices of the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, and the Commonwealth of Nations.

As a result, APC agreed to resume its participation in governance at the national, regional and local levels. While the government will also set up structures to address the identified concerns in the electoral process.

3. Scope and objectives of the evaluation

The Evaluation will focus mainly on assessing the achievements of the various components within the Elections Project. It will focus on assessing the contribution of the Project’s interventions from August 2022 to December 2023 to the 2023 Election in Sierra Leone. Specifically, it will examine the contribution of the Project’s support to enhance the capacity of national institutions to deliver peaceful, credible, and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone.

Specific objectives of the evaluation include:

- Review the performance of the Project interventions in achieving the outputs stated in the programme document and their contributions to CPD outcomes.
- An assessment of the project’s flexibility to respond to changes during the implementation/context, etc.
- An assessment of how the project was able to manage risks (financial, strategic, technical, reputational, etc.)
- Review of Project approach and coherence in delivering programme results.
- Assess the factors that have influenced national ownership of programme results and its sustainability.
- Assess the knowledge, visibility and communication employed by both Project and government counterparts around the programme results.
- Assess the appropriateness of the Project strategy, validity of the underlying assumptions to the TOC implementation approach, and programme institutional/management arrangements, the impact of its work with other implementing partners.
- Document the key outcomes and shortcomings, if any, of the project interventions
- Document good practices and lessons learned from the Project to feed into the next phase of the programme cycle. A separate chapter is expected in the evaluation report to document key lesson learned.
- Proffer concrete recommendations that may be required for enhancing the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of a future programme, including the aspect of timing in an electoral cycle perspective and in the specific context of Sierra Leone.

4. Evaluation criteria and key questions

The evaluation will follow the Organization of Economic Cooperation Development (OECD), Development Assistance Committee (DAC)’s evaluation criteria – relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and

sustainability. Partnership, Gender Empowerment and Social Inclusion (GESI) and human rights will be added as cross-cutting criteria. The guiding questions outlined below should be further refined by the consultant and agreed upon with UNDP prior to the commencement of the evaluation. The assessment on the contribution of the projects to development results through its activities will be made in accordance with the following evaluation criteria:

Relevance

- To what extent does the Elections Project respond to the priorities of the Government of Sierra Leone National Development Plan (2019-2023) and similar strategies, the UNDP Country Programme Document (2020-2024), United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation (UNSDCF) 2020-2024, donors’ strategies and the Sustainable Development Goals?
- How does the support for the Elections Project interventions contribute to the longer-term development results in Sierra Leone in terms of approaches, capacities, policies, and strategies?
- How relevant have the Elections Project interventions been in leveraging support for the democratic process?
- Do the interventions meet the practical and strategic needs of all genders, persons with disabilities, and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups?
- To what extent are the Elections Project interventions coherent with Government’s policies?
- To what extent does intervention support national legislation and initiatives that aim to improve gender equality and human rights? What lessons can be learned?

Coherence

- To what extent the UNDP Elections Project addressed the synergies and interlinkages with other interventions carried out by UNDP?
- To what extent the UNDP Elections Project addressed the synergies and interlinkages with other interventions carried out by the UN and other development partners?

Efficiency

- Has the Project been implemented within its stated timeframe and cost estimates?
- Did the Project interventions focus on the set of activities that were expected to produce significant results?
- To what extent, human and financial resources allocated towards the achievement of the Project objectives? Were different resources allocated in ways that considered gender equality, and inclusion of persons with disability and youth? If so, how were they allocated? Was differential resource allocation appropriate?
- Was there any identified synergy between UNDP-funded interventions and other similar interventions that contributed to reducing costs while supporting results? Did changes to budget sufficiently consider value for money?
- Has there been over expenditure or under expenditure in the Project interventions?
- Were there any unanticipated events, opportunities, or constraints? What could be done

differently in the future?

- What measures were taken to assure the quality of development results and management practices, both in relation to process and products, and to partnership strategies?
- What monitoring and evaluation procedures were applied by UNDP and partners to ensure greater accountability?

Effectiveness

- Have the expected Project (quantitative and qualitative) results been achieved and what were the supporting or impeding factors?
- What are the main lessons learned from the partnership strategies and what are the possibilities of replication?
- To what extent have interventions’ objectives and results contributed to gender equality, women and youth empowerment and human rights for peaceful and credible elections?
- Which aspects of the interventions had the greatest achievements? What have been the supporting factors? How can UNDP build upon or replicate these achievements?
- In which areas does the Project component have the least achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can they be overcome?
- Were the approaches, resources and conceptual frameworks used relevant to the achievement of planned outcomes/outputs?
- What were the unintended results (positive/negative) of project interventions, and why?

Partnerships and Coordination

- To what extent were partnerships and coordination considerations taken into account in the design and implementation of interventions? How was this concern reflected in the design of the Project component and in the implementation of activities at different levels?
- How effective was the coordination structure? Which structures are relatively effective in supporting implementation of the project? What lesson can be learnt?

Digitalization

- To what extent were digitization and digitalization considerations taken into account in the design and implementation of interventions? How was this concern reflected in the design of the programme component and in the implementation of activities at different levels?

Sustainability

- To what extent were sustainability considerations taken into account in the design and implementation of interventions? How was this concern reflected in the design of the programme component and in the implementation of activities at different levels?

- Were exit strategies programme interventions appropriately defined and implemented, and what steps have been taken to ensure the sustainability of results?
- How did the development of partnerships at local and national level contribute to the sustainability of the results?
- How were different stakeholders engaged in the design and implementation? Have interventions been implemented with appropriate and effective partnership strategies? What has been the nature and added value of these partnerships?
- To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights, and human development by primary stakeholders?

Human rights, Gender equality, youth and disability inclusion

- To what extent have poor, indigenous and persons with disability, women, men, youths and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the project?
- To what extent has the Project integrated Human Rights Based Approach in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project? Have the resources been used in an efficient way to address Human Rights in the implementation?
- Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality?
- To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the promoting the rights of women, youths and persons with disability? Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men, youths, or vulnerable groups?

5. Evaluation methodology

The methodology mentioned in this section is indicative. The Evaluator should propose a final detailed methodological framework in the inception report based on the systematic review of the Elections Project’s documents. The Evaluator should adopt both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The qualitative data assessment should include the secondary project data to be collected and developed for more insight into the project’s accomplishments and lessons learned. The evaluation stages include (i) desk review, (ii) preparation of the inception report, (iii) consultation with implementing and development partners, field visits to project’s provinces and districts (iv) data analysis and interpretation, and (v) evaluation report writing and finalization.

The Evaluator will be responsible for designing appropriate theory-based evaluation methodology including designing tools, developing questionnaires and other instruments for data collection and analysis based on programme theory of change. In consultation with UNDP, the evaluator will be responsible for ensuring the participatory and gender-responsive approach to meet the evaluation objectives. A kick-off meeting should be organized with UNDP and evaluation partners to discuss data collection plan, expectations, and tools and techniques to be adhered to for collection of primary information. The consultant should use, but not limited, the following methods for data collection:

Desk review

The Evaluator should review relevant policies, strategies and project documents which includes Project notes, project proposals, progress reports, consolidated quarterly and annual reports, minutes of project board meetings, project modification document, knowledge products, research, monitoring reports and legal review reports, communication and visibility reports, case stories, IEC Materials etc. Please see annex -1 for relevant Project documents. In addition, the Evaluator will review literature, relevant research, and donors’ and government reports.

Interview/Consultation

The Consultant will conduct in-depth key informant interviews (online or virtual) to gather primary data from key stakeholders. For this, he/she should develop a checklist and evaluation questions. This includes interviewing representatives of implementing partner organizations, grantees, and the project donors. The Evaluator should also conduct a group interview, Focus Group discussion, with the Project stakeholders and beneficiaries. The interviews should also include relevant UN agencies and other implementing partners. While organizing interviews and consultations with beneficiaries, the Evaluator should ensure the participation of women, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

Field visit

The Evaluator is expected to conduct a field mission to consult the beneficiaries and stakeholders in provinces and districts. This also includes observing the functioning of the project-supported community and stakeholder groups, and platform, and interacting with the beneficiaries to understand the effectiveness, sustainability of the intervention in the field. Socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, social inclusion, disability and geographic location should be considered in respondent selection.

Case story

Using thematic case studies, the evaluator may assess the effectiveness and impact of the Project on the beneficiaries, particularly the benefits they accrued from the project. Gender and social inclusion including disability should be well considered while capturing and documenting the stories in the report.

6. Evaluation management and institutional arrangement

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP Country Office (UNDP CO) in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The UNDP CO will contract the consultant and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country. The Project team will be responsible for liaising with the consultant to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, as necessary.

Role (Who)	Responsibilities (What)
Evaluation Advisory Group	Senior management will provide an advisory role throughout the evaluation implementation. This group includes the Resident Representative as

	<p>Evaluation Commissioner, the Deputy Resident Representative, the Team Lead of Programme Support Unit and Chief Technical Adviser. The key roles include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure the timely implementation of the evaluation plan through monitoring and advising the process ▪ Safeguard the independence of the evaluation exercise and ensure quality of evaluations ▪ Ensure that all steps in the evaluation process are applied as defined in the UNDP evaluation guidelines ▪ Ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment, social inclusion and other cross-cutting issues are considered in all steps of the evaluation process ▪ Ensure management responses are prepared for evaluation with time-bound key actions for their implementation ▪ Approval of final terms of reference (TORs), final evaluation reports and management responses before final submission to the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC)
<p>Evaluation Manager</p>	<p>The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP CO in Sierra Leone. The UNDP CO will contract the consultant and ensure the timely implementation of the evaluation. The evaluator will report directly to the Evaluation Manager i.e., UNDP CO M&E Specialist in this case. The Evaluation Manager will ensure a smooth, quality, and independent implementation of the evaluation with needful guidance from UNDP’s Senior Management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review ToRs ensuring that they meet UNDP guidance requirements ▪ Ensure a smooth, quality, and independent implementation of the evaluation with needful guidance from UNDP’s Senior Management.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in hiring consultants by reviewing proposals and complete the recruitment process. ▪ Organize a kick-off meeting/briefing with evaluation team. ▪ Provide UNDP evaluation policies and guidelines to the evaluation team. ▪ Ensure that the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) evaluation standards are adhered to, including safeguarding of transparency and independence. ▪ Supervise, guide, and provide feedback and comments to the evaluation consultants. ▪ Ensure the quality of the evaluation. ▪ Review the evaluation inception and draft reports, ensuring that it meets UNDP requirements. ▪ Review management response and action plan. ▪ Report to senior management on compliance with the evaluation plan, completion of management responses and key actions and results of the quality assessment. ▪ Upload the ToRs, report and management response and action plan to ERC. ▪ Monitor implementation of evaluation action plan and update the progress at ERC.
Portfolio Team	<p>The Elections Project team is led by the Chief Technical Adviser. Their key roles include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide required Elections Project documents. ▪ Provide preliminary partner, stakeholder, and beneficiary information. ▪ Arrange all field visits, stakeholder consultations and interviews as needed. ▪ With the Evaluation Manager, the Elections Project team will further provide briefing to the evaluation team. ▪ Provide comments and clarification on the ToR, inception report and draft evaluation reports.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist in circulating and getting feedback on ToRs, inception and evaluation report from stakeholders. ▪ Respond to evaluation recommendations by providing management responses and key actions to all recommendations addressed to UNDP. ▪ Ensure dissemination of the evaluation report to all the stakeholders including the project board. ▪ Implement relevant key actions on evaluation recommendations. ▪ Contact regional focal points to seek advice when dispute arises.
<p>Evaluation Reference Group</p>	<p>The Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) includes key stakeholders with technical expertise in evaluation. The primary roles of the reference group are to support the evaluation process, provide feedback and direction in key stages. Key roles of the ERG include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perform advisory role throughout the evaluation process, providing input into and review of ToRs, inception reports and draft evaluation reports. ▪ Ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment, social inclusion and other cross-cutting issues are considered in all steps of the evaluation process. ▪ Ensure that the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) evaluation standards are adhered to, including safeguarding of transparency and independence. ▪ Provide advice on the evaluation relevance, the appropriateness of evaluation questions and methodology, and the extent to which conclusions are credible, considering the evidence presented, and recommendations action oriented. ▪ Support and provide input to the development of the management responses and key actions.

7. Deliverables and timelines

Under the direct supervision of the Evaluation Manager and in coordination with the UNDP Programme and Management Support Unit (PMSU), the Chief Technical Adviser of the Elections Project, and collaboration with relevant partners, the Consultant will accomplish the following deliverables in accordance with the stipulated timelines covering a total period of 35 working days starting from January 2024. The evaluator is expected to accomplish the evaluation exercise by the end of March 2024.

S/N	Deliverable	Timelines	Payments
1	Inception report: An inception report detailing the evaluator’s understanding of the assignment, showing how each evaluation question will be answered by way of proposed methods, proposed sources of data and data collection procedures. These should be included in an evaluation matrix, a proposed schedule of tasks with activities and deliverables. Inception report should be prepared before going into full-fledged evaluation exercise.	7 Working Days	20%
2	Debrief: The consultant should present the initial findings to UNDP, donors and implementing partners. Draft report: The draft report should include desk review and data collection methodology used, analysis and interpretation with discussion in the prescribed report outline. The consultant should also present the draft report in a debriefing session to discuss on initial findings and recommendations and collect the feedback.	18 Working Days	30%
3	Second draft report: A revised report based on the comments from the stakeholder or validation workshop. Final report: A final report in prescribed format with annexes including the response in the evaluation audit trail form. The evaluation audit trial form can be sent separately to show that comments from the UNDP and its stakeholders are addressed properly.	10 Working Days	50%
Total		35 Days	100%

8. Evaluator competencies

This end-of-project evaluation will be conducted by an external consultant who will work closely with the UNDP CO M&E Specialist, the Elections Project Team, and government counterparts in the conduct and direction of the evaluation.

Corporate Competencies

- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality, and age sensitivity and adaptability.
- Demonstrates diplomacy and tact in dealing with sensitive and complex situations.
- Strong communication, team building, interpersonal, analysis, and planning skills.

Professionalism

- Effective communication.
- Problem-solving skills.
- Demonstrated ability to negotiate and apply good judgment.
- Shows pride in work and in achievements.
- Is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines, and achieving results.
- Superior leadership and strategic management skills with an excellent understanding of international development issues and knowledge of the UN system.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, in a multi-cultural setting; ability to conduct results-based management and reporting, objectivity and ability to analyze large multi-country data sets in short period.
- Good understanding of gender and human right based approach, and skills, experience and commitment to gender issues including experience of conducting inclusive evaluation.

Planning & Organizing

- Organizes and accurately completes multiple tasks by establishing priorities while taking into consideration special assignments, frequent interruptions, deadlines, available resources, and multiple reporting relationships.
- Plan, coordinate and organize workload while remaining aware of changing priorities and competing deadlines.
- Establish, build, and maintain effective working relationships with staff, partners, and beneficiaries to achieve the planned results.
- Experience working collaboratively in small teams with tight deadlines.

9. Required qualifications and experience

The required qualifications are listed below:

Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advanced university degree in Political Science, International Studies, Development Studies, Monitoring and Evaluation, Policy Management, Social Sciences, and any related field of study
Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At least 7 years of international development experience or at least 5 years of experience in project/programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation for the international consultant. ▪ Relevant professional experience in the evaluation of election, peacebuilding or governance project.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong monitoring and evaluation background, sound methodological skills and knowledge of evaluation methods and techniques. ▪ Extensive experience in working with the UN/multilateral development agencies and UNDP CO. ▪ Demonstrate experience in working with a variety of stakeholders. ▪ Technical knowledge and experience of inclusive evaluation and other cross-cutting areas such gender equality, youth engagement, disability issues, rights-based approach, and capacity development
Language Requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to communicate clearly and concisely in written and spoken English.

10. Ethical considerations

This Evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’. The Evaluator must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing the collection of data and reporting of data. The contractor must also ensure the security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

The Evaluator will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a Code of Conduct upon acceptance of the assignment.

11. Submission of application

A qualified candidate is required to submit both technical and financial proposals through the link provided.

Technical proposal submission should include the following detailed document.

- **Personal CV or P11**, indicating all experience from similar consultancy, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number) of the candidate and three (3) professional references.
- **Brief description** (max. 1 page) of why you consider yourself as the most suitable for the assignment, and a methodology (max. 1 page) for how you will approach and complete the assignment.
- **Proposal** containing a summary description of proposed strategy and how the strategy will ensure the achievement of the required tasks, proposed methodology, draft agenda for half-day session on discussing the findings of the evaluation (max 2-3 pages).
- **Example of works** demonstrating the individual past experiences working on evaluations for the UN system (please share the document’s links).

Financial proposal: Financial proposals are expected to be realistic indicating the all-inclusive, fixed total contract price, supported by a breakdown of costs. No adjustment thereafter will be allowed.

For any further clarification, please send an email to vendors.sle@undp.org.

12. Evaluation Selection criteria

UNDP will use a GPN ExpRes Roster to recruit the qualified evaluator. The candidates will be evaluated using a combined scoring method, where the qualifications and technical expertise will be weighted 70%, and combined with the price offer, which will be weighted 30%. The candidates will be asked to send the technical proposal containing a summary description of the proposed strategy and how the strategy will ensure the achievement of the required tasks, the proposed methodology, work plan and draft agenda for a half-day session on discussing the findings of the evaluation (max 5 pages).

Criteria to be used for rating the qualifications and methodology.

Technical evaluation criteria-Expertise, skills, qualifications, knowledge, and value for money (total 70 points)

Criteria	Maximum Points	Weighted Point (70%)
Technical expertise (required experience and knowledge for assignment)	50	35
Relevant regional or country-specific knowledge	20	14
Academic qualifications (relevant academic qualifications in line with the ToR)	30	21

Only candidates obtaining a minimum of weighted 49 points in the Technical Evaluation will be considered for the Financial Evaluation and further process.

Financial evaluation (total 30 points)

All technically qualified proposals will be rated out of 30 points. The maximum points (30) will be assigned to the lowest financial proposal.

UNDP is committed to achieving workforce diversity in terms of gender, nationality, and culture. Individuals from minority groups, indigenous groups and persons with disabilities are equally encouraged to apply. All applications will be treated with the strictest confidence.

ANNEX 2: EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation Criteria and Main Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Indicators/Performance Measures	Data Sources (primary and secondary)	Data Collection Tools	Data Analysis Plans
Relevance					
<p>How relevant was the Elections Project to fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?</p>	<p>To what extent does the Elections Project respond to the priorities of the Government of Sierra Leone National Development Plan (2019-2023) and similar strategies, the UNDP Country Programme Document (2020-2024), United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation (UNSDCF) 2020-2024, donors’ strategies and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?</p> <p>How does the support for the Elections Project interventions contribute to the longer-term</p>	<p>UN, partner, beneficiary, and stakeholder perceptions of the relevance of project interventions to priorities, plans, strategies, and the SDGs</p> <p>Evidence for their perceptions (data, stories, examples, perceived changes)</p> <p>Evidence for and perceptions of relevance of project to longer-term development</p>	<p>Project reporting, other project documentation</p> <p>Analytic documents on electoral processes in Sierra Leone</p> <p>Interviews with project staff, UN organisation staff, staff of GoSL organisations (including ECSL), donor partner staff, and CSO leaders</p>	<p>Document review guide</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>

	<p>development results in Sierra Leone in terms of approaches, capacities, policies, and strategies?</p> <p>How relevant have the Elections Project interventions been in leveraging support for the democratic process?</p> <p>Do the interventions meet the practical and strategic needs of all genders, persons with disabilities (PWD), and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups?</p> <p>To what extent are the Elections Project interventions coherent with Government’s policies?</p> <p>To what extent does intervention support national legislation and initiatives that aim to improve gender equality</p>	<p>Evidence for and perceptions of relevance of project to building support for democratic processes</p> <p>Evidence that project interventions align to the expressed needs of men and women, PwDs, youth, and disadvantaged and marginalized groups</p> <p>Alignment of project activities with government policies</p> <p>Alignment of project with initiatives of Sierra Leone in GE and HR</p>			
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	and human rights? What lessons can be learned?	Lessons learned in GE and HR			
Coherence					
How has the Elections Project brought coherence to fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?	<p>To what extent has the UNDP Elections Project addressed synergies and interlinkages with other interventions carried out by UNDP?</p> <p>To what extent has the UNDP Elections Project addressed the synergies and interlinkages with other interventions carried out by the UN and other development partners?</p>	<p>Evidence for project assessing synergies with other UNDP projects</p> <p>Evidence for project taking actions based on synergies with other UNDP projects</p> <p>Evidence for project assessing synergies with other UN and development partner projects</p> <p>Evidence for project taking actions based on synergies with other UN and development partner projects</p>	<p>Project reporting, other project documentation</p> <p>Analytic documents on electoral processes in Sierra Leone</p> <p>Interviews with project staff, UN organisation staff, staff of GoSL organisations (including EC SL), donor partner staff, and CSO leaders</p>	<p>Document review guide</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>
Efficiency					
How efficient has the Elections Project been in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?	<p>Has the Project been implemented within its stated timeframe and cost estimates?</p> <p>Did the Project interventions focus on the</p>	<p>Evidence for project efficiencies</p> <p>Perceptions of project efficiencies</p>	<p>Primary documents (Project reporting, other project documentation)</p> <p>Secondary documents</p>	<p>Document review guide</p> <p>Semi-structured</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p>

	<p>set of activities that were expected to produce the most significant results?</p> <p>To what extent were human and financial resources allocated towards the achievement of the Project objectives? Were different resources allocated in ways that considered gender equality, and inclusion of persons with disability and youth? If so, how were they allocated? Was a different resource allocation appropriate to reach these groups?</p> <p>Were there any identified synergies between UNDP-funded interventions and other similar interventions that contributed to reducing costs while supporting results? Did changes to budget sufficiently consider value for money?</p>	<p>Timing of implementation relative to ProDoc</p> <p>Use of cost estimates and adjustment of costs</p> <p>Examples of focus on priority activities</p> <p>Examples of allocations that consider GE, PwDs, and youth</p> <p>Assessments of appropriateness of allocations towards GE, PwDs, and youth</p> <p>Evidence for synergies leading to reduced costs</p> <p>Evidence for considering VfM in changes to budgets</p> <p>Assessments of sufficiency of consideration of VfM in these budget changes</p>	<p>Interviews with UN organisation staff, GoSL staff, donor partner staff, and CSO leaders</p>	<p>interview guide and questions</p>	<p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>
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	<p>Has there been over expenditure or under expenditure in Project interventions?</p> <p>Were there any unanticipated events, opportunities, or constraints? What could be done differently in the future?</p> <p>What measures were taken to assure the quality of development results and management practices, both in relation to process and products, and to partnership strategies?</p> <p>What monitoring and evaluation (M&E) procedures were applied by UNDP and partners to ensure greater accountability?</p>	<p>Assessment of actual spending relative to planned expenditures</p> <p>Perceptions of events as unanticipated that affected the project</p> <p>Assessments of potential ways to manage unanticipated events going forward</p> <p>Evidence for Quality Assessment/Quality Control (QA/QC) processes</p> <p>Evidence for M&E</p> <p>Evidence M&E used for accountability</p>			
<p>Effectiveness</p>					

<p>How effective has the Elections Project been in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?</p>	<p>Have the expected Project (quantitative and qualitative) results been achieved and what were the supporting or impeding factors?</p> <p>What are the main lessons learned from the partnership strategies and what are the possibilities of replication?</p> <p>To what extent have interventions’ objectives and results contributed to gender equality, women and youth empowerment and human rights for peaceful and credible elections?</p> <p>Which aspects of the interventions had the greatest achievements? What have been the supporting factors? How can UNDP build upon or replicate these achievements?</p>	<p>Plausible contribution of project interventions to outcomes and outputs</p> <p>Evidence of project outputs</p> <p>Perceptions and evidence for what worked well in the project</p> <p>Perceptions and evidence for what impeded the project</p> <p>Suggested lessons from partnerships</p> <p>Perceptions of replicability</p> <p>Evidence of project outputs in GEWE, youth empowerment, PwDs and HR</p> <p>Contributions of project to GEWE, youth empowerment, PwDs and HR</p> <p>Perceptions of greatest achievements</p>	<p>Project reporting, other project documentation</p> <p>Analytic documents on electoral processes in Sierra Leone</p> <p>Interviews with project staff, UN organisation staff, staff of GoSL organisations (including ECSSL), donor partner staff, and CSO leaders</p>	<p>Document review guide</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>
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	<p>In which areas does the Project component have the least achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can they be overcome?</p> <p>Were the approaches, resources and conceptual frameworks used relevant to the achievement of planned outcomes/outputs?</p> <p>What were the unintended results (positive/negative) of project interventions, and why?</p>	<p>Perceptions of replicability and possibilities of scaling up</p> <p>Perceptions of fewer achievements</p> <p>Ideas and evidence for how to overcome constraints</p> <p>Evidence for usefulness of resources and frameworks in reaching outputs</p> <p>Evidence for usefulness of resources and frameworks towards outcomes</p> <p>Characterizations of results as unintended</p> <p>Explanations for how these results were obtained</p>			
Partnerships and Coordination					
	<p>To what extent were partnerships and coordination considerations taken into account in the design and implementation of interventions? How was</p>	<p>Evidence for attention to partnerships and coordination in design</p> <p>Evidence for attention to partnerships and</p>	<p>Project reporting, other project documentation</p> <p>Analytic documents on electoral</p>	<p>Document review guide</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>

	<p>this concern reflected in the design of the Project component and in the implementation of activities at different levels?</p> <p>How effective was the coordination structure? Which structures are relatively effective in supporting implementation of the project? What lesson can be learned?</p>	<p>coordination implementation in</p> <p>Assessments of effectiveness of coordination structures</p> <p>Lessons asserted about coordination structures</p>	<p>processes in Sierra Leone</p> <p>Interviews with project staff, UN organisation staff, staff of GoSL organisations (including ECSL), donor partner staff, and CSO leaders</p>		
Digitalization					
	<p>To what extent were digitalization and digitalization considerations taken into account in the design and implementation of interventions? How was this concern reflected in the design of the programme component and in the implementation of activities at different levels?</p>	<p>Evidence for attention to digitalization in design</p> <p>Evidence for attention to digitalization in implementation</p>	<p>Project reporting, other project documentation</p> <p>Analytic documents on electoral processes in Sierra Leone</p> <p>Interviews with project staff, UN organisation staff, staff of GoSL organisations (including ECSL),</p>	<p>Document review guide</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>

			donor partner staff, and CSO leaders		
Sustainability					
How sustainable are the contributions of the Elections Project to fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?	<p>To what extent were sustainability considerations taken into account in the design and implementation of interventions? How was this concern reflected in the design of the programme component and in the implementation of activities at different levels?</p> <p>Were exit strategies programme interventions appropriately defined and implemented, and what steps have been taken to ensure the sustainability of results?</p> <p>How did the development of partnerships at local and national level contribute to the sustainability of the results?</p>	<p>Evidence for sustainability of outcomes and outputs</p> <p>Perceptions of sustainability of outcomes and outputs</p> <p>Evidence for attentiveness to sustainability in design</p> <p>Evidence for attentiveness to sustainability in implementation</p> <p>Evidence for contributions of partnerships to sustainability</p> <p>Perceptions of contributions of partnerships to sustainability</p>	<p>Project reporting, other project documentation</p> <p>Analytic documents on electoral processes in Sierra Leone</p> <p>Interviews with project staff, UN organisation staff, staff of GoSL organisations (including ECSL), donor partner staff, and CSO leaders</p>	<p>Document review guide</p> <p>Semi-structured interview guide and questions</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>

	<p>How were different stakeholders engaged in the design and implementation? Have interventions been implemented with appropriate and effective partnership strategies? What has been the nature and added value of these partnerships?</p> <p>To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights, and human development by primary stakeholders?</p>	<p>Evidence for engagement of stakeholders in design</p> <p>Evidence for engagement of stakeholders in implementation</p> <p>Assessments of appropriateness of partnerships</p> <p>Assessments of added value of partnerships</p> <p>Evidence that stakeholders have policies, procedures, and mechanisms to sustain GEWE, HR, and human development results of the project</p>			
Human Rights, Gender Equality, Youth and Disability Inclusion					
<p>How did the Elections Project support human rights, gender equality, youth and disability inclusion in fostering peaceful, credible and</p>	<p>To what extent have poor, indigenous and persons with disability, women, men, youths and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the project?</p>	<p>Evidence for benefits for the poor, PwDs, women and men, youth, disadvantaged and marginalized groups</p>	<p>Project reporting, other project documentation</p> <p>Analytic documents on electoral</p>	<p>Document review guide</p> <p>Semi-structured</p>	<p>Content and thematic analysis and comparison</p> <p>Trend analysis of change over time</p>

<p>inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?</p>	<p>To what extent has the Project integrated Human Rights Based Approach in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project? Have the resources been used in an efficient way to address Human Rights in the implementation?</p> <p>Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality?</p> <p>To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and promoting the rights of women, youths and persons with disability? Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men, youths, or vulnerable groups?</p>	<p>Assertions of and evidence for use of HRBA in design</p> <p>Assertions of and evidence for use of HRBA in implementation</p> <p>Assertions of and evidence for use of HRBA in monitoring</p> <p>Assertions of and evidence for attention to efficiency in implementation of HRBA</p> <p>Assessments of percentage of project directed towards gender</p> <p>Evidence for project attention to GEWE, youth, PwDs</p> <p>Assessments of effects as unintended on women, men, youth, or vulnerable groups</p>	<p>processes in Sierra Leone</p> <p>Interviews with project staff, UN organisation staff, staff of GoSL organisations (including ECSL), donor partner staff, and CSO leaders</p>	<p>interview guide and questions</p>	
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Fostering Peaceful, Credible and Inclusive Elections in Sierra Leone 2022-2023 Progress Report, August 2022-May 2023

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ANNEX 4: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

UNDP

Fredrick Hans Ampiah, Resident Representative, UNDP
Sayed Sahibzada, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP

Elections Project

George Baratashvili, CTA
Mfrekeobong Ukpanah, Conflict Prevention Specialist
Ilemobola Ademola-Adelehin, Gender and Inclusion Specialist
Mohamed Bal, Communications Specialist
Sagar Adhikari, iVerify Specialist

RCO

Simonetta Rossi, Peace and Development Advisor

ECSL

Mohammed Kenewui Konneh, Chief Electoral Commissioner and Chair, ECSL
Abubakarr Mahmoud Koroma, Electoral Commissioner-North, ECSL
Marian Sia Nyuma-Moijueh, Electoral Commissioner-East, ECSL
William A. Davies Executive Secretary, ECSL
Alex Saffa, Principal Assistant to the Chair, ECSL
Raymond George, Director of Media and Communication, ECSL
Mohamed M. Kanneh, Director of Electoral Education, ECSL
Christiana O'Reilly, Director of Electoral Inclusion, ECSL

Development Partners

Enrico Sborgi, Governance team, EUD
Ásdís Bjarnadóttir, Head of Mission, Embassy of Iceland
Kjartan Oskarsson, Embassy of Iceland
Carol Hannon, Head of Development, Embassy of Ireland
Emma McLoughlin, Second Secretary, Embassy of Ireland
Josephus Ellie, Head of Governance, Embassy of Ireland

Other Partners

Baindu Patricia Massaquoi, Head of Governance, UN Women
David Olu, Executive Secretary, PPRC
Atata Mansaray, Chair, National Youth Commission
Momodu Wudie, Program Manager, National Youth Commission
Ahmed Nasrallah, Director, SLAJ
Ransford Wright, Director, IRN

Abdul Rahman Kays, Executive Director, WAYNPEED
Joseph - CGG
Hannah Kabu, Youth Lab participant
Monica Yeanie Ghaliwa, Youth Lab participant
Musa Khalil Koroma, Global Youth Network, Youth Lab participant
Mada Squi, Obasanjo Skills Acquisition Center, Youth Lab participant
Olushogo Abraham David, Executive Secretary, PPRC
Jenneh Amadou, Programme Specialist, PPRC
Director of Finance, PPRC

Stakeholders

Mamoud Tarawallie, Chief of Party, International IDEA
Gavin Weise, DAI, EU-funded Expert Advisor to ECSL

Bo District

Ali Bagma, Acting District Director, ECSL
Samir Sana, Elections Coordinator, ECSL
Joseph Mbawa, PPRC
Jabez Aneadn, Program Officer, MoPADA
Sheku A. Kanneh, Program Officer, MoPADA
Rosaline Belmoh, DRIM
Patrick Wamala, Head of Programs, MoPADA
Abdul Rogers, Sewa Road Youth
Edwin Brewah, MoPADA beneficiary
Cecilia A. Sheriff, Gender, MoPADA
Joseph Balamu Mambu, Team Lead, Bo District, Southern Region Youth Network, Youth Lab participant
Fouad Fofanah, Bonthe District, Youth Movement, Youth Lab participant
Agusta Kaalon, Bonthe District, Youth Movement, Youth Lab participant
Patrick John Sandy, Team Lead, Moyamba District, Southern Region Youth Network, Youth Lab participant
Iye Abu, Young Women in Governance, Network for Rural Development and Advocacy, Youth Lab participant
Jeneba Massawuo, Emissary Sisters, Pujeuun District, , Youth Lab participant
Mohamed Alimamg Bangara, Building the Future Foundation Sierra Leone, Moyamba District, Youth Lab participant

Bombali District

Misboa Lahai Jenneh, Acting Deputy District Director, Mediation and Programs Officer, PPRC
Brima Conteh, Chief Executive Officer, AMNet
Anna Sesay, AMNet
Denis Abu Turay, Assistant Voter Education and Training Officer, ECSL
Ramatu Kabia, APPWA

Ramahdai Mansaray, Gender Officer, PAPO

Foday Momah Kanu, Regional Coordinator, ICPNC

Anbreno Ikummu, Administrative Assistant, ICPNC

Salanafa Thullah, AVETO

Ibrahim Bangnia, M&E Officer, AMNet

Fatmata A.B. Koroma, Voice for the Inclusion and Empowerment of Women, Northern Region Youth Network, Youth Lab participant

Joseph Ayamga, Country Director, SEND

Zainab, Project Manager, SEND

Elijah, Advocacy, SEND

Ruth, Programmes officer, SEND, Kailau District

ANNEX 5: EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

DOCUMENT REVIEW PROTOCOL

The evaluator reviewed project produced and partner produced materials for qualitative and quantitative data directly useful for answering the evaluation questions and fulfilling the purpose of the evaluation. The review looked for evidence to fit the following categories:

Relevance

- Correspondence with priorities of GoSL, UNDP, UNSCDF, donors, SDGs
- Long-term development
- Leveraging support
- For all genders, PwDs, disadvantaged and marginalized groups
- Correspondence with government policies
- For gender equality and human rights

Coherence

- Synergies with other UNDP interventions
- Synergies with interventions of UN and other development partners

Efficiency

- Correspondence with stated timeframes and cost estimates
- Focus on key activities
- Allocation of human and financial resources towards objectives
- Allocation of human and financial resources towards gender equality, PwDs, youth
- Cost effectiveness/Value for money
- Over expenditure or underexpenditure
- Unanticipated events
- Quality control
- M&E

Effectiveness

- Achievement of expected outcomes and outputs
- Factors that contributed to and impeded reaching results
- Partnerships and potential replication
- Contributions to GE, PwDs, youth empowerment, HR
- Greatest achievements
- Least achievements
- Relevance of approaches used for reaching planned outcomes and outputs
- Unintended results

Partnerships and Coordination

- In design
- In implementation
- Effectiveness of coordination structures

Digitalization

- In design
- In implementation

Sustainability

- In design
- In implementation
- Exit strategy
- Contribution of partnerships to sustainability
- Extent of mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights, and human development

Human Rights, Gender Equality, Youth and Disability Inclusion

- extent poor, indigenous and PwDs, women, men, youths and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited
- HRBA in design, implementation, monitoring
- Extent addresses gender
- Unintended effects on women, men, youth, or vulnerable groups

INTRODUCTION AND INFORMED CONSENT

The introduction and consent note was used to introduce the evaluator, the evaluation, and methods to participants in the evaluation to gather the explicit consent of people with participating in the evaluation. The evaluator recited or summarized the following to all prospective interviewees and obtained their explicit oral consent to participate in the evaluation under these conditions.

Introduction and Informed Consent

Thank you for talking with me today.

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

The information collected today will only be used for the review. I will not use this information in a way that identifies you as an individual in the report.

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

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

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

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

[NOTE THAT NOT ALL QUESTIONS WERE ASKED IN ALL INTERVIEWS; INTERVIEWS FOCUSED ON THE AREAS AND QUESTIONS MOST RELEVANT TO INDIVIDUAL INFORMANT’S KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE WITH THE ELECTIONS PROJECT]

Relevance

How relevant was the Elections Project to fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?

To what extent does the Elections Project respond to the priorities of the Government of Sierra Leone National Development Plan (2019-2023)?

To what extent does the Elections Project respond to the priorities of the UNDP Country Programme Document (2020-2024)?

To what extent does the Elections Project respond to the priorities of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation (UNSDCF) 2020-2024?

To what extent does the Elections Project respond to the priorities of development partners?

To what extent does the Elections Project respond to Sustainable Development Goals’ priorities?

How does the support of the Elections Project contribute to the longer-term development in Sierra Leone?

How relevant have the Elections Project interventions been in leveraging support for the democratic process in the country?

To what extent do Elections Project interventions meet needs of women and men, persons with disabilities, and disadvantaged and marginalized groups?

To what extent are the Elections Project interventions coherent with the Government’s policies?

To what extent do Elections Project intervention support gender equality and human rights?

Coherence

How has the Elections Project brought coherence to fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?

To what extent has the UNDP Elections Project addressed synergies and interlinkages with other interventions carried out by UNDP?

To what extent has the UNDP Elections Project addressed the synergies and interlinkages with other interventions carried out by the UN and other development partners?

Efficiency

How efficient has the Elections Project been in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?

Has the Project been implemented within its stated timeframe?

Has the Project been implemented consistent with its cost estimates?

Did the Project interventions focus on the set of activities that were expected to produce the most significant results?

To what extent were human and financial resources allocated towards the achievement of the Project objectives?

Were resources allocated in ways that considered gender equality, and inclusion of persons with disability and youth?

Was differential resource allocation appropriate to reach these groups?

Was there any identified synergies between UNDP-funded interventions and other similar interventions that contributed to reducing costs while supporting results?

Did any changes to budgets sufficiently consider value for money?

Has there been over expenditure or under expenditure in Project interventions?

Were there any unanticipated events, opportunities, or constraints that affected the Elections Project?

What if anything could be done differently in the future around these unanticipated factors?

What measures were taken to assure the quality of development results?

What measures were taken to assure the quality of management practices?

What measures were taken to assure the quality of partnerships?

What monitoring and evaluation (M&E) procedures were applied by UNDP and partners to ensure greater accountability?

Effectiveness

How effective has the Elections Project been in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?

Have the expected Project (quantitative and qualitative) results achieved?

What factors supported the achievement of these results?

What factors impeded these and planned results?

What are the main lessons learned from the project’s partnerships?

What are the possibilities of replicating these partnerships?

To what extent have Elections project interventions contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and youth and human rights through support for peaceful and credible elections?

What Elections Project interventions had the greatest achievements?

What factors led to these activities having the greatest achievements?

How can UNDP build upon or replicate these achievements going forward?

In what areas does the Elections Project have the fewest achievements?

What factors led to these activities having the fewest achievements?

How can these factors that led to activities having few achievements be overcome?

Were the approaches, resources and conceptual frameworks used by the Elections project relevant to the achievement of planned outcomes and outputs?

Can you identify any any positive or negative unintended results of project interventions?

What are the causes of these unintended results of the project?

Partnerships and Coordination

To what extent were partnerships and coordination considerations taken into account in the design of interventions?

To what extent were partnerships and coordination considerations taken into account in the implementation of interventions?

How effective was the coordination structure of the Elections project?

Which structures were relatively effective in supporting implementation?

What lesson can be learned from the experience of the elections project with partnerships and coordination?

Digitalization

To what extent was digitalization taken into account in the design of interventions?

To what extent was digitalization taken into account in the implementation of interventions?

Sustainability

How sustainable are the contributions of the Elections Project to fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?

To what extent were sustainability considerations taken into account in the design of interventions?

To what extent were sustainability considerations taken into account in the implementation of interventions?

What steps have been taken to ensure the sustainability of results?

Were exit strategies appropriately defined and implemented?

How did the development of partnerships at local and national level contribute to sustainability?

How were different stakeholders engaged in the design and implementation?

Have interventions been implemented with appropriate and effective partnership strategies?

What has been the nature and added value of these partnerships?

To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist in primary stakeholder organizations to carry forward the project’s results on gender equality and the empowerment of women, human rights, and human development?

Human Rights, Gender Equality, Youth and Disability Inclusion

How did the Elections Project support human rights, gender equality, youth and disability inclusion in fostering peaceful, credible and inclusive elections in Sierra Leone?

To what extent have poor people, indigenous persons and persons with disability, women, men, youths and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the project?

To what extent has the Project integrated Human Rights Based Approach in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project?

Have project resources been used in an efficient way to address Human Rights in implementation?

Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality?

To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and promoted the rights of women, youths and persons with disability?

Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men, youths, or vulnerable groups?

ANNEX 6: SIGNED CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EVALUATION



ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION

PLEDGE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN EVALUATION



UNEG

United Nations Evaluation Group

By signing this pledge, I hereby commit to discussing and applying the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and to adopting the associated ethical behaviours.



INTEGRITY

I will actively adhere to the moral values and professional standards of evaluation practice as outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and following the values of the United Nations. Specifically, I will be:

- **Honest and truthful** in my communication and actions.
- **Professional**, engaging in credible and trustworthy behaviour, alongside competence, commitment and ongoing reflective practice.
- **Independent, impartial and incorruptible.**



ACCOUNTABILITY

I will be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken and responsible for honouring commitments, without qualification or exception; I will report potential or actual harms observed. Specifically, I will be:

- **Transparent regarding evaluation** purpose and actions taken, establishing trust and increasing accountability for performance to the public, particularly those populations affected by the evaluation.
- **Responsive** as questions or events arise, adapting plans as required and referring to appropriate channels where corruption, fraud, sexual exploitation or abuse or other misconduct or waste of resources is identified.
- **Responsible** for meeting the evaluation purpose and for actions taken and for ensuring redress and recognition as needed.



RESPECT

I will engage with all stakeholders of an evaluation in a way that honours their dignity, well-being, personal agency and characteristics. Specifically, I will ensure:

- **Access** to the evaluation process and products by all relevant stakeholders – whether powerless or powerful – with due attention to factors that could impede access such as sex, gender, race, language, country of origin, LGBTQ status, age, background, religion, ethnicity and ability.
- **Meaningful participation and equitable treatment** of all relevant stakeholders in the evaluation processes, from design to dissemination. This includes engaging various stakeholders, particularly affected people, so they can actively inform the evaluation approach and products rather than being solely a subject of data collection.
- **Fair representation** of different voices and perspectives in evaluation products (reports, webinars, etc.).



BENEFICENCE

I will strive to do good for people and planet while minimizing harm arising from evaluation as an intervention. Specifically, I will ensure:

- **Explicit and ongoing consideration of risks and benefits** from evaluation processes.
- **Maximum benefits** at systemic (including environmental), organizational and programmatic levels.
- **No harm.** I will not proceed where harm cannot be mitigated.
- **Evaluation makes an overall positive contribution** to human and natural systems and the mission of the United Nations.

I commit to playing my part in ensuring that evaluations are conducted according to the Charter of the United Nations and the ethical requirements laid down above and contained within the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. When this is not possible, I will report the situation to my supervisor, designated focal points or channels and will actively seek an appropriate response.

Lawrence R. Robertson

22 December 2023

ANNEX 7: OUTCOME AND OUTPUT DATA -FINDINGS AND EVALUATION ASSESSMENT

Expected Result	Indicator (Baseline and Target)	Final Report Data and Other Evaluation Findings	Evaluation Assessment
IMPACT: Capacity of stakeholders strengthened, and peaceful and credible elections conducted in 2023	1. a. Observation mission reports concluded elections were credible and peaceful organized in conformity with the national legislation. Target: Yes.	Voting was conducted in a peaceful atmosphere, however operational shortcomings effected delivery of transparent and credible elections. Observation mission preliminary statements.	Peaceful elections Limited credibility
	1.b. Results management system enhanced transparency of electoral results. Target: Yes	Lack of transparency in the Tally process. Observation mission preliminary statements.	Not applicable for evaluating project. The Elections Project did not work in this area as ECSL declined assistance envisioned in ProDoc.
	1.c. Number of voters registered Baseline: 3.1 million in 2018 Target: 3.5 million in 2022	3,374,258 voters registered in 2022. ECSL registration record published on 24 December 2022	Partially met
	1.d. Percentage of women candidates nominated in the upcoming elections. Baseline: 12.6% Target: 35%.	ECSL nomination records for 2023 elections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36% women MPs elected in 2023 • 30.4% Local Council members elected in 2023 • 34% women 	Met

Expected Result	Indicator and Target (Baseline if non-0)	Draft Final Report Data and Other Evaluation Findings	Evaluation Assessment
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<p>Outcome 1: Institutional capacity of electoral stakeholders is enhanced</p>	<p>1.1 a. Number of capacity building sessions and management courses attended by commissioners and secretariat staff. Target: 3</p>	<p>PPRC’s visit (6 delegates) to the Gambia to study the country’s experience in facilitating dialogue among political parties.</p>	<p>Partially met</p>
	<p>1.1. b. Number of materials procured for the PPRC/ECSL Target: Laptops, printers, scanners, projector/screen, A/C, generators, vehicle, furniture</p>	<p>The Project delivered 16 laptop computers to PPRC headquarters and regional offices, an all-terrain vehicle to support field missions, internet connectivity equipment (two servers, eight routers), 75 conference chairs and tables for the PPRC conference hall, a generator, two air conditioning units, and eight sets of tables and chairs for the new PPRC office. Heavy-duty printers, one laptop, one printer and editing software for the graphic design unit, 18 generators and 18 printers. Solar panels installed to power the ECSL HQ ICT Unit and Datacentre.</p>	<p>Met (However, no target set so difficult to assess with precision)</p>
	<p>1.2. Number of technical expertise provided to ensure quality of a voter register. Target: 1</p>	<p>ECSL formally declined the Project’s proposal to recruit a Voter Registration Consultant. The Project supported ECSL’s efforts have create a gender-and disability disaggregated voter register.</p>	<p>Partially met Gender and disability disaggregated voter registration data made available; ECSL has not made disaggregated voting data available.</p>
	<p>1.3 Percentage of electoral disputes resolved in a timely manner during the project period. Target: not set</p>	<p>No complaints filed during the 2023 elections, as main opposition party APC asserted courts would not be neutral but pro-SLPP.</p>	<p>Not applicable (Can not assess as no disputes taken to courts)</p>

	<p>1.3. a. Number of judges, magistrates and support staff trained on electoral dispute resolution process. Target: 120</p>	39 Supreme and High Court judges, 20 magistrates, and 76 court registrars trained on electoral justice and electoral complaints adjudication process.	Exceeded
	<p>1.3. b. Number of electoral law compendiums printed. Target: 1000</p>	500 copies of the two-volume Compendium of Election Laws printed (1000 books).	Met
	<p>1.4. Number of high and mid-rank police officers trained on electoral security and prevention of gender-based violence. Target: 700</p>	The SLP training courses set for implementation under Activity 1.4 were completed through the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) project coordinated by the UNDP Elections Project.	Not applicable (undertaken through the PBF project funding)
	<p>1.5. a. Number of assessments conducted to identify capacity within the bodies mandated to receive and handle complaints and determine digitalization of some of the complaint mechanisms. Target: 1</p>	Not implemented due to no interest of stakeholders.	Not implemented
	<p>1.5. b. Number of electoral complaints tracking system installed. Target: 1</p>	Not implemented due to no interest of stakeholders.	Not implemented
Outcome 2: Transparency in the electoral process is enhanced.	<p>2.1. a. Online system designed to increase transparency of electoral results and operation. Target: 2 (1 PPRC Webpage and 1 ECSL Webpage)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Project launched the iVerify platform on 5 April. 265 fact-checked stories successfully processed to date. PPRC’s website redesigned and fully functional. ECSL declined support for redesigning of its webpage. 	Met
	<p>2.1.b. Number of ECSL dialogues and information sharing meetings Target: 3</p>	Not applicable	Not implemented

	<p>2.2. Results management system (RMS) assessment report developed. Baseline: RMS designed in 2012 Target: RMS decentralized and functional</p>	<p>ECSL formally declined the Project’s proposal to recruit a Results Management Consultant</p>	<p>Not implemented</p>
	<p>2.2 a. Number of technical expertise provided to ensure accuracy and transparency of RMS. Target: 1</p>	<p>ECSL formally declined the Project’s proposal to recruit a Results Management Consultant</p>	<p>Not implemented</p>
	<p>2.3 Number of Media and Civic Education Centre established in the ECSL. Target: 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Project supported a Media and Communication Centre at the Bintumani Conference Centre for two weeks around the election date. • ECSL in partnership with ESSEL Media failed to provide internet connectivity, a dedicated website, or an active help desk and could not timely manage external communication to provide updates to address mounting public frustration during the polls. • Scheduled for completion after the elections. 	<p>Met</p>
<p>Outcome 3: <i>Inclusion in electoral processes is promoted and citizen engagement is strengthened</i></p>	<p>3.1.a Number of WEEC’s formed. Baseline: 398 (2018) Target: 449 (2022-23)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECSL recruited and trained 1800 LEECs (former WEECs) members in 448 localities. The LEECs supported the ECSL during the 2022 voter registration, the 2023 voter ID cards collection and the 2023 candidate nomination process. • Regional briefing on LEECs Operations: Trained 79 District Election Managers and Voter Education Training Officers from the 16 districts on the operations and activities of LEECs for effective oversight of the LEECs. • Training of 481 Election Coordinators (EC) at district level to train, manage and supervise LEECs. • 1800 LEECs members trained from the 448 localities by the ECs to undertake voter education campaigns effectively. 	<p>Exceeded</p>

	<p>3.1.b Number of voter education materials produced.</p> <p>Target: 50,000 A1 size posters, 50,000 A3 size posters, 50,000 leaflets (per year), aprons/vests (4500) for voter educators, T-shirts (5000), megaphones (2000) Training materials for voter educators</p>	<p>The Project provided technical support to ECSL to produce and disseminate election awareness material:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animation material on polling exercise and process • Audio-visual aid on polling • One (1) peace-themed song • One (1) song on polling • Jingles on peace messages in English and local languages. • Jingles on women's participation and the PR system in English and local languages. • Jingles on the nomination process and the PR system in English and local languages. • Airing of jingles on radio (8 stations) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Megaphones/loudspeakers (2000/500) used by LEECs for sensitizations (2022-2023) <p>Provided technical support to ESCL to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize 18 float parades in 16 districts. • Procure and install PA systems on dedicated vehicles in 18 district offices. • Produce 6,168 T-shirts/caps for ECSL staff and LEEC members (exhibition process and elections). • Produce over 98,223 awareness material such as banners, posters, leaflets, including FAQs on the PR system and polling and counting (exhibition process and elections). 	<p>Exceeded</p>
	<p>3.2. a. Number of Gender and Disability Stakeholders coordination groups meetings held at districts.</p> <p>Target: 9</p>	<p>Gender Stakeholders Coordination Groups established in 11 districts of Sierra Leone and Disability Coordination Groups were established in 11 districts of Sierra Leone</p>	<p>Exceeded (focused on gender and disability inclusion)</p>
	<p>3.2. b. Number of social media campaign designed to target women with particular focus on young women and women from rural areas.</p> <p>Target: 1</p>	<p>To promote the visibility of women candidates participating in the electoral race, a training workshop was organized for 50 female journalists from the 16 districts of Sierra Leone. UN Women engaged SLAWIJ to run social media campaign and develop animation video on women political participation. The video was disseminated using social and traditional media including on the national</p>	<p>Partially met</p>

		television and was displayed in public places using LED vehicle.	
	3.2. c. Number of women candidates with enhanced capacities in fund-raising and campaign management Target: 250	90 female aspirants trained from 14 political parties. 260 women candidates from 14 political parties and independent candidates were trained on public speaking, fund-raising, intra-party advocacy, constituency engagement and campaign management.	Exceeded
	3.2. d. Number of men political leaders publicly committed to taking action to promote women’s political participation supported. Target: 50	PPRC and APPWA in collaboration with UN Women held five (5) engagements targeting a total of 200 male and female political leaders to promote public commitment to women’s political participation. UN Women convened a total of 100 traditional and religious leaders in Makeni, Kenema and Bo as part of the <i>He4She</i> campaign to support women’s political participation at local, district and national levels.	Exceeded
	3.2. e. Number of CSOs are engaged in the roll out of national campaign on election and gender equality. Target: 5	5 CSOs contracted through a small grant scheme	Met
	3.3. a. Number of young people reached through the Youth Lab Target: 200	A total of 298 youth (230 males, 68 females including 13 PwDs) responded to the call to participate in the National Youth Lab, a national platform designed to encourage innovate ideas for youth participation and violence-free elections. Youth Lab activated; 5 grants issued (USD 10,000 each) for the most innovative ideas.	Exceeded
	3.3. b. Number of meetings held with youth groups and political parties committing to peaceful conduct of the elections. Target: 3 (2 meetings at regional and 1 meeting at national level)	301 youths: 212 males and 89 females participated in the five (5) two (2)-day regional workshops for representatives of the youth wings of political parties, national and regional youth councils, youth organizations and groups on the peaceful conduct of the elections and youth participations. Working closely with district level youth councils and organizations, NAYCOM district offices is engaging members of the youth council, youth groups and youth wing of political parties to embark on series of	Exceeded

		<p>activities of fostering commitment to the peaceful conduct of the elections.</p> <p>Through the Youth Lab, the grantees across the five regions held over 20 meetings with youth groups and political leaders on committing to peaceful elections. Through the meetings and other engagements of young people through the #MakePeaceWin campaign, an estimated 1 million young people were reached on committing to peaceful elections.</p>	
	<p>3.3. c. Number of coordination meetings held amongst the ECSL, NCD, the Youth Commission and CSOs including the Legal Aid Board Target: 10</p>	<p>One LPAC (28 July 2022) and Two (2) Project Board meetings held on 6 February and 17 May 2023. One Technical Committee Meeting held in December 2022.</p>	<p>Partially met</p>
	<p>3.4. a. Number of consultations to discuss structure of a tactile ballot sleeve prior to the production Target: 5</p>	<p>Two (2) regional engagements in South-Eastern and North-North-West Regions consulted 110 visually impaired voters on the design of the Tactile Ballot Guide (TBG).</p> <p>During the five (5) regional workshops on improving access for PwDs in the electoral process, ECSL consulted at least 30 visually impaired participants on the TBG design.</p>	<p>Exceeded</p>
	<p>3.4.b. Number of persons trained on access to electoral process for persons with disability using sign language interpretation Target: 250</p>	<p>ECSL trained 214 PwDs from all categories and victims of war in the 5 regional sensitization workshops on improving their access to the electoral process.</p> <p>ECSL engaged five sign language interpreters to support the regional workshops.</p> <p>ECSL produced braille versions of voter education materials.</p>	<p>Almost met</p>
	<p>3.4. c. Number of polling sites adjusted to facilitate accessibility of people with disabilities to polling stations. Target: 87</p>	<p>128 polling stations adjusted for PwDs accessibility in the 16 districts: 82 ramps and 46 slabs installed at the polling stations.</p>	<p>Exceeded</p>