

**Mid-Term Evaluation For**

**Strengthening Election Management in Bangladesh (SEMB) Project**

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# **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

APROs Assistant Presiding Officers

AROs Assistant Residing Officers

ECB Bangladesh Election Commission

BRIDGE Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

CEO Chief Executive Office

CSSED Construction of Server Stations for Electoral Database

CIDA Canadian International Development Agency

CPAP Country Programme Action Plan

CSO Civil Society Organization

CTA Chief Technical Advisor

DAC Development Assistance Committee

DEX Direct Execution

DFID UK Department for International Development

DPA Department of Political Affairs

ECA Electoral Cycle Approach

EMB Election Management Body

ETI Election Training Institution

EU European Union

EUEOM European Union Election Observation Mission

GoB Government of Bangladesh

GTU Gender Technical Unit

HRW Human Rights Watch

HRMS Human Resource Management System

ICT Information and Communications Technology

IDPs Internally Displaced Persons

IFES International Foundation for Electoral Systems

IRI International Republican Institute

M & E Monitoring and Evaluation

MOU Memorandum of Understanding

NEX National Execution

NIM National Implementing Model

NDI National Democratic Institute

NID National Identification and Registration

NORAD The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

NPD National Project Director

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PERP Preparation of the electoral roll with Photographs

PIC Project Implementation Committee

PM Project Manager

PMSU Project Management Support Unit

PMU Project Management Unit

PO Polling Officer

PRO Presiding Officers

PRODOC Project Document

PSO Procurement Services Offices

PSC Project Steering Committee

PWDs Persons Living with Disabilities

RBM Result Based Management

RO Returning Officer

SAARC South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

SEMB Strengthening Election Management in Bangladesh

SEPB Support to the electoral process in Bangladesh

SMART Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound

SOP Standard Operating Procedures

TBB Translucent ballot boxes project

TC Technical Committee

TMG Transitional Monitoring Group

UK United Kingdom

UN United Nations

UNDAF United Nations Development Assistance Framework

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

USAID United States Agency for International Development

USD United States Dollar

VEP Voter Education Programme

VPN Virtual Public Network

# Executive Summary

Since Independence, Bangladesh has had ten Parliamentary elections. The majority of these have been marred by political violence. In 2008, for the first time in Bangladesh’s’ short democratic history, elections were heralded as “marking an important step in the restoration of democratic governance to Bangladesh and it was concluded that the hallmarks of the election were professionalism, transparency and credibility.” Upon this premise and building on the gains of the 9th Parliamentary Elections, SEMB was designed in order to improve the institutional capacity of the Bangladesh Election Commission (ECB) to conduct credible elections.

In 2010, a special parliamentary committee was formed to amend the Constitution. The system of a caretaker government that has been in force since 1996, was officially abolished in June 2011 by the Special Committee citing the Supreme Court decision that the thirteenth amendment is “prospectively declared void and ultra vires under the Constitution. Thereafter, for much of 2013, political unrest imbued and the opposition called for strikes, and blockades, which brought the country to a standstill. The opposition requested that certain conditions be met for the holding of elections, however political unrest prevailed and in the year leading up to the elections, hundreds of people were killed as a result of the political turmoil. Amidst this political unrest and a boycott of the elections by the opposition, the 10th parliamentary elections took place on the 5th January 2014 and were considered the “most violent” elections in Bangladesh since independence.

International monitors resisted from observing the elections as they felt that Bangladesh “was unable to create the necessary conditions for transparent, inclusive and credible elections”. Subsequent to these polls, SEMB faced an uncertain future. Donors conducted internal reviews of the achievement of outcomes to date while the United Nations and the Electoral Affairs Division (EAD) conducted their own review. In May 2014, EAD advised that a phased approach should be taken with a more targeted and focussed approach to promote demonstrable improvements in the electoral process. Agreement to adopt this strategy was eventually made by all three donors, with the European Union, the biggest donor of the project having serious observations over the performance of the commission.

In July 2014, an evaluation team conducted a mid term review of the project to evaluate the relevance and performance of the project in relation to the project document. The evaluation found the relevance of developing SEMB to very pertinent and relatively well designed. However it should have not been assumed that the provision of improved institutional capacity would necessarily deliver credible elections. The existence of a transparent and a working EMB is only one precondition for enabling a genuine and participatory electoral environment, many other preconditions exist, and given Bangladesh’s past history, the project should have “under promised” and “over delivered” in order to ensure the success of its outcomes. To this end, although the project objective is relevant, the overall goal of the project is considered over ambitious and unrealistic.

During the design stage, key stakeholders were consulted including the former election commission who helped shaped the outputs of the project. In February 2012, new commissioners came on board, and it was felt by many of the interlocutors that the project was perhaps more geared toward the former commissioners’ needs and the new commissioners were not as keen to take on the responsibility of supporting some of the outcomes foreseen in the ProDoc. This resulted in certain delays in the implementation of some of the activities, others being cancelled.

The project has a life span of 5 years, with a total of 42 activities divided amongst six outputs. To date, a total of 38 per cent of the outputs are achieved, 50 per cent are partially achieved and 12 per cent are yet to be achieved. Overall the effectiveness of the outputs was not only affected by operational and organizational weaknesses, but some of the outputs were simply not able to be realised in the current political context.

The project has various levels of policy and operation, including a project steering committee (PSC) and Project Implementation Committee (PIC). Unfortunately due mainly to the political unrest and then subsequently the post election uncertainty of the project, some meetings have not taken place as outlined in the ProDoc. Although it is difficult to gauge whether the shortage of meetings has had any effect on the impact of the project, many of the meetings did not discuss the apparent risks and shortfalls of the project. This was also apparent in the quarterly and annual reports, which tended to shy away from results based management reporting.

Nevertheless, the Resident Coordinator convened a regular platform among key partners including the SEMB project partners to promote greater dialogue and coordination around key political and electoral issues and discuss collectively at senior levels the political and technical risks associated with the electoral process.

Under standard NEX procedures the project had a National Project Director (NPD) who is responsible for project management and project formulation. The NPD also have a full time job at the ECB and can not always dedicate as much time as required to the project, nevertheless he seems very supportive of the project and was key in providing significant feedback to the project and liaising with the Election Commission to get approval of the activities.

The Project did not have a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), which is the norm in most UNDP election projects; this request was not approved by the former commissioners. In the run up to the 10th Parliamentary elections, in order to improve efficiency, another request for a CTA was submitted, but it was rejected. To this end it was decided to employ a senior management advisor who could support management, operations and coordination. The advisor was able to satisfactorily fulfil his tasks as agreed with the ECB however there was still a gap of provision of technical leadership and overall guidance which could have proved useful to the ECB during the elections.

The project factored in several risk management strategies. During the course of the project up until June 2014, 11 out of the 19 risks have become apparent at some time or other. The evaluation has rated six of the risks as high impact, only two of these (risk 9 and 13) had a political element to them, the remainder were mainly operational and/or organizational although the political complexities influenced the impact of some of these particular risks.

The timeframe of the project also had a particular impact on some of the outputs, as recruitment was sometimes slow, and full time international advisors were not on board until late 2012/early 2013. The project did address this gap in some of the components, by recruiting part time consultants for ICT and BRIDGE training, however in essence they were not a replacement for continuous full time capacity building support. In the public relations wing, which did not have an advisor until 2013, it was apparent that due to the increased political tensions as well as the apparent partisanship of the new commissioners, confidence in the commissions outreach to stakeholders and its overall perceived transparency was dwindling, and therefore capacity building in this area was essential.

The overall impact of the project has various levels, and by and large SEMB had a limited impact on the democratic governance objectives. Till now, the project has had little impact on ensuring that vulnerable groups are better represented, although there have been some small inroads with some targeted activities. However, many of these activities were after thoughts and not included in the core of the design of the project. Nevertheless, the overall capacity on the ECB has had a positive impact, even if this impact was unable to ensure favourable conditions for the elections mainly due to the political reason. The training unit and provision of ICT has most definitely enhanced the way that the ECB works and will have the capacity to work in the future. This impact would have not been seen if the project had not existed.

To gauge the overall sustainability of the project, various measures need to be taken into consideration, it must be remembered that the project is still at midterm, but however it is essential to build on the gains already made, if any of the activities are going to have the desired sustainability of the closure of the project. ICT and Training still need to be built upon in order to maintain the inroads achieved to date, and of course the communications wing still needs to derive a sound communications plan in order to galvanise support amongst stakeholders away from the political tensions that both the project and the ECB were under during the holding of the 10th Parliamentary elections.

SEMB is due to close in March 2016, and therefore all activities need to be finalised by December 2015. In the post electoral climate, the project has undergone numerous changes, and the ECB has concentrated on conducting various lessons learned exercises. The project should assist the ECB in collating this information and ensuring that their future revision of the strategic plan, SEMB priorities and lessons learned from these exercises are run in parallel and do not conflict with each other. The new CTA should ensure “buy in” on all activities from the Commissioners, and should therefore work directly with them and ensure that international best practices are maintained.

To this end the MTR makes the following recommendations:

1. Acknowledging the ECBs efforts to conduct lessons learned exercises subsequent to the 10th Parliamentary elections, the MTR recommends that all information gathered from these exercises is collated and recommendations and lessons learned are acknowledged and discussed amongst the commissioners
2. Recognising that all election stakeholders including, political parties, civil society and the media all have an important and fundamental role in promoting an enabling environment for credible elections, the MTR advocates for the ECB to conduct in unison with key stakeholders outside in the electoral process a second layer of lessons learned exercises. These sessions should involve information sharing, whereby the ECB also communicates their lessons learned and experiences of the recent elections with key stakeholders, and vice versa. These sessions should be used to identify shortfalls in the process and to prioritise work under the revised Strategic Plan (see recommendation 10)
3. Reiterating the importance of “buy in” by the ECB of all activities under SEMB and utilising the relaxed political climate, the MTR supports the recent employment of a CTA and encourages SEMB to directly liaise with the Commissioners in order to ensure that priorities emanating from the lessons learned exercises, SEMB outputs, donor priorities and the strategic plan run in parallel and do not conflict.
4. Acknowledging the on-going negotiations with the donors on the funding of the SEMB, and recognising that funds have been substantially reduced, the MTR encourages the SEMB to take stock of the current status of all the outputs and their accompanying activities to safeguard their sustained impact and to ensure that important gains are not lost at the end of the project:

**To this end the Mid Term Evaluation, recommends the following priority actions in relation to outputs one to five.[[1]](#footnote-1)**

1. Ensure that a Monitoring and Evaluation Matrix is re-designed according to the new target activities and that a monitoring and evaluation specialist is in-country under a permanent contract
2. Restructure the monthly and quarterly reports to reflect a more results based approach
3. Ensure that Risk Management is strengthened and coordinated with key stakeholders to the process
4. Strengthen collaboration and coordination between other international partners and the Project SEMB
5. Ensure that the project is managed technically by a CTA and creates a synergy between all the outputs
6. Review the impact of cross cutting issues such as gender, reform and conflict analysis across all components and ensure that all output heads include how they are being mainstreamed in monthly reports
7. Ensure continued support to ETI in implementing their Strategic Plan and to devise a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy
8. Strengthen the support to ETI to ensure gender mainstreaming training of all staff and consider the possibility of adopting a gender policy
9. Support ETI to further build their capacity to impart BRIGE training and other types of electoral training
10. Ensure support to ECB in revising and implementing their Strategic Plan and to devise a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy
11. Strengthen gender mainstreaming throughout the ECB and consider support to establish a gender desk to ensure proper and strategic implementation of a possible gender policy
12. Support ECB to build their legal capacity
13. Support the communications department in designing and in implementing its strategic plan as well as developing an M & E Framework to monitor its implementation
14. To continue support of advisors to ensure adequate development of software tools that meet international standards
15. To continue training of key personnel to be able to develop software
16. To conduct an independent review of the voters roll
17. Develop an impact-monitoring framework and conduct the review.
18. Develop a donor strategy to engage with them more effectively.

## Structure of the Report

The report is organized according to the terms of reference. The evaluation commences with an **executive summary** outlining the main findings of the project including key recommendations. Chapter two describes the **purpose of the evaluation** and the third chapter summarises the **approach and methodology of the evaluation**.

Chapter four frames the **political background** and the **electoral landscape** of the years since Independence. The **project is then outlined** and a brief analysis of **programme design and management** is offered.

The Fifth Chapter presents the **key findings of the report**, which includes the examination of the **relevance** of the project. It discusses the importance of the *consultations with key stakeholders and International Partners, UNDP’s experience in providing electoral assistance to Election Management Bodies (EMBs), the mobilisation of donor coordination and resources under the basket fund and interconnectedness*.

The sixth Chapter reviews the **validity of assumptions** and identifies some of the key risks, which have already had an effect on the success of the project.

Chapter seven considers an **assessment of the projects progress towards attaining its objectives and outcomes** and how **effective** each output has been till now. Chapter Eight assesses the **overall performance of the project** which looks at the **efficiency** of the project *examining the* *management policy, internal control, risk management*, *timeframe*, and monitoring *and evaluation*

Chapter nine considers the **impact** of the project, including its *overall impact, impact on the project on the wider democratic objectives, project design, impact of timelines, cross cutting issues, gender, capacity building and national ownership*. It subsequently analyses the impact on individual activities within the six outputs.

Chapter ten looks at the **sustainability** of the project, examining it in the context of *policy support measures, choice of technology, socio/cultural matters, institutional approach, and external factors.*

Chapter eleven provides an **assessment for future programming** and chapter thirteen outlines **best practices and lessons learned,** the final chapter fourteen provides a list of **recommendations** for the implementation of the project in the last two years of its lifetime.

# Evaluation

## Purpose of the Evaluation

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to undertake an independent review of the status,[[2]](#footnote-2) relevance and performance of the project in relation to the project document. The evaluation will also identify and assess the basic results and impacts of the initiatives implemented with regards to their sustainability and suitability for supporting and enhancing the management of the Election Commission in Bangladesh.

The evaluation results are expected to identify and describe the lessons learned, through measurements of the changes in the set indicators, summarize the experiences gained, technically and managerially, and recommend the approaches and methodologies required to further strengthen and enhance the professionalism and credibility of the ECB.

# Methodology

The evaluation adopted a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach. Upon receipt of the key documents, the consultants undertook a comprehensive desk review of all available documents. These documents were mostly provided by the UNDP and the SEMB Project, however other documents were also provided from outside sources. Based on the information gathered during the desk review, the consultants prepared specific open-ended interview questions for all the relevant stakeholders. The evaluation team conducted personal interviews from 15 July to 24 July 2014, which took place both in Dhaka and Chittagong. The team held sessions with various stakeholders involved and benefitting from the project, these included the Election Commission, SEMB project members, including all component heads, staff from Democratic Governance Cluster, as well as the Resident Representative and other key UNDP staff. Interviews were also conducted with other key stakeholders such as Transparency International Bangladesh, Election Working Group, and IFES. The responses from these interviews were then analysed and cross-checked with information from the documents provided as well as email exchanges with both the project and the Democratic Governance Cluster. Prior to the evaluator leaving the country, preliminary findings were presented to the cluster. The Evaluation then proceeded to analyse all the information according to the Terms of Reference provided. The Mid Term Report (MTR) represents the wealth of data provided from all the different sources and endeavours to be as forward thinking as possible. Where implementation has been weak or found not to be relevant, solutions have been put forward and lessons drawn from other similar projects.

# Introduction

## Political Background

Bangladesh consists of a unicameral parliament (Jatiyo Sangshad) which has 350 members whereby 300 are directly elected through national elections for a five-year term in single-seat constituencies. The remaining 50 seats are reserved for women which are then subsequently selected by the ruling party or coalition.[[3]](#footnote-3) The Prime Minister is the Head of Government and the President, which is a ceremonial post and is elected by the National Parliament. The country has two dominant parties or coalitions (The Awami League (AL) and The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)) and has resulted in one or the other party dominating the polls since 1991.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Since Independence, Bangladesh has seen ten parliamentary elections,[[5]](#footnote-5) the first being on 7th March 1973 where a total of 14 political parties contested the elections.[[6]](#footnote-6) Subsequent elections have largely been marred by violence and fraud and an inherent distrust and bitter rivalry between the two dominating parties to maintain power. To this end, there was a demand to establish a mechanism to promote a legitimate means of changing government and uphold a fair and just election system. In 1991, there was a ruling with the support of the major political party alliances to adopt the system of a Caretaker Government (CTG). It was initially formed to aid the transition from authoritarianism to democracy, however this system was formally adopted as part of the constitutional framework in 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2008. The 13th amendment to the constitution was passed in 1996 formalizing this agreement.

A Caretaker Government is a form of government which is selected for a set period of time, normally three months. The CTG does not represent any political party nor are they allowed to contest the elections. The main role of the CTG is to enable a conducive environment for the holding of elections whereby there is no undue political influence.

In January 2007, the 9th Parliamentary Elections which were due to take place under the administration of a non-partisan Caretaker Government were boycotted by the AL on the grounds that the CTG, headed by President Iajuddin Ahmed, was favoring its main opponent, BNG. Under pressure from the army, the elections were suspended on 11 January, and the President of the CTG resigned and declared a State of Emergency. A new CTG was appointed to prepare for credible and participatory elections and by April 2007 committed to holding the elections by the end of 2008; the time it would take to prepare a new electoral roll and introduce other electoral reforms.

The State of Emergency remained in force from 11 January 2007 to 16 December 2008, and restricted various fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution and stipulated in the International Covenant of Civil, Political Rights.[[7]](#footnote-7) These were gradually relaxed over time, and on 3 November 2008, the state of emergency restrictions were lifted. The elections were originally foreseen to take place on 18 December, however they were postponed by a few weeks in order to find a compromise as the BNP refused to participate in the elections unless certain conditions were met. The authorities made concerted efforts to safeguard elections that could take place in an environment that was agreeable to all parties.

The 9th Parliamentary Elections took place with a total of 38 parties contesting the elections and 1567 candidates. The December Polls were heralded as “marking an important step in the restoration of democratic governance to Bangladesh and it was concluded that the hallmarks of the election were professionalism, transparency and credibility and that the election broadly met international standards.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Upon this premise, many thought that Bangladesh had put behind them problematic elections and all that was needed was to build on the gains made in 2008 and ensure the improved capacity and support of the election commission in order to ensure that the polls would meet international standards.

In July 2010, a 15 member Special Parliamentary Committee was formed to amend the Constitution. BNP was allegedly asked to join the committee, but they refused. After much deliberation the committee took the unanimous decision to maintain the caretaker system. On 29 May 2011 the Committee proposed to limit the life-time of the caretaker government to a maximum of 30 days. Nevertheless, a day later, after an alleged meeting with the Prime Minister they repealed this decision and decided to abolish the caretaker system all together.[[9]](#footnote-9) The reason for this change was attributed to the recent judicial decision of the Supreme Court, which had declared the caretaker system unconstitutional, nevertheless in the same decision, the judgement had permitted the government to hold the next two elections under the same system of CTG. On the 25th June 2011 a bill was submitted to parliament (while the opposition was still boycotting the parliament) repealing the CTG, this was approved and became one of the clauses under the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The appellate division of the supreme court of Bangladesh declared the care taker government system illegal and void on May 10, 2011. A seven-member Supreme Court panel, headed by Chief Justice ABM Khairul Hoque, reached the verdict on the basis of majority vote.

In this brief verdict, the Supreme Court said:

**The Constitution (thirteenth amendment), Act 1996 is prospectively declared void and ultra vires under the Constitution.**

After that it said:

**The elections to the tenth and eleventh parliament may be held under the provision of the above mentioned thirteenth amendment.**

*Source” Abdur Razzak – Bangladesh Crisis and a way out – The Daily Financial – 12 July 2011*

The appointment of the election commissioners took place approximately 8 months later, with five new commissioners being selected in February 2012.[[11]](#footnote-11) The search for the five male commissioners was actually more robust than normal, and a “search” committee was established; all parties requested to submit potential candidates, however BNP boycotted the process. They did not support the selection process nor the subsequent appointment of the commissioners who were chosen. The BNP adopted a general boycott stance against the ECB which also extended to any type of engagement with the commission as well. The ECB did not make any real concerted efforts to overcome or discuss this boycott.

The boycott of the political process continued and throughout most of 2013, the BNP and its alliance of 18 opposition parties called for over 85 days of nationwide general strikes and blockades which led the country into disarray and violence flared up around the country, causing hundreds of deaths in 2013. After months of protests, strikes and blockades, BNP announced a boycott of the elections citing unfair conditions for the elections. Various demands were thrown at the incumbent government to amend the constitution, dissolve parliament after their five-year term ended on 24 January, 2014 and then hand over power to a caretaker government to conduct and oversee the elections in cohorts with the ECB. The demands were not met in time

Shortly before the 10th Parliamentary elections, the political and human rights spaces gradually reduced and numerous opposition leaders were detained including the former Prime Minister and Opposition Leader, Khaleda Zia. On 13 December, 2013, Jamaat-e-Islami’s ABudl Quader Mollah was executed for war crimes resulting in violent clashes by the Islamistic Opposition. Various other political activists were killed and more strikes were called for. On 29 December 2013, the BNP called for a *March on Democracy* where people were asked to take to the streets in protest at the election. Various clashes ensued and a train was derailed by opposition activists culminating in three deaths. On 30 December, further blockades of roads, waterways and railways were called on to resist the scheduled election, and on 3 and 4 January over 100 polling centres[[12]](#footnote-12) were attacked.

The United Nations attempted to broker a deal between the two parties, and international partners including the European Union, United Kingdom and the United States as well as other western nations called for a solution to the problem. Nevertheless a deal was not obtained and international observers including the European Union choose to not observe the elections due to main political forces in Bangladesh being “unable to create the necessary conditions for transparent, inclusive and credible elections, despite many efforts, including most recently under UN auspices".

Nonetheless, the elections went ahead as scheduled with 12 political parties, 543 candidates and 153 non-contested seats. The 10th Parliamentary Elections were held to be “most violent” elections since independence,[[13]](#footnote-13) with Election Day seeing 21 deaths.[[14]](#footnote-14) Given the fact that only 12 political parties were contesting and the opposition parties had either boycotted or were banned from running in the elections, and the country was on a high security alert, turnout was very low. Some figures cited voter turnout as low as 20 per cent,[[15]](#footnote-15) but official turnout figures indicated that they were around the 40 per cent mark.

## Project Outline and Management

### Project Outline

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has enjoyed a long-standing collaboration with the Bangladesh Election Commission (ECB) and has lent its support to various facets of the electoral process in Bangladesh. This includes support to the 2008 elections under the programme *Support to the Electoral Process in Bangladesh* (SEPB); *Preparation of the Electoral Roll with Photographs* (PERP); *The Construction of Server Stations for Electoral Database* (CSSED); and *The Translucent Ballot Boxes Project* (TBB). These projects which have all been nationally executed projects (NEX) have been pivotal to consolidating key achievements of the ECB since the 2008 elections and have enabled the support to infrastructure development at the Upazila and District level as well as at the regional level to contribute to ECB to enhance their presence and outreach throughout the country.

In December 2009, an independent evaluation of UNDP electoral support was conducted, which concluded that there was a need to further strengthen electoral processes and its management through to 2015. To this end, the Strengthening Election Management in Bangladesh Project (SEMB) was established to **“consist of technical assistance designed to enhance and further consolidate the institutional and professional capacities of the ECB, its Secretariat and local offices to deliver its mandated functions of conducting fair, credible and transparent elections and further consolidating itself as a permanent, professional, credible and independent institution of governance**”.

UNDP widely consulted with the different relevant stakeholders involved in the electoral process and the former Election Commission[[16]](#footnote-16) in order to ascertain its needs for the upcoming five years. It was concluded that the project would have six overarching outputs, namely:[[17]](#footnote-17)-1). Professionalised and strengthened training by the ECB; 2). Strengthened ECB capacity to efficiently manage decentralisation and institutional growth; 3). Reformed communications unit and outreach to stakeholders; 4). Professionalised and strengthened ICT wing of the ECB; 5). Enhanced capacities to prepare and disseminate a credible and accurate photo voter register; 6). Support to activities in the run up to the parliamentary elections in 2014.

The Project Document was signed in April 2011, and the project started to fully implement its activities in July 2011. However, funding from the international partners did not arrive until almost March 2012.

Figure 1: Percentage of contributions to SEMB per international partner

The total project budget is US$19.6 million and contributions in full have been received from USAID and DFID, as well as UNDP. The EU has provided 64.5 per cent or US$8.8 million of its total commitment of US$13.69million and a balance of $6.2million remains. In July 2014, The EU decided to substantially reduce its financial contribution to the SEMB project and engage in negotiations with the UNDP and other donors to this end. In practical terms, this will mean the projects’ overall contributions will amount to a little over USD$14 million rather than the original USD$19,6m anticipated.

Figure 2: Committed Funds vs Received Funds

### Programme Design and Management

Overall Outcome

“Strengthening Election Commission” is projected by political leaders as an antidote to free and fair election in such a manner as if all other things pertaining to the conduct of credible election are in place and in good shape and it is only the commission that is the weakest link. These leaders are right in their assertion that the commission is the principal instrument in the management of the elections and must be sufficiently strong but its strength cannot and should not be expected to make up the deficiencies in the expected role of other partners. Nor should there be any expectation that the Commission would go beyond its mandate and indulge in activities that are not prescribed for it under the law.

Source: Dr Huda - Former Commissioner of the ECB

The overall outcome of the project is to improve institutional capacity of the ECB to conduct credible elections. While recognising that an election management body has an important role to play to ensuring credible elections, and they have the sole role to conduct and oversee the electoral process, the conduct of credible elections relies on many preconditions other than having a strong, transparent and efficient Election Commission. To this end, **although the project objective is relevant, the overall goal given the past political turmoil and instability of Bangladesh was over ambitious and not realistic.**

Furthermore, the ProDoc provides a situation analysis of the 2008 elections in Bangladesh, which were held to be the most credible in the history of elections since independence. Nevertheless, the background to the 2008 elections was unique, and their success were as a result of varying enabling circumstances including that of electoral reforms and a political will to ensure credible elections. This was not the case for previous elections.

The ProDoc also presents a risk analysis/log whereby many of the countermeasures and management responses are not always tangible, especially in the political realities of Bangladesh. For example, risk number 13 – “A decision by one or more political parties to boycott the next elections.” The probability is given at two and the impact on the project is five. The risk log highlights it is therefore important in maintaining stakeholder confidence in the process. The risk log, however, does not provide a solution in the case that the countermeasure cannot be assured. In the lifetime of the project, as will be seen in chapter eight, the project was able to identify the risks, however **there were many incidences whereby the project was unable to exert enough influence to ensure that the countermeasures foreseen were implemented or had the desired impact.**

With regards to the six outputs, it is automatically assumed that the Election Commission will embrace all the activities in the prodoc, however there was a lack of “buy in” from the commissioners who came on board in 2012 for some of the envisioned activities of the project. Although the project was fundamental to supporting training, IT, voter registration activities, the ECB were more reluctant to support all of the activities under communications and outreach and the decentralisation of the Voter Registration. The hesitancy of the new commissioners to adopt some of these activities for some part relied on a differing vision of their role as compared to the former commissioners. This was particularly pertinent with the decentralisation process which was pushed for by the former commissioners, but the new ECB was not so keen to promote this process. Furthermore, the deteriorating political environment had a profound effect on the project and to the extent to which the Election Commission could/would exercise their role over actions such as stakeholder engagement, especially with regards to political parties and civil society. Such actions meant that some activities in the Prodoc were relegated to the backburner, or decisions to support them were made too late, rendering their impact minimal on the overall process.

### Context

Previous independent assessments of SEMB have been mostly positive but have revealed certain weaknesses in the operational setup of the project itself and its alleged ability to fulfil all of its objectives. Furthermore, some noted that despite the working level traction and Secretariat interest, **the new Election Commissions’ willingness to operate as a key independent institution has come into question, and thus the impact of some of the activities has not always attained the foreseen results**. Furthermore, the introduction of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution in 2011 and the political crisis that ensued and culminated in the political impasse resulted in non-favourable conditions for transparent, inclusive and credible elections to take place in 2014 and meant that the overall goal of the project has yet to be met.

To this end, the conducting of a mid-term review is pertinent and could potentially contribute to establishing a way forward in order to galvanise any of the gains already made and to examine **whether it is actually possible to achieve the projects principal goal of improving the institutional capacity of the Election Commission to achieve credible elections**. In this context, it is important to note that while any inherent weaknesses will be identified in this evaluation, the political crisis, which has come to a stalemate, still has the potential to influence some of the outcomes of the results envisaged in the ProDoc and to influence future local elections. **Therefore it needs to be remembered that this evaluation will examine the success and potential successes of the project to perform and to ensure a favourable outcome, however a project of this size cannot and should not be responsible for the failings to reach a political agreement in the present circumstances and to ensure a conducive environment for holding peaceful and credible elections.**

The Evaluation team comprised of one key expert who ensured a comprehensive review according to best practices in evaluation using her international experience in electoral technical assistance, as an election observer, and knowledge of project management of electoral projects as well as expertise in evaluating projects of a similar nature in comparable circumstances. The evaluation will determine if the Project is currently fulfilling its overall objectives and will provide suggestions and recommendations to enable the project to realize its full potential.

# Main Findings

## Key Findings

### Relevance of the Programme

Subsequent to the 9th Parliamentary polls in 2008, whereby the Election Commission under the Chairmanship of Dr Huda was widely seen to have demonstrated its impartiality and ability to conduct technically sound elections[[18]](#footnote-18) **the relevance of developing SEMB was very pertinent.** In this vein, the project was envisioned to further enhance the capacity of the election commission in which it was decided that in order to consolidate these important gains, a shift was needed from **“the former event-focused and catch-all role towards a more strategic view of the Commissions’ planning. Some of the critical areas were to support the ECS in its institutional transformation into a permanent and effective electoral management body (EMB) and the development of its permanent systems, structures and procedures.”** This included the need to build a consistent and transparent relationship with stakeholders, strengthen its institutional and professional capacity and establish consistent and robust operating procedures across its departments.[[19]](#footnote-19)

*As the legal ‘custodian’ of the electoral process in Bangladesh the ECB is expected to create an environment where greater transparency and confidence in the electoral process is ensured. Unfortunately for a number of reasons the ECB has in recent years become the target for increased public scepticism. In times of adversity there is always to view the present situation as a problem or an opportunity. At this juncture in its history the ECB should seize the moment and use it as an opportunity to drive the breadth and depth of change that is required to instil greater public confidence in the electoral system and process. This can be done by focusing on four main elements: 1) an election law and associated regulations that provide for free and fair elections; 2) an election commission that is completely independent and which has the capacity and budget to discharge its mandate properly; 3) administrative systems and procedures that ensures the equal participation of all voters involving the disadvantaged sections, within an environment devoid of fear and intimidation; and 4) an electorate which is fully aware and informed of its rights and responsibilities*

#### Consultations with Key Stakeholders and International Partners

In 2008, an independent review was undertaken which identified the need for a follow-up programme of assistance to strengthen electoral processes and its management. **The formulation mission met with a wide range of stakeholders** including staff at all levels of the Commission, Electoral Training Institute, civil society representatives, political parties, development partners, and staff from the different projects supporting the ECB.

**The project was seen to be relatively well designed and relevant to the former election commission**, and full buy-in of the activities was sought. Nevertheless, it would seem that much of the success of SEMB’s predecessor, SEPB was found to lie with the commitment that the Election Commission (2007/2012) had demonstrated to “drive the breadth and depth of change that was required to instil greater public confidence in the electoral system and process.”

To this end, many of the interlocutors interviewed state that the **project was geared towards the former commissioners needs and commitment to improve on the gains already made in the last electoral process**, and thus once the commissioners had terminated their mandate, (According to article 118 (Subsection 3) of the Constitution a new set of Commissioners,[[20]](#footnote-20) were appointed in February 2012) much of the driving force to implement the established activities weakened and the **new commissioners were not as keen to take on the responsibility of supporting some of the outcomes foreseen in the ProDoc. This resulted in certain delays in the implementation of some of the activities, others being cancelled and additional ones not being as effective as envisioned.**

#### UNDP´s Experience in providing Electoral Assistance to EMBs

The consolidation of democracy is not just about a one off electoral event but is rather the continual strengthening of electoral governance as a whole and therefore the establishment of mechanisms for engendering a democratic political culture is essential.[[21]](#footnote-21) To this end, **SEMB promotes The Electoral Cycle Approach (ECA)**,[[22]](#footnote-22) whereby assistance was not only afforded to lending support to the electoral events *per se*, but also focussed on building long-term capacity, which inevitably enhances participation and understanding of the electoral process.

**UNDP’S ELECTORAL REFORM PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES**

**Expected Outcome** (UNDAF 1.)

By 2016, all Bangladeshis, including vulnerable groups, are better represented and participate more in democratic processes.

**Expected Outcomes** (CPAP)

The Election Commission have improved institutional capacity to conduct credible elections.

Electoral assistance coordinated and electorate informed of voting rights and responsibilities

Elections although ***technical in substance* are *political in nature***, and even more so in Bangladesh where it is not only important to provide technical advice to the organisational aspects of running an election, however it is equally salient to promote a conducive environment to ensure elections meet international standards. (see annex II). Elections, which typically take place in a post conflict or transitional environment, are politically charged, and as was seen in the case of Bangladesh, **technically sound election support does not always result in elections meeting their international commitments.**

#### Mobilisation of Donor Coordination and Resources under the Basket Fund

Support to Elections is usually an expensive undertaking and many transitional democracies require assistance in this regard. Bangladesh with a population that is estimated at over 140 million is unfortunately no exception. While, the Bangladeshi Government does provide a healthy election budget, **it is recognised that there are still some gaps in the electoral commission that necessitate external technical assistance**. For example, the budget line for training under the government is very small and only provides enough to carry out massive scale trainings in a very short period of time. With SEMB, **the ECB was not only able to design more targeted comprehensive, uniformed and systematic trainings, but these systems could be used again in the future, enabling the gains of the project to be sustainable** far beyond the closure of the project.

**Support from SEMB is therefore indispensable and provides added value.** It moves beyond the basic provision of operational services and strives towards crystallising procedures and processes, which inevitably **build an inclusive and participatory environment**, which is conducive to enabling a more credible and transparent electoral process in line with international standards for elections.

## Interconnectedness

Many electoral projects normally have separate components, which do not interlink. SEMB, nevertheless, **endeavoured to consolidate past gains from other projects** and under outputs two and five **aimed to complement two other UNDP Projects, namely CSSED and PERP**. The PERP project came to an end in June 2012, and the SEMB project financed four pilot studies in August 2011 to finalise the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) of voter registration to be used for the massive registration drive which took place in 2012/2013. **Under Output 5 SEMB has easily been able to sustain and build upon the gains already achieved through the PERP project.**

Unfortunately, the CSSED project although successful in its completion of almost all construction sites[[23]](#footnote-23) across the country, has yet to fulfil its overall objective of facilitating voter list maintenance. Its failure to reach its objective is unfortunately out of the scope of the project itself as the National Identification Document Project is still behind schedule and as a result not a single server has been installed in any of the local election offices. Furthermore, there seems to be some reluctance by some members of the Election Commission to promote decentralisation to its full extent, and many of the offices therefore still find themselves without the adequate resources. **To this end, SEMBs ability to impact on the decentralisation process has been largely limited although over 40 per cent of the foreseen results for this output have been achieved.**

The interconnectedness between the other outputs were relevant, especially with regards to promoting a more favourable electoral environment which would encourage stakeholder participation and transparency of the election commission. **Unfortunately due to a lack of buy-in to some aspects of the Prodoc, external political pressure and indeed an aversion on the part of the election commission to undertake activities that had the potential to at least promote more trust and confidence in the commission such as publishing the results, engaging more strongly with key stakeholders and the implementation of a more robust and communications strategy - many of the results foreseen have not yet been accomplished.**

# Validity of Assumptions

In order to ensure an enabling environment for a genuine and democratic electoral process, certain preconditions need to exist. One of these is a transparent and efficient Election Management Body (EMB) that has the ability to demonstrate impartiality and work in a professional manner ensuring that national laws and international standards for elections are applied. An EMB should be able to assume its tasks without political interference or intimidation. This was indeed the case in 2008, whereby despite Bangladesh’s torrid electoral past, the 9th Parliamentary Elections were heralded as an important milestone for the consolidation of democracy and the SEMB’s main thrust was to build on these important gains to ensure improved institutional capacity to conduct credible elections in the future.

Throughout the lifetime of the project, many of the assumptions outlined in the original Prodoc materialised, and the political will, which supported the success of the 2008 elections, eroded over time; the project recognised that important challenges to the process laid ahead.In late September 2012,[[24]](#footnote-24) the project presented an update to the donors whereby they stated that two of the major challenges to the project were:- a). Creating a conducive environment for a credible election preparation and 2) Ensuring that there is an assertive ECB leadership to guide the project.

The United Nations, fully cognizant of the potential implications that the ensuing political situation could have both on the project and on the elections themselves held regular meetings with the most senior levels of the Election Commission in the 18 months prior to the elections. This included frequent meetings between the Chief Election Commission and the United Nations Resident Coordinator. In order to promote a more conducive electoral environment, advocacy efforts focused on how the ECB could be more inclusive of issues related to gender and disadvantaged groups, as well as to strengthen stakeholder engagement and public outreach to push for a more level playing field amongst candidates and to boost public confidence in the election commission.

The independent review of support to the Election Commission commissioned by UNDP in the last quarter of 2012 also made recommendations along the same lines, and highlighted key challenges and risks in the electoral and political environment. There were also regular technical working group meetings and a thrust from the international community to push for the promotion of credible and transparent elections. The “good offices of the UN Secretary General” carried out three missions in December, 2012, May and December 2013 respectively and resulted in the two main parties sitting in dialogue at the invitation of the Secretary General.

The European Union under the offices of Baroness Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, issued various statements, including one prior to the elections advising the end to violence and “to find a political solution through dialogue as being essential to allow a peaceful, inclusive, transparent, and credible elections to take place. This can only happen if all sides can agree to move ahead, in the interests of the country’s future.” The UK also issued a similar statement subsequent to the parliamentary polls stating that the UK “ believes that the true mark of a mature, functioning democracy is peaceful, credible elections that express the genuine will of the voters. It is therefore disappointing that voters in more than half the constituencies did not have the opportunity to express their will at the ballot box and that turnout in most other constituencies was low.”

The assumptions that buy in from the government and sustainable political will were indeed fundamental to the success of the project were correct. Furthermore, given the political context in Bangladesh and its volatile electoral history, the likelihood of a technical project delivering a sound political outcome was very improbable, especially in the wake of the 15th Constitutional amendment and the ensuing political crisis, which followed. The design of the project and its respective outputs were valid and relevant to the needs of the ECB, **however it should have not been assumed that the provision of improved institutional capacity would necessarily deliver credible elections**. The existence of a transparent and a working EMB is only one precondition for enabling a genuine and participatory electoral environment, many other preconditions exist, and given Bangladesh’s past history, the project should have “under promised” and “over delivered” in order to ensure the success of its outcomes.

# project progress towards attaining its objectives and outcomes

This section will discuss to what extent the project has achieved its objectives and outcomes, and in the instances where they have not yet been achieved, and what recommendations, if any, can be put forward to accomplish them in the future. Where an output is said to be achieved, it means that the output has been effective and reached its overall goal. While actual outputs may have been accomplished, this does not necessarily guarantee that the output has had the desired impact or sustainability can be assured after the closure of the project. These issues are discussed in chapters nine and ten respectively. The table below illustrates that to date a total of 38 per cent of outputs are achieved, 50 per cent are partially achieved and 12 per cent have yet to be achieved.

Figure 3: Percentage of outputs achieved in SEMB

**The project has a life span of 5 years, with a total of 42 activities divided between six outputs.** As can be seen from the graph below output five was allocated the highest amount of funds (nearly 36% of the total of the project)

Figure 4: Output Budget for SEMB

Overall, **the effectiveness of the outputs were not only affected by operational and organizational weaknesses but some of the outputs were simply not able to be realised in the current political context.** Furthermore, despite may of the challenges and risks being highlighted by the project to donors, it would seem that some of the assumptions and risk factors highlighted in the project document were not dealt with adequately as they simply had no control over the external environment. **The political climate and the immense pressure under which the election commissions worked had a profound impact on the project and the ECBs ability to ensure that key international practices for good election management were adhered to.**

### Output 1: Professionalised and strengthened training by the ECB

Output one has six main activities: A total of $3,924,850 was earmarked for this output. Up until June 2014, $1,830,209 has been spent which accounts for approximately 47 per cent of the designated funds for this output. The allocated funds account for approximately **20 per cent of the overall budget**.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |

The amount of funds spent per year is illustrated in the graph below. As one will note, the highest expenditure was in 2013, the year that a full time trainer came on board.

Figure 5: Output Budget for Component 1 from 2011 to June 2014

In order to facilitate professionalized training for the ECB, the  Electoral Training Institute (ETI) was established as a project under the Election Commission Secretariat, Bangladesh in 1995.[[25]](#footnote-25) The ETI currently has 39 staff [[26]](#footnote-26)(30 men and 9 women) and SEMB is currently paying 50 per cent of its rental costs.[[27]](#footnote-27) **SEMB’s aims to capitalize on the vision of ETI and further enhance the capacity development of the institute as its significant focus and act as a driving force to further develop the capacity of the Bangladesh Election Commission.**

Figure 6: Percentage of outputs achieved per Output 1

**In the main, SEMB has contributed substantially to improving the capacity of ETI and as a result training has become more systematic and uniform. The project’s logistical support** (paying 50% of the rent, two classrooms with furniture to facilitate learning and air conditioners) **has been fundamental to its development and has allowed ETI to further enhance its capacity** while a new building is being constructed. ETI does support a long-term vision and acts as a semi-autonomous body, **however without continued support from the project, its future development would be severely hampered.**

The slight delay in the start up to the project in 2011 meant that many planned activities were put on the back burner while ETI shifted to new rented office facilities. A series of targeted interventions were carried out in 2012 by a part time advisor. This included a capacity assessment in 2012, which although important in identifying key recommendations, did not provide for a comprehensive enough assessment[[28]](#footnote-28) of the ability and capacity of both the institution and individuals to carry out their mandate and identify the gaps. SEMB also carried out a three-day workshop with ETI officers to design a strategic plan. Nevertheless, the plan has still not been approved by the ECB and therefore the institution feels that they are working with no clear guidelines and therefore would like **to develop and follow a comprehensive action plan.**

The full time training advisor started his contract in 2013 and was only able to focus on election related activities in the lead up to elections, which undoubtedly provided the institute and its staff with on the job training, **but perhaps did not ensure that their capacity could yet be sustained without the project.**

**To date, approximately 50 per cent of the outputs have been achieved, although it is recognized that more needs to be done, especially with regards to in-house training and ensuring that more members of both ETI and the ECB are successfully BRIDGE accredited.**

Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) training was introduced to the ECB by SEMB in 2012. To date a total of 154 (23 female and 131 male) were trained in 2012 and 94 persons (21 female and 73 male) in 2013. Participants received training on different modules including “introduction on Electoral Administration”, “Training on Legal Framework and Elections”, “Training on Gender and Elections”, and “Training on Capacity Building Strategy”. Furthermore, 40 participants (four female and 36 male) took part in “train the facilitators” training. Eight of these became accredited and 32 are semi accredited (two of these work with ETI). **SEMB should ensure that by the closure of the project, more members of ECB and ETI are accredited in full to ensure that they are able to impart BRIDGE training both in-house and abroad.**

Furthermore, the **project has successfully supported an establishment of a system of evaluation and monitoring the quality of trainings** that will enable the ECB to further improve on the trainings. They have also established a training database management system which keeps records of who has been trained and what training they have already received. A useful document on a training needs assessment guidelines has also been developed in order to enable ETI to better gauge the ECBs needs.

Table 1: Status of the Intended Results Component 1

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Intended Results** | **Results status** |
| **Output 1.1. Professionalizing and strengthened trainings conducted by the ECB** | | |
| 1.1. | Support to development of ETI vision, plan, procedures, financial planning | Partially Achieved |
| 1.2 | Support to strengthen ETI training capacity to prepare and conduct trainings for local election officials (including BRIDGE) | Partially Achieved |
| 1.3 | Support to establishment of system of evaluation and monitoring, skills audit and future planning | Achieved |
| 1.4 | Support to ETI facilities | Achieved |
| 1.5 | Support to ETI library and Regional offices | Not Achieved[[29]](#footnote-29) |
| 1.6 | Financial assistance for selected ECB staff to attend high-level specialised external in-country courses. | Achieved |

### Output 2: Strengthened ECB Capacity to efficiently manage decentralisation and institutional growth

Output two has five planned activities. Output two has an overall budget of $527,003 and to date has spent approximately 28 per cent of its budget amounting to $148,919. This output accounts for a little under **three per cent** of the overall budget and is designed to complement UNDP’s other project “ Construction of Server Stations for the Electoral Database (CSSED).

Figure 7: Budget for Output 2 from 2011 till June 2014

Although only a small amount of the overall budget was allocated to this output, the overall goal is not to be underestimated. In order for an EMB to run efficiently and effectively, internal procedures as well as a comprehensive and implemented strategic plan is fundamental. Furthermore, although much of this output is dedicated to improving internal procedures, its objective is to also efficiently manage decentralisation. As has been illustrated under section 5.2. Interconnectedness, decentralisation has been relegated to the backburner from an organizational point of view as there is little impetus from the new commissioners to fully implement activities to achieve full decentralisation at the regional, district and upazila level. To this end, to date, the ECB has only achieved two out of the five outputs (see table below), and even then, it is not yet clear as to what impact the achievement of these outputs will have.

Figure 8: Status of the Intended Results – Output 2

**The development of a strong strategic plan is essential to the running of any EMB.** The ECBs current five-year strategic plan (2011-2016) and a two year action plan (2011 – 2013) were developed with support from the UNDP Preparatory Assistance to Electoral Reform Project and the former commissioners who ended their term in February 2012. Various workshops were held in 2011 and 2012 with the support of SEMB to take stock and review the progress of the implementation of said plans. These sessions were led by the CEC and senior ECB officials.

During this Mid Term Evaluation, there was some debate in the Secretariat as to how much of these plans were being currently implemented. The evaluation team unfortunately did not have enough time to make an audit of how much of these plans have been implemented to date, however for example, implementation of strategic goal five, “support to the democratic culture” has been very weak whereby the current election commission has tended to shy away from engaging with electoral stakeholders and considers that their role is only technical and is not their responsibility to ensure that stakeholders perceive them as transparent, impartial and acting with integrity. In December 2012, an internal review and assessment has in fact been carried out by SEMB of the implementation of the activities for the Two Years Action Plan (2011-2013). The review revealed that 40 per cent of the activities are completed, 27 per cent are on-going and 31 per cent are not done.[[30]](#footnote-30) **It is essential that a review and update of the 5-year strategic plan is carried out by the new commissioners, and the development of a proper monitoring mechanism to ensure its implementation is supported.**

The implementation of Activities 2.2. and 2.3 are important but are not time bound. To this end, the priority to develop the systems were delayed to make way for preparations for the 10th Parliamentary elections. Ensuring an adequate tracking system for human resources (HRMS) is fundamental and is part of a broad organizational reform that requires capacity assessments and identification of baselines, staff capacities and skills gaps. The evaluation and capacity of staff and skill sets are currently taken place and will feed into the accomplishment of the HRMS which will be completed in the second half of SEMB.

Similarly, ECB in 2013 requested that attention be made to improving the financial system, however once again the election preparations took priority. This activity is now planned for the future, whereby SEMB will ensure that the ECBs financial system is synchronised to that of the Government which now requires all institutions to have a uniformed automated system.

Furthermore, SEMB has produced an impressive number of reports on different local elections, lessons learned after the 2014 parliamentary elections and various other reports. **However it is essential that these reports are properly translated, and disseminated and understood by the relevant target group within the ECB.** The project has also facilitated exchanges with Secretary and international experts to provide more information on electronic voting machines and has undertaken research and analysis on results management systems and candidate management systems to facilitate the policy decision prior to their implementation.

Finally a comprehensive lesson learnt agenda has been designed and is currently being undertaken. Unfortunately at the moment, these lessons learnt workshops are only being conducted at the level of SEMB and thus it **would be advisable in the future to involve the other key electoral key stakeholders in order to get a balanced view and understand how the elections were perceived outside of the actual election commission.**

Table 2: Status of the Intended Results for Output 2

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Intended Results** | **Results status** |
| **2. Strengthened ECB Capacity to efficiently manage decentralisation and institutional growth** | | |
| 2.1. | Support the annual review and monitoring of ECB’s strategic plan and action plan | Partially Achieved |
| 2.2. | Support to ECB administration wing to establish and maintain human resource management systems including staff skills audit | Partially Achieved |
| 2.3. | Support the ECB administration wing to develop and maintain electronic HR record keeping, financial system and system of monitoring and compliance | Partially Achieved |
| 2.4 | Provide support to ECB research and development branch in planning and conducting electoral research and project management | Achieved |
| 2.5 | Conduct and review post-election lessons learnt and support post-election research and analysis | Achieved |

### Output 3: Reform of Communication and Strengthening Partnerships

The output is split into ten areas and has a total of $1,545,000 out of the total budget, which accounts for approximately **21 per cent of the whole project**. To date, $576,239 has been disbursed which is only 37 per cent of the allocated budget to this particular output.

Figure 9: Output Budget for Output 3

**The overall aim of output three is mainly to promote increased transparency of the ECB and its ability to engage and partner with national electoral stakeholders. The output also aspires to enhance the level of voter awareness on electoral procedures and processes.** Ensuring and enhancing transparency was seen as very relevant and the output aimed to galvanise on the gains already made under the leadership of the former commissioners during the 2008 polls

Figure 10: Status of Intended Results – Component 3

Despite SEMBs, UNDP and DPAs concerted efforts to enhance stakeholder engagement, many of those interviewed consider that this particular component was one of the weakest not only in effectiveness but also in efficiency. To date only 30 per cent of the activities have been achieved.[[31]](#footnote-31) The overall effectiveness of this output required the commitment of the ECB and their follow through in implementation, however to date many of the projects recommendations are yet to come to fruition. Talks with the ECB focused on strategies to improve the communications and outreach. These extended to advice on the outreach to stakeholders, the formulation of desired positions and messages to influence the perception of ECB and to create a more conducive environment for polls, advice on the need for more systematic and frequent exchanges with the media/better media management, importantly streamlining information management of public relations – i.e. who speaks to the press, maintaining a unified front; preparation before addressing the press and many other recommendations.

To this end, **counterpart training to increase management capacity of the communications unit has only been partially achieved**. In addition to the reluctance of the ECB to take on some of the activities, the communications advisor came on board in early 2013 leaving little time for a comprehensive capacity building programme to be designed. Furthermore, only two persons are in the Public Relations and Communications Department, which means that there was little time to impart such a programme as this would have hampered their daily duties and furthermore would have interrupted the planning of the 10th Parliamentary elections. Nevertheless, **on–the-job capacity was built during 2013 time including working with Reuters enhancing the Public Relations Offices ‘professionalism.**

As was stated above, relentless efforts were undertaken to engage the ECB to the stakeholders. In addition, in partnership with the Group on Political Governance (GPG); the project provided a full list of all the partners supporting elections to ECB and their respective areas of work to identify synergies and areas for interaction ahead of the elections; the project even recommended countless numbers of meetings to the CEC/then Secretary, outreach mechanism, potential topics and agendas for certain meetings, however the ECB remained reluctant to implement. In some instances, several meetings were approved, but dates for the meetings were never confirmed and therefore did not take place.

While most election commissions have a designated spokesperson, the nomination of such a person is sensitive within the ECB and thus nobody has yet been selected and therefore all the commissioners tend to speak to the press and even sometimes the Secretary and Public Relations Officer as well. Various recommendations have been put forward including by Reuters, to streamline the line of communication, this has not yet been taken up. To this end, **training to enhance the skills of the ECB to respond to the media and analytical issues in a more systematic way was only provided to 23 members of the Secretariat as the Commissioners had rejected the need for the training.[[32]](#footnote-32) The project did recommend one-on-one sessions for the commissioners on media management, but this was also rejected.**

With regards to a comprehensive voter and civic education programme, materials were produced including information offered in audio and audio-visual formats, different types of resources were also produced, such as handbooks, flipcharts, guidelines for international observers[[33]](#footnote-33), factsheets and brochures. Due to the political situation, a lot of these material were not printed and / or delivered, nevertheless, the material remains the property of ECB and can be reproduced for other future elections.

Table 3: Status of the Intended Results – Output 3

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Intended Results** | | **Results status** |
| **Output 3. Reform of Communications and Strengthening Partnerships** | |  |
| 3.1. | Support for development of action plan and road map for implementation of communications strategy | Partially Achieved |
| 3.2 | Refurnishing of office facilities of the communications unit | Achieved |
| 3.3 | Counterpart training to increase management capacity of communications unit | Partially Achieved. |
| 3.4 | Counterpart training to increase unit capacity to interact with stakeholders and build partnerships including developing a visitor’s programme | Partially Achieved |
| 3.5 | Implement work placements, exchange peer-to-peer visits, forums for stakeholders and election observation visits in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) or other Asian region | Achieved |
| 3.6 | Support to establishment of resource and documentation centre including library. | Partially Achieved[[34]](#footnote-34) |
| 3.7 | Specialised training for nominated spokesperson | Partially Achieved |
| 3.8 | Support to increase functionality of ECB website and production of corporate material to showcase ECB including a quarterly newsletter | Achieved |
| 3.9 | Support the development of a comprehensive voter education programme | Partially Achieved |
| 3.10 | Review and Finalization of project communication and visibility plan | Partially Achieved |

### Output 4: Professionalized and Strengthened IT Wing of the ECS

Output four is split into five different outputs and has a total of $1,923,199. The component works on strengthening and building the IT wing of the Election Commission. The budget of $1,923,199 represents nearly ten per cent of the overall budget. To date a total of $681,692 has been spent which is approximately 37 per cent of the allocated budget for the output. Nevertheless, an additional 1,649,803.90 was provided by the 10th Parliamentary Project.

Figure 11: Budget for Output 4 from 2011 to June 2014

**This output has achieved over 60 per cent of its results, rendering it the best performing output in the whole of the project.** **Two of the biggest results** of this particular output are the development of a **Candidate Management System (CMS) and the Results Management System (RMS).** The CMS and RMS took precedence, although the final approval for the use of these systems was not given until July 2013, leaving very little time to ensure procurement and effective installation and use of the two systems. Nevertheless they were developed and deployed in time for the elections, and all relevant officials received training on how to use them. The original purpose of the results management system was to enhance transparency in the results announcement, and although the system had this potential, it was decided not to use the system due to various factors (Please see under impact)

Figure 12: Status of Intended Results – Component 4

The IT department enjoyed a fruitful relationship with SEMB, as it was fortunate enough to be able to employ two of the local staff that worked with the ECB in the previous election process, and thus two of these programmers were on board from the very start of the project. The ICT expert and the team of both international and national advisors worked closely with the ECB IT wing to build their capacity and raise skills in programming and development of election software, voter registration system architecture, RMS/CMS etc, nevertheless, **it is fundamental to continue this training, especially in the areas of software development to ensure sustainability of the know-how once the project finishes.**

SEMB is also tasked to develop computer set definitions for key roles both at the ECB but also at the regional, district and upazila offices. This has been partially achieved and assessments of the current general computer proficiency and skills sets are yet to be done. All buildings in the field were evaluated for the LAN/Wan hardware, however it should be noted that none of the regional, district or Upazila sites have yet installed and connected the server to allow for the VPN.

Other skills set were transferred, especially during the elections whereby there were specialised briefings on the CMS as well as the RMS for the ICT wing of the Election Commission. Trainings were also conducted for training of trainers on both these systems for polling officials. Despite all relevant staff receiving training, the RMS system was only used as a back up tool and was not utilized to its full potential, ie providing enhanced transparency to the dissemination of results. (See under Impact for more details)

Table 4: Status of the Intended Results – Output 4

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Intended Results** | | **Results status** |
| **Output 4. Professionalised and strengthened IT Wing of the ECS** | | |
| 4.1 | Counterpart training provided to ICT | Achieved |
| 4.2 | Develop, in collaboration with ETI, computer skillset definitions for key roles at ECS, regional, district and upazila offices | Partially Achieved |
| 4.3 | Procure, arrange, co-ordinate, deliver specialized training for ITC Wing Staff | Achieved |
| 4.4 | Appraisal of ECB’s local and wide area networking requirements and procurement of LAN/WAN hardware for all sites and VPN leasing | Partially Achieved[[35]](#footnote-35) |
| 4.5 | Post-electoral review of ICT wing performance and research into the use of technology in election management | Achieved[[36]](#footnote-36) |

### Output 5: Enhanced capacities to prepare and disseminate credible and accurate photo voter list

Output five is split into nine different outputs and has a total budget of $6,992,038. To date the output has spent over 87 per cent of its budget and has expedited $6,056,582. **It represents nearly 36 per cent of the overall budget** and is intended to complement the PERP and CSSED project. The quality of the voters register vastly improved for the 2008 elections, and it was therefore important to maintain this quality and more importantly the perception of the accuracy of the register.

Figure 13: Budget for Output 5 from 2011 to June 2014

Although in statistical terms, with **22 per cent of the activities being achieved to date for this output, SEMB ensured that it reached its target of registering over 7 million people in time for the elections**. In 2011, SEMB piloted a project in four areas that served as a successful basis for the planning and roll-out of the 2012 nation-wide voter registration. The pilots ensured the design of enhanced standard operating procedures (SOP) for voter registration and a series of workshops disseminated this new methodology leading to the finalization of a uniform methodology being used across the country. In 2012, SEMB supported the procurement of additional equipment and software for the continued smooth functioning of voter registration activities, which led to a total of 92.1 million voters being registered (46,201,871 male and 45,927,981 females). Support of voter registration training was also supported by the project.

Figure 14: Status of Intended Results – Component 5

Prior to the finalisation of the voters register, in March 2012, an international advisor carried out a review of the process, status of implementation, functionality and sustainability of the software and hardware of the existing system for the voter registration. Confirmation of the robustness of the voter registration system and processes was reconfirmed and recommendations were provided to further update/improve and maintain sustainability of the existing system. Post registration reviews are also planned for 2014/5 to review the 2013 and 2014 registration drives. Voter Registration assessments are also planned for the foreseeable future once the ECB approves them.

In line with the future decentralisation of voter registration at the local level, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SEMB and the two responsible wings of the ECB namely National Identification and Registration (NID) wing and the Election Training Institute (ETI) in 2012. The MOU was for a total of approximately $6 million dollars. However due to the NID project being behind schedule, the regional, district and Upazilas are still unable to fully carry out voter registration in the regions without sending the data back to the capital first.

Table 5: Status of the Intended Results – Output 5

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Intended Results** | | **Results status** |
| **Output 5. Enhanced capacities to prepare and disseminate credible and accurate photo voter list** | | |
| 5.1 | Review and finalization of rules, forms, end-to-end processes and finalization and dissemination of SOPs | Achieved |
| 5.2 | Conduct post-registration review and assessment involving internal and external stakeholders | Achieved |
| 5.3 | Develop and implement rollout plan including pilot of BVRs to Upazilas in coordination with PERP-GoB | Partially Achieved |
| 5.4 | Consultations with internal and external stakeholders on rollout strategy and design of voter education and awareness programme | Partially Achieved |
| 5.5 | Research and analysis including assessment of voter list and research on best practice in the region in VR | Not Achieved[[37]](#footnote-37) |
| 5.6 | Support in the development and compatible voter registration and national identity systems delivering services to relevant stakeholders | Partially Achieved[[38]](#footnote-38) |
| 5.7 | Contribute to the design and development of robust information systems, adequate infrastructure | Not Acheived[[39]](#footnote-39) |
| 5.8 | Support development and implementation of a comprehensive voter list update programme | Partially Achieved |
| 5.9 | Comprehensive voter education programme designed on new VR Processes | Not Achieved[[40]](#footnote-40) |

### Output 6: Support Election Day activities in the run up to the parliamentary elections in 2014

Output six is split into seven different outputs and has a total of $661,745. Under SEMB, to date the output has spent approximately 46 per cent of its fund totalling $174,444. **The budget of $661,745 accounts for only three per cent of the overall budget.** The component focussed on supporting election day activities in the run up to the parliamentary elections in 2014 and worked in close synergy with the UNDP managed project – Support for the 10th Parliamentary,[[41]](#footnote-41) which was established based on the request from the ECB, as their needs required a more substantial budget.

Figure 15: Budget for Output 6 from 2011 to June 2014

Support to the 10th Parliamentary elections had four outputs including:[[42]](#footnote-42)- Professionalised ICT based Result and Candidate Management System; Strengthened ECB capacity for professional training and the production of election reference materials; Enhanced capacity for communication and voter education and improved logistics, coordination and procurement of electoral materials for the 10th parliamentary elections. To date a total of $5,924,720[[43]](#footnote-43) has been spent and the project has a no-cost extension till the end of 2014.

Table 6: Division of Labour between SEMB and 10th Parliament Election Project in 2013

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Major Areas of expenditure** | **SEMB Expenditure (2013)** | **SEMB Expenditure (2014)** | **10th P Expenditure (2013)** | **10th P Expenditure (2014)** |
| **Training** | 1,082,504.71 | 505,748.14 | 124,096.89 | 769,323.36 |
| **ICT** | 281,242.41 | 180,094.87 |  |  |
| **Development of RMS/CMS** |  |  | 1,265,345.95 | 384,457.95 |
| **Communication voter education** | 232,002.15 | 333,606.08 | 139,830.76 | 484,168.03 |
| **Election logistics** | 13,661.96 | 3,768.00 | 1,386,559.67 | 600,769.14 |
| **Decentralization and institutional growth** | 8,033.42 | 19,769.33 |  |  |
| **Decentralization and voter registration \*\*** | (328,843.90) |  |  |  |
| **Management** | 412,843.56 | 205,674.04 |  |  |
| **Total** | **1,701,444.31** | **1,248,660.46** | **2,915,833.27** | **2,238,718.48** |

**Output six, after output five is one of the worst performing, with only 29 per cent of the activities accomplishing the intended results.** These failings had more to do with the political context than any shortcomings due to the running of the project.

Figure 16: Status of the Intended Results from 2011-2014 – Output 6

Output six supported the ECB and ETI to develop an operational training plan utilizing the cascade methodology. 68 returning officers (ROs), 583 Assistant Returning Officers (AROs), 42,000 Presiding Officers (PROs), 212,500 Assistant Presiding Officers (APROs) and about 425,000 polling officers (POs) were trained.

SEMB successfully supported developing producing audio-visual messages for broadcast on television, they also helped use smart phones to distribute public service announcements via SMS and they also aided in producing videos or dramas illustrating important steps in the electoral process and given to communities in rural Bangladesh.

The project further provided high level and technical level advocacy/advice on management of the campaign period including the offer of supporting the revision of the code of conduct for elections. However external assistance was refused by the ECB.

Voter education, which was supported both by SEMB and the support for the 10th Parliamentary project was developed and approval to adopt it was granted partially for some of the materials, however due to the political impasse, the number of materials was reduced and due to late approval much of the materials did not get disseminated properly.

Media monitoring is a useful tool to examine the tone of the campaign, however unfortunately SEMB did not receive approval by ECB to engage civil society organizations in the process. A private company, however, was hired in order to monitor the media for twelve weeks from the 2nd November 2013 until the 21 February 2014. The media coverage included coverage of News and the key media outlets at national and divisional levels, reflecting a representative sample of the media in Bangladesh.

Table 7: Status of the Intended Results – Output 6

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Intended Results** | | **Results status** |
| **Output 6** | | |
| 6.1 | Support to planning and delivery of trainings | Achieved |
| 6.2 | Support to development of high-quality multi-media training materials for the national elections | Achieved |
| 6.3 | Research and analysis of issues arising related to the holding of national elections including on compliance with laws and regulations during campaign period | Partially Achieved |
| 6.4 | Support to development of a voter education strategy, materials and diffusion plan | Partially achieved |
| 6.5 | Support to planning and implementing post-election assessment of trainings | Partially Achieved |
| 6.6 | Support to civil society to monitor the audio-visual media during campaign period | Partially Achieved |
| 6.7 | Support for conduct of candidate debates. | Not Achieved[[44]](#footnote-44) |

# Assessment of the performance of the project

## Management – Policy and Operational Levels:

The Project Steering Committee[[45]](#footnote-45) (PSC) is the highest-level policy and oversight body for the project. The PSC was to meet on a quarterly basis; nevertheless, the committee has so far met three times[[46]](#footnote-46) with some meetings postponed due to the taking place of *Hatals* and meetings in 2014 suspended upon the request of the donors until the future of SEMB gains more clarity. It is uncertain as to whether more regular meetings would have had a more positive impact on the project, nevertheless in the meetings that were held, little reference was made to the political situation or the lack of buy in from the election commissioners for the implementation of some of the activities. Some activities highlighted in the minutes of the PSCs did in fact not take place, and no mention was made of these in any of the public reports available thereafter to the donors.

A Project Implementation Committee (PIC) whose role is to “ensure high quality coordination and oversight” was also established. The National Project Director (NPD) chairs the PIC. The Committee supervises the overall project implementation and day-to-day management of the project. The PIC was due to meet monthly, but to date has had only nine meetings, due mainly to the same reasons as cited above.[[47]](#footnote-47) These meetings also showcased activities, but did not highlight constraints or challenges to activities being implemented. No mention was made of the political impasse or the inability of the ECB to conduct credible and genuine elections during these meetings.

Nevertheless, the Resident Coordinator convened a regular platform among key partners including the SEMB project partners (US, EU. DFID) to promote greater dialogue and coordination around key political and electoral issues and discuss collectively at senior levels the political and technical risks associated with the electoral process. The RC organized a series of meetings with Ambassadors and Heads of Cooperation, 18 months leading up to the parliamentary polls. Exchanges with donors were almost bi-weekly in November/December 2013. There was also an increase in email exchanges and telephone conversations between UNDP and its donors.

The final level for the management and implementation of the project is under the Project Management Support Unit (PMSU), which is based in the Islamic Foundation building[[48]](#footnote-48) along with the NID project. The project was originally housed in the ECB but due to space constraints had to move out in early 2012. The project does maintain an office in ECB, which is home to the ICT and voter education sections when needed. The day-to-day management of the Project is the responsibility of the NPD who is assisted by a project coordinator under the PMSU.

Under regular NEX guidelines, the role of the NPD does not normally give technical advice but does have a project management as well as project formulation role. The NPD as well as running the project also had a full time job within the Secretariat and direct liaison was sometimes difficult due to the NPD mainly being located in the ECB. Regular staff meetings were held, however these were not necessarily conducted by the NPD, but the head of the democratic governance cluster, there were some occasions where meetings would take place more often than others. Nonetheless, the NPD is very supportive of the project and has given significant feedback on issues when needed. He has also actively lobbied (even for sensitive issues) for activities with the Commission itself in order to get approval. He adopted an open door policy for all staff, and met regularly with the Democratic Governance Cluster. The NPD from his side, also felt when it came to administrative matters, many key decisions surrounding recruitment were taken away from him, and it was alleged that in many of the interviews for both international and national posts, there was nobody represented from the project on the interview panel. This issue has been addressed by UNDP.

The original project coordinator who normally works under a SB5 was employed from July 2011 till March 2012 when he resigned. His resignation also coincided with the changing over of the members of the Election Commission. As an interim measure, the current Training and Capacity Building Expert (SB3) also acts[[49]](#footnote-49) as the project coordinator, and remains in this post till today.[[50]](#footnote-50) The coordinator[[51]](#footnote-51) should amongst other things provide technical direction, including provision of substantive leadership in elections, however was unable to bring distinct election technical know-how to the table and thus some members of the project felt that more technical direction and guidance over the activities and how the different components could interlink was lacking.

In order to improve efficiency of the project in the run up to the elections, the project expressed a desire to hire a full time CTA, however this request was denied. To this end, it was decided to employ a senior management advisor who could support management, operations and coordination as these were the items deemed most needed under the project in absence of a CTA. The advisor was able to fulfil his tasks as agreed with the ECB and as a result procurement was fast-tracked and operations were able to run more smoothly. Nevertheless, this role still failed to provide technical leadership and overall guidance to the project, which could have proved useful to the ECB to encourage them to take on activities that they did not deem necessary but could have had the potential for them to be perceived as more neutral and transparent.

## Project Assurance

Project assurance is carried out on various levels,[[52]](#footnote-52) including by the PSC, the NPD and the PMSU as well as the Project Coordinator and the International Experts. Nevertheless, the main focal point of project assurance is vested upon UNDP under the Democratic Governance Cluster.

In most UNDP election projects, there is almost always a chief technical advisor (CTA) who is able to oversee not only the general management of the project but the technical direction of it as well. A CTA is also pivotal to ensure not only the transfer of knowledge to the beneficiary but can act as a *go between* the project and the beneficiaries. Due to this lacuna, the Democratic Governance Cluster, under the role of the Programme Specialist and Programme Office, admirably took on this role, which in essence is not their responsibility and went beyond their role of project assurance.

Given not only the political sensibilities of the project but also the technical nuances of “selling” the activities under the ProDoc to the new Commission, the programme specialist (especially) was pivotal in providing key support and advice to not only the members of the project but also to the Election Commission itself and in providing information to the international partners. The programme specialist went above and beyond her remit, and held regular meetings with the project, the beneficiaries and donors in order to iron out any problems and to engage the election commission in promoting a more transparent and professional approach to the oversight of the elections. Furthermore, as has been mentioned above, the UN RC and the “good offices of the Secretary General” endeavoured to engage the election commission and some of the other stakeholders in order to address some of the political ramifications of the repealing of the caretaker government law. Despite these efforts, the projects’ overall aim to improve the institutional capacity to conduct credible elections was not achieved.

## Risk Management

The project factored in several risk management strategies, these include at the levels of the PSC and PIC and project coordinator as well as the employment of a monitoring and evaluation officer whose role is to inform the Democratic Governance Cluster on how to mitigate against critical risk factors and thus take major decisions to avoid unnecessary delays in the implementation of the project and if needed to consider a new direction or engaging in innovative strategies should the project need to reassess its course.

In line with results based management, a risk log for the project was presented within the Project Document,[[53]](#footnote-53) which identified 19 risks (see annex IV) that the project may be subject to. The project identified six types of risks: 1) Operational; 2) Organizational; 3) Strategic; 4) Political; 5) Regulatory and 6) Financial. As one will note from the table below, the majority of the risks factored were either organizational and/or operational in nature, only 6 of the 19 risks had a strictly political element to them. The risks were apparently logged on Atlas[[54]](#footnote-54) and it is assumed that they were regularly and correctly updated. Nevertheless, the majority of these risks were not shared in any of the PSC or PIC meetings or in quarterly or annual reports, although in quarterly meetings with donors, major risks such as the lack of a conducive environment for genuine elections and the challenge to achieve assertive ECB leadership to guide the project were highlighted,[[55]](#footnote-55) and the problems facing the 10th Parliamentary elections were of course conveyed to the donors in the run up to the polls.

Figure 17: Types of Risks Envisaged in the Project

During the course of the project up until June 2014, 11 out of the 19 risks have become apparent at some time or other. As one can note from the graph below, the evaluation has rated six of the risks as high impact, only two of these (risk 9 and 13) had a political element to them, the remainder were mainly operational and/or organizational although the political complexities influenced some of these particular risks.

Figure 18: Risks incurred during the lifetime of the project

The project suffered from particular weaknesses which invariably affected its ability to deliver the level of capacity building envisaged in the ProDoc. This was particularly apparent in output three (Reform of the Communications Department). These weaknesses were mostly of an operational nature, such as delay in recruitment, which is unfortunately common in such projects. Other risks outlined in the risk log such as lack of support for the project by the ECB, was on some occasions apparent, and although this is indeed expressed as an organizational risk, the motivation behind the reluctance of the ECB is also a direct consequence of the polarised political environment which inevitably had some influence over the commission to undertake certain activities. Other factors could also play a part in their reluctance for example to engage with stakeholders. This could be attributed to a lack of understanding of best international practices in managing an election commission or merely miscommunication between them and what the project sought to achieve.

## Timeframe

In essence, the project had approximately one and a half years prior to being in full election mode in order to ensure that important gains from the previous projects were sustained and built upon. Nevertheless, there was some delay to starting the project and the Pro Doc was not signed until April 2011, with funds not really being expedited until nearly a year later. (Please see section under impact). Furthermore, due to other delays, the project did not actually initialise activities until the summer of 2011, whereby only 11 out of the 33 (please see annex VI) staff were on board, which included two people from ICT and one person from communications, but no international advisors. National staff had little or no experience in previous election projects. The three international consultants heading the six components did not commence their contracts until September 2012 (ICT Specialist) and January 2013 (Communications and Training Specialists), leaving little time for efficient capacity building of the respective departments, especially as from 2013 the ECB was in full election operation mode. This delay had a particular impact on the public relations wing as it had become evident that due to the increased political tensions as well as the apparent partisanship of the new commissioners, confidence in the commission’s outreach to stakeholders and its overall perceived transparency was dwindling.[[56]](#footnote-56)

Figure 19: Recruitment of staff within the project

Figure 20: Recruitment of staff per output within the project

The delay in recruitment for the international advisors was largely due to not being able to find qualified candidates, and rather than accepting substandard quality, the project re-advertised the positions in order to attract better qualified candidates. All three consultants had previous experience in similar projects. Delay in recruitment for the project was not only a problem for international advisors, but there was a severe delay in the recruitment process in general. Various persons in the project stated that it normally took 6 -12 months for the recruitment process to be finalised. In one known case, the post was advertised in April 2012 but the person did not actually start their contract until March 2013.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The Project Document emphasises the importance of monitoring and evaluation throughout the lifespan of the project and the need for the project to have a project-monitoring unit reporting to the NPD. The project employed a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer from November 2011 till April 2014. Under the M & E framework, various activities were foreseen, including using atlas, lessons learned, and submitting Project Progress Reports to the Steering Committee. Reports on achievements of gender equality results with mention about challenges and opportunities in obtaining gender equality would also be given to the project. A draft indicator framework with outcome and output indicators, mode of verifications and relationship of results chain was also developed.

Leaving aside the political tensions which had a profound impact on the overall objectives of the project, challenges and obstacles to the implementation of key activities were generally not highlighted in key meetings such as the PSC or PIC and were not officially reported in the quarterly and annual reports. Nevertheless, operations and substantive challenges were reported in the progress report for the period from April 2011 to September 2012, and in periodic meetings that the democratic governance cluster had with the international partners. It is therefore unclear why the reports emanating from the actual project did not report these challenges and tended to only highlight the positive points. To this end, there **could be more result-based reporting at this level to ensure the link among the work plan, results and input framework and the subsequent quarterly and annual report reflect what is going on in reality.**

## Donor Input and Technical Assistance

Donor inputs for implementation of the programme were proposed to follow the UNDP partnership approach, with mobilised resources combined in a ‘basket fund’. The basket is made up of three international partners, the European Union, DFID and USAID. UNDP is also a key contributor to the project. The EU contributes solely to SEMB and is not supporting any other activities related to the electoral process outside of the basket. DFID supports other electoral projects including CSSED and the Support to the 10th Parliamentary Elections, and projects outside UNDP including NDI and IFES which are also supported by USAID. The proposed budget was over $19m however, funds did not start to flow into the project from the international partners until at least a year into the projects implementation which led to UNDP getting a bridge loan to cover costs.

In the post electoral environment, stock needed to be taken of the achievements of the project to date. Donors conducted internal reviews through SEMB to review the outcomes of their electoral assistance and consulted with their headquarters on the way forward. The project faced an uncertain future. The UN also conducted its own review and in May 2014 the focal point of EAD instructed that a phased approach should be taken with a more targeted and focussed approach to promote demonstrable improvements in the electoral process. Agreement to adopt this strategy was made with both USAID and DFID in May 2014. The EU expressed their reluctance to implement activities until a formal decision was taken from Headquarters, although this was never expressed in official terms. In August 2014, the EU decided to reduce the amount of funding by approximately four million dollars.

In the meantime, the ECB concentrated on lessons learned activities, and reduced other activities originally foreseen in the AWP to a minimum. The ECB expressed their frustration and disappointment at this reduction in activities, and that the international advisors were not being utilised to their full potential.

## External Factors

The efficiency of the project was also of course severely affected by the political disruptions in the country. The country underwent a series of Hatals, which hampered the implementation of some of the activities, especially outside of Dhaka. While many other UNDP projects were not running from the office, the staff of SEMB bravely came into work under police escort and ensured that activities were being carried out despite the political impasse. This was part of a broader risk management policy which was agreed at the highest level to ensure that the SEMB continued productivity during its most critical period despite external factors. The boycott of the elections by the opposition meant that certain activities were cancelled all together, such as the candidate debates, and many other aspects of voter education for example were reduced.

# Impact

## Overall Impact of the Project

The project in essence has at least 18 months to go before it closes, however many of the activities were geared towards contributing to the success of the 2014 elections and these gains would be further built upon subsequent to the parliamentary elections. To this end, the perceived failure of the election commission to ensure credible elections in 2014 has largely led to reluctance by the international partners to continue to engage in the projects activities at the same level as prior to the polls. This section aims to look at the impact of the project on the overall environment, however it should be noted, that one single project can never guarantee the success of an election.

**Expected Outcome** (UNDAF 1.)

By 2016, all Bangladeshis, including vulnerable groups, are better represented and participate more in democratic processes.

**Expected Outcomes** (CPAP)

The Election Commission have improved institutional capacity to conduct credible elections.

Electoral assistance coordinated and electorate informed of voting rights and responsibilities

This has been seen in Afghanistan and Libya for example, whereby both the political and security environment overshadowed the process and led to what many have perceived as “failed” elections, however it did not mean that the electoral projects were a failure and they did not have an overall impact. In this light, it would perhaps be useful to look at the impact of the project from a two-pronged approach. Firstly what impact has the project had on the wider democratic environment, including the ability for Bangladeshis including vulnerable groups to be better represented and participate in a more democratic process? Secondly, what impact has the project had on the overall capacity of the election commission, if the project had not existed would their capacity have remained the same or could it have done things differently to have a different outcome?

The overall aim of SEMB is to construct the necessary building blocks amongst the election commission to foster a more enabled environment however as it has been reiterated in this report, the holding of credible and transparent elections was always at risk politically and the promoting of credible elections cannot be the sole responsibility of the project.

The aim of this particular evaluation therefore is to assess the impact so far on the capacity of the election commission and to what extent the envisioned results in the ProDoc and work plans have been attained. Chapter seven highlighted, that the key shortfalls with regards to achievement were under outputs three, five and six. Output five actually had the lowest rating, for both the rate of achieved and the highest for not achieved - however voter registration was most definitely a success, and has had a positive impact on the process despite voter turnout being so low. Notwithstanding whether particular activities have been achieved or not, **the impact of those that have been completed are mostly positive and there is no doubt that without the project, the election commission would have not been able to build their capacity and knowledge around the electoral process**, especially with regards to the building of certain technical systems and the development of a more institutionalised approach towards training and enabling a large number of persons to be registered successfully. Nevertheless, **it should be duly noted that capacity building needs to continue in order to ensure that these gains are not lost and are able to continue beyond the closure of the project.**

## Impact of the Project on the wider democratic objectives

By and large, SEMB has had a **limited impact** on the democratic governance objectives. (UNDAF outcome 1). As has been reiterated throughout the report, the initial repeal of the caretaker government and the political impasse that imbued unwittingly influenced the outcome of the electoral process and resulted in the conduct of elections that were not up to international standards. Through the design of the project, and its sole emphasis on building the election commission’s capacity, meant that the project was unable to galvanise support amongst other key stakeholders in the electoral process and engagement with these actors was only guaranteed if the commission was open to consultations with them. To this end, till now, the project has had a limited impact on ensuring that vulnerable groups are better represented. Nevertheless, having said that, the project has made some inroads with regards to ensuring that gender and other minority groups have been aptly represented in the voter registration for example. **However, many of these activities were after thoughts and not included in the core of the design of the project.**

The overall capacity of the election commission has had a positive impact, even if this impact was unable to ensure favourable conditions for the elections. **The training unit and the provision of ICT has most definitely enhanced the way that the election commission works and will have the capacity to work in the future.** This impact would have not been seen if the project had not existed.

## Project Design

In general the design of the project was well conceived and relevant and looked set to achieve the majority of its intended results. **However, this was under the pretext that the new election commission would embrace the same ideals and work ethics with the same amount of vigour and transparency as the previous commission. The projects outcome also relied on a peaceful and enabling political environment, which has generally not existed in Bangladesh, and unfortunately 2013/2014 was no exception.**

The use of a more nuanced and technically savvy project coordinator or a chief technical advisor may have been able to rectify some of the shortcomings in the project especially with regards to many of the recommendations made at the end of 2012 to increase transparency and for enabling better conditions for genuine and credible elections. **Nevertheless, much of the reluctance by the commission to engage with the stakeholders and embrace certain activities had political connotations, and there was very little the project could do to remedy these gaps**. Furthermore, due to the design of the project, i.e. the main and only focus of the project being the ECB, it was difficult to promote an enabling environment to reach out with the stakeholders outside of the commission, when they did not want to engage with them. Finally the initial design of the project also meant that gender and people with disabilities (PWD|s) and internally displaced persons (IDPS) were not seen as cross cutting themes and thus specific interventions were carried out but not mainstreamed across all outputs. It should be highlighted that each output description did refer to gender inclusion, however this was not an integral part of the design but instead was an *add on* to ensure that the project would record numbers and encourage women to take part in the trainings. **Gender mainstreaming is not only about numbers but refers to changing attitudes and ensuring that women in all aspects of the election process are able to access the same opportunities as men in order to put them on a level playing field.**

Finally, the project risks did not talk about the escalation of violence and hatals which had been prominent in other electoral processes, and there should have perhaps been a section on how to minimise the effect violence could have on the overall process.

## Impact of Timelines

The evaluation has already highlighted that the late start of the project, as well as the prolonged recruitment process and the organisational shuffle in the ECB led to important delays and had repercussions on the quality of the outputs delivered. Furthermore, there were a number of decisions that took a long time to be processed within the Commission, which resulted in either activities not taken place or them having a limited impact, as there was not enough time to implement them. For example, the late decision to produce voting education material meant that the production of the materials was delayed and the dissemination of said booklets etc was fragmented and did not reach all the areas they had intended to.

Furthermore, the core of SEMB is to improve capacity building. This was of course done to some extent, especially with the on-the-job training during the run up to the elections. Nevertheless, the delay in recruiting the three main technical experts until the end of 2012/beginning of 2013 meant that valuable time to assess their concrete needs and to design a relevant capacity building programme was relegated to the backburner to ensure that key activities were done in time for the elections. (This was particularly pertinent in the communications wing). **The project did address this gap in other components by recruiting part time consultants for ICT and BRIDGE training, however in essence they are not a replacement for continuous full time capacity building support.**

## Disbursement of Funds

The project was signed in April 2011, however the first instalments from the international partners did not arrive until February 2012, when the project received a little under $2 million dollars from USAID/DFID. This was followed by another $3 million dollars approximately in May from the EU.

Table 8: Total Expenditure for the six outputs and project management of SEMB from 2011 till June 2014

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Strengthening Election Management Project – SEMB** | | | | |  | |
| **Activity** | **Year** | | | | |  | |
| **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | | **Total Expenditure** | |
| Activity 1 | 68.314 | 194.687 | 1.082.340 | 484.868 | | **1.830.209** | |
| Activity 2 | 25.426 | 99.273 | 7.604 | 16.617 | | **148.919** | |
| Activity 3 | 9.083 | 17.171 | 238.298 | 311.687 | | **576.239** | |
| Activity 4 | 4.810 | 151.716 | 371.164 | 154.002 | | **681.692** | |
| Activity 5 | 180.819 | 6.204.752 | (328.989) | - | | **6.056.582** | |
| Activity 6 | 76.290 | 65.652 | 13.662 | 18.840 | | **174.444** | |
| Activity 7 | 271.824 | 447.376 | 392.800 | 187.979 | | **1.299.979** | |
| **Total** | **636.566** | **7.180.628** | **1.776.878** | **1.173.992** | | **10.768.064** | |

As one can note from the above table, the expenditures for 2011 and 2012 equalled $7,817,194 and by May 2012, the project had approximately, with the full disbursement of UNDP, a total of $6,967,333.23 which meant that the project had to apply for a bridge loan of approximately one million dollars to cover 2012 in order to ensure the implementation of activities. It is unsure whether this lack of funds resulted in delays in implementation. The next influx of funds did not come into April of the following year when most of the big ticket items (such as the voter registration had already been carried out).

Output six which supports activities to the run up to the parliamentary elections in 2014 had an initial budget of approximately $661,745, however a year prior to the elections, the election commission requested additional support to fund the procurement of 40,000 ballot boxes, 2,400,000 Security Seals and 648,000 Indelible Ink Pens. Support was also given for the production and dissemination of materials. In order to cover the costs of the support to the 10th Parliamentary Election Project, a separate project was set up which has a total budget of approximately $10.5 million dollars. DANIDA, DFID, Swiss Development Corporation (SDC), and AusAid contributed to the basket fund. Given the reduction in activities during the elections, to date only approximately half of the budget has been spent.

Table 9: Financial Status – Support to 10th Parliamentary Election Project

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Financial status - Support to 10th Parliamentary Election Project** | | | | |
| **Donor** | **Total commitment** | **Total income** | **Forecast expenditure end of 2014** | **Balance** |
| UNDP | 120.000 | 120.000 |  | 120.000,00 |
| DANIDA | 360.000 | 365.571 |  | 365.571 |
| DFID | 7.938.931 | 7.938.931 | 3.894.397 | 4.044.534 |
| SDC | 1.125.597 | 1.015.343 | 510.034 | 505.309 |
| AusAID | 963.391 | 963.391 | 559.329 | 404.062 |
| **Total** | **10.507.919** | **10.403.236** | **4.963.760** | **5.439.476** |

Table 10: Disbursement of Donor Funds 2012/2014

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Development Partner** | **Total Commitment** | **Amount Disbursed in 2012** | **Amount Disbursed in 2013** | **Amount Disbursed in 2014** | **Total Amount Disbursed to Date** | **Total Amount Pending** |
| **European Union** | 13,698,630.00 | 3,002,711.23[[57]](#footnote-57) | 5,839,332.35[[58]](#footnote-58) |  | 8,842,043.58 | 4,856,586.42[[59]](#footnote-59) |
| **DFID/USAID** | 3,773,199[[60]](#footnote-60) | 1,923,199[[61]](#footnote-61) |  | 1,850,000[[62]](#footnote-62) | 3,773,199 | 0,00 |
| **UNDP** | 2,041,423 | 2,041,423 |  |  | 2,041,423 | 0,00 |

## Capacity Building

A key component of the technical assistance was to “strengthen the organizational, management and operational capacities of the Election Commission and to a limited extent sustain the decentralisation process to enable them to better plan, prepare, conduct, manage and supervise the elections in Bangladesh. There is no doubt that the ECB has been enabled to strengthen its operational capacities and the impact has been **somewhat positive on training and the ICT department and to a limited extent on the communications and external relations**; however, in some instances some persons in the Election Commission saw the project as a provider of specific interventions rather than a capacity building provider. The reasons for this are manifold. The first and foremost is that the Commission has vast experience in conducting elections, and many of the staff in the Secretariat have well over a few decades of experience. What is more, many members of the Secretariat have actually provided technical assistance to other UNDP projects abroad, and therefore many staff do not feel that they need capacity building. Furthermore, as has been elaborated upon previously in the report, some of the activities did not enjoy a full “buy in” from the commission, therefore many of those that were planned were not approved or decided upon too late. Finally the late arrival of the technical experts also left little time to build a relationship and the chance to mentor the departments that were meant to receive the capacity building.

## National Ownership

“Efforts to increase country ownership of the development process is a central pillar of the aid effectiveness agenda”[[63]](#footnote-63) and principles of *alignment and harmonisation* support the principle of *ownership* in the Paris Framework, enabling donor and partner countries to effectively operationalize and support enhanced ownership.

The design and implementation of the project being a national implementation (NIM)[[64]](#footnote-64) project aimed to enhance national ownership and leadership. Furthermore, the ProDoc was drafted in direct consultation with the beneficiaries and the strategic plan had a truly national stamp on it. Nevertheless, due to the change over of commissioners, the activities outlined in the ProDoc and the goals of the strategic plan of the Election Commission did not necessarily match the overall direction that the new commission wanted to take. The non ownership of these two documents have had implications on the project and its outcome and this has been further hindered by the fact that there was no direct link between the commission and the project other than the Democratic Governance Cluster which did not have the overall clout nor technical know how to engage the commissioners fully.

### Analysis of the Components

The Program Results and Resource Framework outlined 42 key indicative activities[[65]](#footnote-65) to be undertaken under the six different components. As has been stated previously, **the majority of the activities in each group under the six outputs have been carried out or are currently being undertaken. As has been reported under the section under effectiveness, to date 38 per cent of the activities have been achieved, however as was noted a further 50 per cent of them have only been partially achieved largely due to the political situation but in some cases due to the operational/organizational risks discussed under the section on efficiency.** Notwithstanding this, some of the group activities have had or will have varying impacts on the process and the overall goals of the project and in many cases **the overall goal was not necessarily reached or was in fact distorted**. Given the limitations of this report, the evaluation will only examine various group activities under each output to demonstrate the varying impacts these activities have had on the process and its wider environment.

### Output 1: Professionalizing and Strengthened trainings conducted by the ECB

**The overall impact is varied.** There is no doubt that in the areas of training, ETI and indeed the Election Commission have benefitted largely from the project. The work has been organised in a more structured way, and BRIDGE trainings have enabled staff to have better understanding of the process and are more professional in their outlook to their work. Furthermore, with the help of the project, it is the first time that they had access to properly structured manuals, which were easy to read, and structured trainings whereby the manual was read out in class. Unfortunately, according to some ad-hoc reports, the structure of trainings did not always filter down to the lowest level, and therefore this needs to be examined and if need be, addressed to ensure that the quality of training does not diminish at the lower levels.

Various members of the commission have embarked on study visits abroad, which always have the capacity to enrich and contribute to knowledge. However, these visits were not documented and findings were not shared amongst other members of the Election Commission, so the benefits of these study visits are quite limited in their scope.

ETI has undoubtedly benefitted form the project, and without it, would have not been able to maintain the building and refurbished the class rooms as well as the language lab. Nevertheless, the members of ETI are not fully accredited BRIDGE trainers and therefore cannot impart BRIDGE training to others within the Election Commission. Furthermore, they need to be exposed to other facilities in order to strengthen their capacity. Study visits are normally undertaken by high level secretariat or commission staff, and the ETI staff still need exposure in order to enhance their skills. Nevertheless the Needs Assessment guidelines and the evaluation and monitoring tools will help them better analyse where the elections commissions strengths and weaknesses lie. It is **imperative that the Strategic plan of the ETI is approved as quickly as possible so that more structure and direction is added to their work.**

### Output 2: Strengthened ECB Capacity to efficiently manage decentralisation and institutional growth

**The impact on decentralisation is minimal** given the fact that there is no still no concrete decentralisation plan and the plan to ensure constant voter registration in all the offices in the regions, districts and Upzilas is not yet up and running to its full potential.

The SEMB project has produced various reports on local elections, and there is a wealth of documentation on the varying elections and training sessions that took place during the 10th Parliamentary Elections and the other local elections. **Nevertheless, the impact that these reports can have on the future is at the moment very limited, as they are not being used**. It is important that they are disseminated, translated in the local language, and the relevant persons discuss their contents in order to ensure that the appropriate lessons learned are adopted.

### Output 3: Reform of Communications and Strengthening Partnerships

**The overall impact is still quite limited**, as many of the strategies suggested were not employed by the commissioners. Out of the ten activities envisaged only four of them are achieved, therefore this is an important area, which still needs to be followed up on. The development of an accepted and comprehensive communication strategy needs to be prioritised as well as building better relationships with all relevant stakeholders.

### Output 4: Professionalized and strengthened IT Wing of the ECS

The development of RMS and CMS had a varied impact on the elections. The CMS system worked and meant that the election commission has the know how to implement a candidate management system which facilitates the work of the commission and also enables ballot papers to be produced more easily. **The impact on the overall process was positive.** The development of RMS is also positive, however its impact on the actual process has yet to be seen. Unfortunately the introduction of such a system was to ensure greater transparency of the results, however the decision to use the system came late, and there were various flaws in it being able to be used to its maximum. One of the reasons, was the fact that the data in the RMS database depends on accurate voter registration figures, however in practice those entered into the database and those available in the field differed, therefore making it difficult to produce results sheets where the number of voters registered did not tally. The reason for these differences can be explained in the fact that many polling stations still registered voters up till election day, and thus the pre designed data base was finalised a few weeks prior to the elections, and therefore the figures sometimes differed. The election commission at all levels has to ensure that a cut off date for registration is adhered to, in order to avoid this confusion.

**The potential impact this system could have had on the results is of course positive, and it has the ability to ensure better transparency**. However, as well as the aforementioned problems, the commission did not adopt the system formally and furthermore the law still dictates that the results should be manually displayed. **Therefore for this system to have an impact in the future, it is essential that the law reflects this change and the voter registration figures are finalised before the system is deployed to the field.**

### Output 5: Enhanced capacities to prepare and disseminate credible and accurate photo voter list

One of the key successes of the 2008 elections, was the newly created voter register which was considered to be one of the best biometric voter registers in the world. SEMB in conjunction with PERP, ensured that a further 7 million people have been registered and has meant that the project reached its target as well as enabling the election commission to establish enhanced and homogenised standard operating procedures for collecting data and updating the register. The impact on the process is important, despite less than half of the registered voters actually turning out to vote in 10th Parliamentary elections. Furthermore, registration does not only imply the right to vote, it also gives the registrant an identifying document, which enables them to access different services in Bangladesh. **To this end, the registration of over 81 million persons is a huge feat and should be recognised as such**. Various reviews of the voter registration have been done in recent years, and before proceeding with the future updates, it is important to enable an independent evaluation of the accuracy of the register to ensure that the voters roll continues to enjoy the confidence it has till now, and to identify any potential problems for the future.

### Output 6: Supportive Election Day activities in the run up to the parliamentary elections in 2014

As has been outlined previously the budget under output six was very small, and the ECB requested more funds to purchase some big ticket items such as ballot boxes, seals and indelible pens. SEMB did contribute to some training materials and voter education materials, but unfortunately due to the boycott of the elections and the Hatals, much of these materials were either not used or did not reach the intended audience therefore the **impact was limited.**

# Sustainability

A key component to any project which aims at enhancing further entrenchment of democratic governance is its ability to ensure sustainability after the closure of the project. SEMB was to build upon the capacity already attained under the previous SEPB and to run in parallel and complement the projects of CSSED and PERP. After the review in 2009, SEMB was designed in a way to provide in-depth support to the Election Commission that has the ability to contribute and deepen democracy, and as a result should lead to fostering credible elections. SEMBs only focus is on the Election Commission and therefore its reach to the stakeholders outside the institution is limited to the activities that it does under the project. The report has established that due to a number of possible reasons, some of the crucial activities which had the ability to enhance transparency and the integrity of the commission were weak and there is information from various stakeholders that indicate that the level of confidence in the election commission has decreased as compared to the elections in 2008.

The principal focus of an average election support project is to deliver the elections and therefore not all elements of the project could be said to be sustainable. Nevertheless, SEMB adopted an electoral cycle approach and the leitmotif behind the project was not only to deliver credible elections but also to enhance the capacity of the commission.

In order, therefore, to measure the overall sustainability of the project, it is useful to consider certain areas that are used to gauge sustainability: **Policy Support Measures, Choice of Technology, Socio-Cultural Matters, Ownership and Political Sustainability.** These factors can be individual in nature, but their effects on the sustainability of a project can sometimes be interlinked.

## Institutional/Policy Support Measures

The influence of **policy support measures** on sustainability is very pertinent. The ECB for example has been recipients of donor support for many years and there is no doubt that capacity has been built, yet as the evaluation will examine below, it is important that policy support measures are adhered to in order to ensure sustainability. In the case of ECB, it is essential that they have a supported structure and are enabled funds to carry out elections and maintain offices, as well as having an established protocol and procedures to implement their key activities.

**Support Structure**

Output two is focussed on strengthening the ECBs capacity to efficiently manage decentralisation and institutional growth. The Election Commission both at capital level and in the regions now have permanent structures and therefore this is an important element for their sustainability. The new buildings for the election commission and the ETI should be finalised in a few years time, which will facilitate the way they work and also the way they engage with the public and other key stakeholders. However, the fact that these buildings exist and allow the ECB more space and indeed independence[[66]](#footnote-66) is of course important, however they are not yet being used to their full potential. To this end, it is very important that the ECB defines their plans for decentralisation, especially with regards to the voter registration process, and as has been previously reiterated revisit the strategic plan to ensure that the ECB has a clear roadmap over the next 4 years.

**Funds**

Funds for the election commission has never been an issue, and therefore their sustainability in this regard is not a problem. However, despite the vast array of experience that many members of the staff have in the Secretariat, there are still many areas of the Election Commission which are weak, this includes the legal department and the establishment of proper procedures and protocols both in relation to regulations to be adopted by the commission, but also the uniform implementation of procedures and protocols at all levels of the Election Commission. Funds for extra activities and to build this type of capacity is not provided in the national budget, thus it is essential that the last two years of the project are used wisely to enhance capacity in the aforementioned areas.

**Transparency and engagement with the stakeholders**

One of the key weaknesses of the current commission is the perception of its partiality and the lack of transparency it applies when engaging with stakeholders. 2017 will see a newly appointed commission, it is of course not known who these persons will be and whether they will display any particular affiliation to a particular political party. Therefore in order to ensure the transparency and integrity of any of the election commissioners in the present and in the future, it is important to look at electoral reform with regards to ensuring that the selection of commissioners is more uniformly accepted by all stakeholders and to develop protocols and procedures to guarantee the perception of transparency and openness between the commission and all stakeholders involved in the election process.

## Ownership

Ownership of the project and its goals is of course essential for the sustainability of the outputs into the future. The evaluation has concluded that there have been various activities and outputs which were either only partially achieved or their overall impact has been quite weak due to various factors, including the lack of total ownership of all of the activities of the project by the current election commission. I**t is therefore important to fully engage the commission to ensure that the project is both serving their purposes but ensures that the elections commissions’ approach adheres to international best practices and equally promotes more confidence amongst the general public and all relevant stake holders to ensure a favorable environment to conduct credible elections.**

## Choice of Technology

SEMB has introduced various technical innovations to the election commission and the IT department while enthused is still quite weak in its technical ability. The staff are in the process of receiving training on ensuring that in the areas of software development they are well versed. The use of RMS and CMS will of course change in each election, therefore it is imperative that the IT department is enabled to ensure full understanding of not only using this technology but also to develop software and to make adaptions to the system if they are required.

## Political Factors

The electoral process in Bangladesh has always tended to be influenced by the political environment, and more so, since the amendment to the Constitution. Subsequent to the 2014 elections, there does not seem to have been any progress in the political situation and it is currently at a stalemate. In order for the overall goal of the project to prevail, it is therefore important to ensure political will from both the government and all the political stakeholders. This is no mean feat and the political environment can only be contained to a certain extent. **To this end, it is essential that the other factors mentioned above are ensured in order to counter any political factors, which will inevitably influence the overall impact and sustainability of the project.**

# Assessment of Programming until 2015

The project is due to close in March 2016, it is therefore safe to assume that most of the activities need to be completed by the end of December 2015, to allow the project to close and to undertake a final evaluation of its gains throughout its lifetime.

Subsequent to the 2014 elections, due to the complex political climate, various reviews have taken place, and EAD has concluded that a phased approach should be adopted with a more targeted and focused approach to promote demonstrable improvements in the electoral process. In September 2014, a new and experienced Chief Technical Advisor has begun to work with the ECB and all other component heads have left the country. The majority of the national staff have been retained until December 2014.

In the first half of 2014, the ECB have conducted various lessons learned exercises, and the project should now assist the ECB to collate this important information into a set of useable documents and should aid the Commission in carrying out a SWOT analysis of where the institution stands at the moment. The Commissioners are now almost half way through their tenure, and to date, as a direct result of the polarized political environment, the ECB was not perceived as being transparent or as effective as the ECB was in 2008. There are still a number of local elections to be conducted, however the pressure to conduct these elections is far less than during the 10th parliamentary elections. To this end, the ECB should utilize this window of opportunity and ensure that the projects resources are used to a maximum to ensure a more targeted impact and ensure that local elections can serve as lessons learned for future electoral events.

The evaluation has already reiterated that the Commissioners did not always “buy in” to all activities, and this sometimes resulted in some activities being rejected or delayed despite the working traction of the Secretariat. To this end, the CTA should work directly with the commissioners to ensure not only overall technical leadership of the project, but can also explain in technical terms the benefits of certain activities and can encourage more “buy in” from the Commissioners themselves.

The CTA should look at the strategic plan, along with the SEMB ProDoc and the conclusions drawn from the lessons learned, to ensure that they all run in parallel, and the Commissions vision mirrors that of the SEMB and emanates from the lessons learned from the previous elections. As was already stated, the Commission is responsible for the conducting and oversight of the electoral process, but cannot be held entirely responsible for ensuring a conducive environment for elections; in this light, it is essential that lessons learned at the level of the ECB are shared with all the key actors in the electoral process, and that they also share their lessons learned, so that the Commission can obtain a complete picture of the process and examine where the short falls are.

The next 15 months are decisive for the project but they are also decisive for the ECB, it is essential that SMART activities are undertaken, and they are targeted at specific areas, and results can be shown from the outputs undertaken. To this end, it is essential that a monitoring and evaluation specialist comes on board; in order to ensure that results based management is carried out for each activity from hereon.

The first five outputs are still relevant, and with the money, which is left, stock needs to be taken of what has already been achieved. Looking back at the status tables contained in this evaluation, it should be noted, that where an activity is achieved, it does not necessarily mean that it should not be continued, or that its sustainability is ensured. To give an example, in Output one, support to ETI facilities is indeed achieved, however, should the project stop contributing to 50 per cent of the rent of the building, the ETI would find it very hard to continue their endeavors. Similarly, in output two research and lessons learned activities are indeed completed, however it is important to note that these two exercises are not pertinent if the information contained therein is not examined and utilized to its maximum. Output three, whereby many of the activities are only partially achieved, should be looked at, and innovative ways of engaging with the commission/commissioners should be looked at in order for them to drive their own communications strategy which is in line with international best practice. It is particularly important for the ECB to showcase innovative actions, and one way to do this, is to ensure complementarity and complicity with the regional EMBs, the Forum of Election Management Bodies of South Asia to which the ECB is a member.

The registration process is on-going and the gains already made in this area should be built upon. Many of the activities under this output have not yet been realized; therefore it should be analyzed as to which of these activities should take priority and which ones can be given to the NID project. It is essential, however, that an independent review of the current voter register is undertaken to ensure that it is reliable and is in conformity with international standards.

Finally, output five which regards to ICT has to date been one of the most successful outputs, however the full impact of these systems has yet to be seen. Technical systems are expensive and it is essential that capacity is especially built and available to ensure future development and change to the current systems. Failure to do so, will mean that the cost will outweigh the overall benefit of the output. Therefore capacity building in this sector should not be lost, and on the contrary should be built upon to ensure the sustainability of the systems in the future.

# Best Practices and Lessons Learned

1. Overall outcome of a technical election project should “under promise” and “over deliver”, i.e. a technical project can never deliver a political outcome, and should be taken into account when designing the ProDoc.
2. If possible, an election project should not only focus on one key stakeholder but should ensure that all key stakeholders who are involved in the process benefit from the project (however this is sometimes difficult under a NEX/NIM modality)
3. An Electoral Cycle Approach is key, however a reasonable start up time for the project should be factored into to ensure that activities start as soon as feasible and have the maximum impact possible. (This should also include time for donors to confirm funding agreements and to transfer monies prior to the start up of key activities.
4. Election projects of this complexity and in such a difficult political environment should have a chief technical advisor who can continuously oversee the technical areas of the project and liaise and mentor the Election Commission.
5. If recruitment proves impossible or is lengthy, hiring of shorter-term experts is recommended to cover important gaps.
6. Adequate results based management should be adopted at all levels of reporting, and where possible, project meetings should highlight the problems and challenges to the implementation of activities.
7. Gender and vulnerable groups should be factored into the project design and should cut across all outputs ensuring that they are fully mainstreamed into all areas of the project.
8. Where possible, examine possible ways of reducing or deterring election related violence, this can be in collaboration with other projects outside of UNDP.
9. Where possible, the project should be co-located within the election commission, in order to ensure proper transfer of knowledge and to aid in the running and implementation of the project.

# Conclusions

The evaluation concludes that in general the project was relatively well designed, however the sole focus on the election commission may have limited its overall impact on the electoral process, which was marred by political instability. Furthermore, the overall outcome of ensuring credible elections through enhancing the ECBs capacity was unrealistic and highly unattainable. There was a wide consultation process during the design of SEMB and the outputs addressed the needs of the Election Commission. However, with the appointment of new commissioners in 2012 and the repeal of the caretaker government during the conduct of elections, and the polarized political environment, the project’s outreach was weakened.

February 2012 saw the appointment of a new commission which illustrated an aversion to fully embrace the goals of the project document which resulted in some of the activities being not approved in a timely fashion, being reduced or having some of the activities cancelled all together. According to international best practice, a transparent as well as an election commission that demonstrates integrity, inclusiveness and the engagement of all key stakeholders is vital to ensure a conducive environment for credible and transparent elections. Subsequent to the 2014 elections, the Election Commission has experienced a loss of confidence in their ability to ensure credible and transparent elections. While much of this is due to the boycotting of the elections, many also perceive the election commission to be partisan and they do not enjoy the high regard for transparency and integrity as they did in 2008.

Various risks were identified at the beginning of the project and 11 out of the 19 risks have materialized in some form or shape over the three-year life time of the project. The project identified six types of risks that comprise: - 1) Operational; 2) Organizational; 3) Financial; 4) Strategic; 5) Political and 6) Regulatory. The risks that had the most impact on the outcome of the project were political, operational and organizational. The introduction of the 15th Amendment which resulted in the main opposition party boycotting the elections meant that many of the activities were disrupted and the results of many of the activities were either partially achieved (50%) or not achieved at all (12%). Adding to the political stalemate, the project did not enjoy a total “buy in” from the commissioners which resulted in some of the activities being delayed or not approved and having a weakened impact.

The project lacked overall technical leadership and the three international advisors did not have the know-how or enough “clout” to mentor and guide the commission to undertake certain activities. This gap was filled by the Democratic Governance Cluster which did manage to bridge some of this gap, however they were unable to provide key technical advice.

In addition to the lack of enthusiasm and understanding of some of the activities of SEMB by the Election Commission, the project also suffered from various operational and organizational issues which have limited its impact. This includes a delay to implementing its activities, and the late arrival of all of the international technical advisors. All three advisors came on board in the lead up to the elections, and therefore their prime focus was to prepare for the 10th parliamentary elections rather than designing a comprehensive and gradual capacity building programme. Training and ICT did receive specific interventions from part time advisors, however unfortunately the communications wing of the ECB did not enjoy such a privilege that could have affected the ECBs overall ability to build capacity in the areas of communications and outreach. All of the targeted departments did gain from on-the-job-training and some of the procedures and protocols of the election commission were substantially improved as a direct result of the project.

Since the 2014 elections, the project has reduced its activities an substantially d is in the process of conducting essential lessons learned activities in order to re-orient its focus for the remaining two years of its project life.

# Recommendations

1. Acknowledging the ECBs efforts to conduct lessons learned exercises subsequent to the 10th Parliamentary elections, the MTR recommends that all information gathered from these exercises is collated and recommendations and lessons learned are acknowledged and discussed amongst the commissioners
2. Recognising that all election stakeholders including, poltical parties, civil society and the media all have an important and fundamental role in promoting an enabling environment for credible elections, the MTR advocates for the ECB to conduct in unison with key stakeholders outside in the electoral process a second layer of lessons learned exercises. These sessions should involve information sharing, whereby the ECB also communicates their lessons learned and experiences of the recent elections with key stakeholders, and vice versa. These sessions should be used to identify shortfalls in the process and to prioritise work under the revised Strategic Plan (see recommendation 10)
3. Reiterating the importance of “buy in” by the ECB of all activities under SEMB and utilising the relaxed political climate, the MTR supports the recent employment of a CTA and encourages SEMB to directly liaise with the Commissioners in order to ensure that priorities emanating from the lessons learned exercises, SEMB outputs, donor priorities and the strategic plan run in parallel and do not conflict.
4. Acknowledging the on-going negotiations with the donors on the funding of the SEMB, and recognising that funds have been substantially reduced, the MTR encourages the SEMB to take stock of the current status of all the outputs and their accompanying activities to safeguard their sustained impact and to ensure that important gains are not lost at the end of the project:

**To this end the Mid Term Evaluation, recommends the following priority actions in relation to outputs one to five.[[67]](#footnote-67)**

1. Ensure that a Monitoring and Evaluation Matrix is re-designed according to the new target activities and that a monitoring and evaluation specialist is in-country under a permanent contract
2. Restructure the monthly and quarterly reports to reflect a more results based approach
3. Ensure that Risk Management is strengthened and coordinated with key stakeholders to the process
4. Strengthen collaboration and coordination between other international partners and the Project SEMB
5. Ensure that the project is managed technically by a CTA and creates a synergy between all the outputs
6. Review the impact of cross cutting issues such as gender, reform and conflict analysis across all components and ensure that all output heads include how they are being mainstreamed in monthly reports
7. Ensure continued support to ETI in implementing their Strategic Plan and to devise a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy
8. Strengthen the support to ETI to ensure gender mainstreaming training of all staff and consider the possibility of adopting a gender policy
9. Support ETI to further build their capacity to impart BRIGE training and other types of electoral training
10. Ensure support to ECB in revising and implementing their Strategic Plan and to devise a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy
11. Strengthen gender mainstreaming throughout the ECB and consider support to establish a gender desk to ensure proper and strategic implementation of a possible gender policy
12. Support ECB to build their legal capacity
13. Support the communications department in designing and in implementing its strategic plan as well as developing an M & E Framework to monitor its implementation
14. To continue support of advisors to ensure adequate development of software tools that meet international standards
15. To continue training of key personnel to be able to develop software
16. To conduct an independent review of the voters roll
17. To conduct an impact review of the project on the ECB.
18. Development of an communication and stakeholder strategy.

annexes

# Annex I – Salient Features of the Fifteenth Amendment of the Constitution

**Salient features of Fifteenth Amendment of Constitution**

1.    The provision of caretaker system, introduced by the Thirteenth Amendment, was abolished.

2.    All future General (Parliamentary) Elections would be held under incumbent cabinet.

3.    Islam as the State religion was kept with some qualifications and ‘Bismillah-Ar-Rahman-Ar-Rahim’ was retained above the Preamble.

4.    'Absolute faith and trust in Allah' was removed from the Constitution.

5.    Article 12 to restore secularism and freedom of religion was revived.

6.    The provision allowing religion-based politics was maintained.

7.    The indigenous people would be termed as tribal and ethnic minorities.

8.    The people of Bangladesh shall be known as Bengalese as a nation and citizens of Bangladesh shall be known as Bangladeshis.

9.    Articles 7A and 7B were inserted in the Constitution after Article 7 in a bid to end takeover of power through extra-constitutional means.

10.  Basic provisions of the Constitution (more than 50 Articles) were made unamendable.

11.  The original Article 70 of the 1972 Constitution was restored allowing Members of Parliament (MPs) to remain absent from the House if she or he does not want to cast vote on any issue in line with her or his party’s decision.

12.  The legality of trials of war crime suspects, who were not part of any armed force or auxiliary force in 1971, cannot be challenged in any court.

13.  In the case of dissolution of Parliament by any reason, election shall be held within 90 days of such dissolution.

14.  The numbers of women reserve seats were increased to 50 from the existing 45.

15.  The Supreme Command of the defence services shall vest in the President and the exercise thereof shall be regulated by law.

16.  The Chief Justice shall be appointed by the President, and the other judges shall be appointed by the President in consultation with the Chief Justice.

17.  The portrait of the Sheikh Mujibur Rahman shall be preserved and displayed at the offices of the President, the Prime Minister, the Speaker, and the Chief Justice and in head and branch offices of all government and semi-government offices, autonomous bodies, statutory public authorities, government and non-government educational institutions, embassies and missions of Bangladesh abroad.

18.  The speech of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 7, 1971, supposed declaration of Independence by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman after midnight of March 25, 1971 and the proclamation of Independence declared at Mujibnagar on April 10, 1971 were incorporated in the Constitution.

19. A new clause for safeguarding and developing the environment and wildlife was introduced, under which the State will protect natural resources, biodiversity, water bodies, forest, and wildlife, and preserve and develop the environment for the present and future generations.  According to another new clause, “The State shall take steps to protect and develop the unique local culture and tradition of the tribes, minor races, ethnic sects, and communities”.

# Annex II – International Standards of Elections

**International Standards**

International standards for elections stem from political rights and fundamental freedoms which are enshrined in universal and regional instruments. These instruments establish legal and political commitments to meet specific standards in relation to elections.

These standards relate to the following:

* The right and opportunity, without any distinction or unreasonable restrictions, for citizens to participate in government and public affairs through:
* Periodic elections,
* Genuine elections,
* Universal suffrage,
* Equal suffrage,
* The right to stand for election,
* The right to vote,
* The right to a secret ballot,
* The free expression of the will of voters
* The freedom of expression;
* The freedom of association;
* The freedom of assembly;
* The freedom of movement;
* The freedom from discrimination; and
* The right to an effective legal remedy

**Best practice for Democratic Elections**

These are electoral practices which, by the extent of their use internationally, can be considered to facilitate opportunities for democratic elections. While not always specifically referred to in universal or regional instruments, many of these practices can be considered essential to a genuine and democratic electoral process. The following are key examples of best practice for democratic elections:

* There is transparency in the electoral process;
* The election administration acts in an effective, impartial, independent and accountable manner;
* There is equal access for candidates and political parties to state resources;
* There is equal access for candidates and political parties to, and balanced coverage by, any state or publicly funded media;
* The electorate is informed of its rights through civic and voter education programmes; and
* There is a peaceful atmosphere – free from violence, intimidation or reprisals – for candidates and parties to campaign and for the electorate to vote.

# Annex III – Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

The overall evaluation addresses the five main OECD-DAC criteria for UNDP evaluations: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability on the electoral process.

The scope of the evaluation will examine the impact of interventions as it relates to the success of the project in strengthening election management and related technical capacity of the Election Commission Bangladesh; identify challenges faced, appropriateness of initiatives in the given context of democracy and elections in Bangladesh; the impact and sustainability of activities and outputs.

**Issues to be addressed by the evaluation:**

To achieve the above objectives the Mid-Term Evaluation will address the following:

* Assessment of the project progress towards attaining its objectives and outcomes and recommended measures (if any):
* Assessment of the performance of the project in terms of timeliness, quality, quantity and cost effectiveness of the activities undertaken including project procurement; both experts and equipment, training programs, etc:
* Investigation of the relevance of these objectives to the Election Commission Bangladesh and the national democracy objectives and priorities, the UNDP and partners:
* Identification of areas of interest and the needs of beneficiaries and recommend means of incorporating those priorities:
* Review of the appropriateness and clarity of the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and the level of coordination between them:
* Review of the project concept and design with respect to the clarity in addressing the challenges of the ECB as well as soundness of the approaches adopted by the project to solve these problems;
* Review of the logical framework matrix and the indicators to assess their appropriateness for monitoring the project performance and to what extent the project management is using them;
* Assess the prospects of the sustainability of the project outcomes and benefits and recommend measures for its further improvement in the given context of elections in Bangladesh;
* Identify and describe the main lessons learned from the project performance in terms of awareness raising, strengthening of technical and financial capacity, efforts to secure sustainability and approaches and methodologies used;
* Lessons learned in the following areas should be highlighted:
* Effectiveness of the activities implemented in the areas of Training, Voter Education and Results management process and their impact on the quality of elections implemented from January – April 2014;
* Appropriateness of the current linkages between the major stakeholders and recommend measures for their improvement;
* The future of sustainability of different project achievements in relation to the roles and linkages among the stakeholders.

# Annex IV – Overview of the Outputs of SEMB

**Programme Design**

The project implements the following activities under each output:

**Output 1: Professionalised and strengthened training by the ECB**

**Activity 1.1** Support to development of ETI vision, plan, procedures, financial planning

**Activity 1.2** Support to strengthen ETI training capacity to prepare and conduct training for local election officials (including BRIDGE)

**Activity 1.3** Support to establishment of system of evaluation and monitoring, skills audit and future planning

**Activity 1.4** Support to ETI facilities

**Activity 1.5** Support to ETI library and Regional offices

**Activity 1.6** Financial assistance for selected ECB staff to attend high-level specialised external in-country courses.

**Output 2: Strengthened ECB capacity to efficiently manage decentralisation and institutional growth**

**Activity 2.1** Support the annual review and monitoring of ECB’s strategic plan and action plan

**Activity 2.2** Support to ECB administration wing to establish and maintain human resource management systems including staff skills audit

**Activity 2.3** Support the ECB administration wing to develop and maintain electronic HR record keeping, financial system and system of monitoring and compliance

**Activity 2.4** Provide support to ECB research and development branch in planning and conducting electoral research and project management

**Activity 2.5** Conduct and review post-election lessons learnt and support post-election research and analysis

**Output 3: Reformed communications unit and outreach to stakeholders**

**Activity 3.1** Support for development of action plan and road map for implementation of communications strategy

**Activity 3.2** Refurnishing of office facilities of the communications unit

**Activity 3.3** Counterpart training to increase management capacity of communications unit

**Activity 3.4** Counterpart training to increase unit capacity to interact with stakeholders and build partnerships including developing a visitor’s programme

**Activity 3.5** Implement work placements, exchange peer-to-peer visits, forums for stakeholders and election observation visits in South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) or other Asian region

**Activity 3.6** Support to establishment of resource and documentation centre including language lab

**Activity 3.7** Specialised training for nominated spokesperson

**Activity 3.8** Support to increase functionality of ECB website and production of corporate material to showcase ECB including a quarterly newsletter

**Activity 3.9** Support the development of a comprehensive voter education programme

**Activity 3.10** Review and Finalization of project communication and visibility plan

**Output 4: Professionalised and strengthened ICT wing of the ECB**

**Activity 4.1** Counterpart training provided to ICT

**Activity 4.2** Develop, in collaboration with ETI, computer skillset definitions for key roles at ECS, regional, district and upazila offices

**Activity 4.3** Procure, arrange, co-ordinate, deliver specialized training for ITC Wing Staff

**Activity 4.6** Appraisal of ECB’s local and wide area networking requirements and procurement of LAN/WAN hardware for all sites and VPN leasing

**Activity 4.10** Post-electoral review of ICT wing performance and research into the use of technology in election management

**Output 5: Enhanced capacities to prepare and disseminate a credible and accurate photo voter register**

**Activity 5.1** Review and finalization of rules, forms, end-to-end processes and finalization and dissemination of SOPs

**Activity 5.2** Conduct post-registration review and assessment involving internal and external stakeholders

**Activity 5.3** Develop and implement rollout plan including pilot of BVRs to Upazilas in coordination with PERP-GoB

**Activity 5.4** Consultations with internal and external stakeholders on rollout strategy and design of voter education and awareness programme

**Activity 5.5** Research and analysis including assessment of voter list and research on best practice in the region in VR

**Activity 5.6** Support in the development and compatible voter registration and national identity systems delivering services to relevant stakeholders

**Activity 5.7** Contribute to the design and development of robust information systems, adequate infrastructure

**Activity 5.8** Support development and implementation of a comprehensive voter list update programme

**Activity 5.9** Comprehensive voter education programme designed on new VR Processes

**Output 6: Support to activities in the run up to the parliamentary elections in 2014.**

**Activity 6.1** Support to planning and delivery of trainings

**Activity 6.2** Support to development of high-quality multi-media training materials for the national elections

**Activity 6.3** Research and analysis of issues arising related to the holding of national elections including on compliance with laws and regulations during campaign period

**Activity 6.4** Support to development of a voter education strategy, materials and diffusion plan

**Activity 6.5** Support to planning and implementing post-election assessment of trainings

**Activity 6.6** Support to civil society to monitor the audio-visual media during campaign period

**Activity 6.7** Support for conduct of candidate debates.

# Annex V – Project Management of SEMB

Table 11: The role of the key project persons under a NEX/NIM modality

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Title | Policy formulation | Project management | Provide technical advice |
| NPD | Yes | Yes (primary) | No |
| CTA | Yes (advisory) | Yes | Yes (primary) |
| NPC/NPME | No | Yes | Yes |
| Experts | No | No | Yes |

**Source: National Execution Manual for UNDP-Funded Projects in Bangladesh**

Table 12: Staff plan of SEMB

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Output 1** | **Output 2** | **Output 3** | **Output 4** | **Output 5** | **Output 6** |
| International Expert (Training and Capacity Building) | | International Expert  (Communications) | International Expert (ICT) | | International Expert (Training and Capacity Building) |
| Training and Capacity Building Specialist  Human Resource Specialist | | National Communications Specialist | Senior Systems Administrator  Programmers  ICT Technical Expert  Website Manager  VR Datacenter Manager | | Training and Capacity Building Specialist  Human Resource Specialist |
| **PROJECT ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT UNIT** | | | | | |
| Project Coordinator, Operations Manager, Finance Expert, Monitoring and Evaluation Expert, Project Expert, Project Associate, Project Assistant, Training Assistant, Finance and Admin Assistant, Office Secretary, Drivers, Messenger | | | | | |

Table 13: Staffing Table

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Steering Committee** | | | |
| Relevant Government Ministries | Chair Secretary  ECS | UNDP/Donor Representative | NPD (Member Secretary) |

Project Management and Support Unit

Technical Experts

(International)

Technical Experts (National)

**Project Implementation Committee**

**Chair: NPD**

Programme Assurance

UNDP Programme

**Terms of Reference for the Project Steering Committee (PSC)**

The project Steering Committee is to ensure upstream policy direction of a UNDP supported project and to coordinate inter-ministerial issues. The main responsibilities of the Project Steering Committee are:

1. Review progress of the project and discuss policy implications.
2. Recommends actions to reflect new policy directions in national planning documents) GoB Periodic Plan, ADP location, PRSP etc)
3. Coordinate and resolve any inter-ministerial or cross-sectoral matters.
4. Provide proper policy guidelines to overcome the problems of the project and endorse the Annual Work Plan.
5. Review the capacity of National Implementing Agency.

**Project Implementation Committee**

**The Projection Implementation Committee (PIC)** to ensure high quality coordination. Chaired by the National Project Director (NPD), it provides a forum to ensure speedy implementation and project results through the provision of necessary and critical support. The PIC is responsible for preparing and endorsing the quarterly work plan, monthly and quarterly and progress report, annual work plan and annual progress report. This committee will supervise the overall project implementation and day to day management of the project. The committee meets once per month.

# Annex VI – Risk Management Table

**Table 8: Risk Management Table**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Description** | **Type** | **Impact & Probability** |
| **1** | ERD and other executive agencies involved in approving the SEMB project take an extended period of time | Operational | Delayed start to the Project  P = 3  I = 2 |
| **2** | The New ECB organigram is not approved and the ECB have to continue to operate with the current staffing positions | Operational / Organizational | Planned project activities will be limited without staff to implement (e.g. in the training department, administration, communications and ICT)  P = 1  I = 4 |
| **3** | The ECB is not able to recruit staff for the new positions in good time | Operational / Organizational | Planned project activities will be limited and delayed without staff to implement (e.g. in the training department, administration, communication and ICT)  P = 3  I = 3 |
| **4** | Unsuitable staff are appointed by the ECB/Public service commission | Operational / Organizational | Counterparting will be less effective, Project targets may be delayed or not met  P = 2  I – 5 |
| **5** | Counterpart ECB staff are not identified or are not committed to working with project experts/consultants | Operational / Organizational | Expert assistance (international and local) is not effective and there is reduced development  P = 2/3  I = 5 |
| **6** | Entrenched bureaucratic practices are maintained and leadership support to modernisation of the internal ECB administration is not given or is not effective | Operational / Organizational | The project will not be able to support ECB internal administration in modernisation. This would make it harder for ECB senior management to make informed choices and to plan and budget effectively and efficiently. It could also hamper the ECB in being regarded as a leading modern institution that attracts staff.  P = 3  I = 3 |
| **7** | The ECB fails to make realistic budgets that provide for future electoral administration costs, thereby remaining dependent on international development partner support | Financial  Operational  Organizational  Strategic | The ECB is not able to take over running costs initially supported by the project (e.g. the cost of specialist external staff training courses). Further donor assistance could be sought, particularly after the project’s completion.  P = 3  I = 2 |
| **8** | Future ECB budgets are not approved by the executive leaving the ECB with reduced financial resources | Financial  Operational  Organizational  Strategic  Political | The ECB is not able to operate as a fully independent institution. Administration of the elections and confidence in the institution could be compromised.  Further donor assistance could be sought and after the project’s completion.  P = 1 / 2  I = 4/5 |
| **9** | The appointment process of the new ECB Commissioners is controversial and not accepted by all major stakeholders | Organizational  Political  Strategic | The ECB becomes controversial and its authority and actions questioned, possibly resulting in some stakeholder non-participation in elections.  P = 3  I = 5 |
| **10** | The new ECB leadership is not supportive of project implementation | Operational  Organizational | The project is not able to fully deliver, which will be particularly important for the upcoming national elections.  P = 2  I = 5 |
| **11** | The ECB leadership supports the project, but makes other electoral decisions that are inappropriate and/or counter to international standards and good practice for elections | Operational  Organizational  Strategic  Political | Individual project targets may be on track and achieved but the greater outcome of holding credible and transparent elections is jeopardised  P = 2  I = 4 |
| **12** | The legal framework is problematic for the holding of elections that meet international standards and good practice | Political  Regulatory | A less positive, and possibly controversial, electoral process is administered.  P = 2  I = 4 |
| **13** | A decision by one or more political parties to boycott the next elections | Political  Strategic | The election process is ineffective  P = 2  I = 5 |
| **14** | Duplication of activities with other development partners | Operational  Organizational  Strategic | Additional resources available to complement UNDP work, or replication of assistance and loss of coherence and consistency  P = 3  I = 3 |
| **15** | Early National Elections | Operational  Organizational  Strategic  Political | Project activities would need to be re-sequenced with amended Annual Work Plans  P = 3  I = 3 |
| **16** | International experts cannot be recruited | Operational  Organizational | Project activities would be hampered  P = 3  I = 4 |
| **17** | No new premises is idenfied for the training department | Operational  Organizational | The Training department continues to operate in appropriate premises, thereby reducing its ability to develop and deliver  P = 2 / 3  I = 3 |
| **18** | The lack of Government of Bangladesh resources for ECB to voter registration activities after PERP ends in December 2010 | Operational  Organizational | ECB depends on PERP (supported by SEMB) project to assure delivery of VLP for national elections in 2014. If PERP is discontinued, this is at risk.  P = 3  I = 4 |
| **19** | CSSED project falls significantly behind schedule | Operational  Organizational | ECB reporting difficulty in getting some sites on which to build, so some delay probable. ECB must make adequate provision for alternative sites at which VRMS, in particular, can be deployed until all CSSED sites fully up and running  P = 2  I = 3 |

# Annex VII – Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

* On a quarterly basis, a quality assessment shall record progress towards the completion of key results, based on quality criteria and methods captured in the Quality Management Table;
* An Issue Log shall be activated in Atlas and updated by the Project Coordinator to facilitate tracking and resolution of potential problems or request for change;
* Based on the initial risk analysis submitted (see annex VI) a risk log shall be activated in Atlas and regularly updated by reviewing the external environment that may affect the project implementation.
* Based on the above information in Atlas, a Project Progress Reports shall be submitted by the project Coordinator to the Steering Committee through Project Assurance, using the standard report format available in the Executive Snapshot.
* A project lessons learned log shall be activated and regularly updated to ensure on-going learning and adaptation within the organization, and to facilitate the preparation of the Lessons-Learned Report at the end of the Project
* A monitoring Schedule Plan shall be activated in Atlas and updated to track key management actions/events
* A report on achievements of gender quality results with mention about challenges and opportunities in achieving the gender equality results and the Project Coordinator shall submit amount of resources used to produce these results.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sl.** | **Name** | **Designation** | **Component** | **Date of Joining** | **Date of Leaving** |
| 2 | **Mr. Abdul Alim** | Project Coordinator | Project Management | 01-07-2011 | 31-03-2012 |
| 3 | **Mr. Md. Salim Khan** | Project Coordinator (a.i.) | 01-04-2012 | \_ |
| 4 | **Mr. Md. Zakaria** | Project Officer | 10-07-2011 | \_ |
| 5 | **Mr. S S Bakht Hindole** | M & E Officer | 01-11-2012 | 13-04-2014 |
| 6 | **Mr. Md. Anisar Rahman** | Project Assistant | 01-07-2011 | \_ |
| 7 | **Ms. Asma Akter** | Project Secretary | 01-02-2013 | \_ |
| 8 | **Ms. Caroline Ann Kennedy** | Communication Specialist | Communication | 23-01-2013 | \_ |
| 9 | **Mr. Ahmed Rezwanul Zaki** | Communications Officer | 01-03-2013 | \_ |
| 10 | **Mr. Gazi Muhammad Masud** | Project Assistant (ICT & Comm) | 15-07-2012 | \_ |
| 11 | **Mr. Igor Dolgikh** | Capacity Building Specialist | Training | 02-01-2013 | \_ |
| 12 | **Mr. Md. Salim Khan** | National Expert-TCB | 10-10-2011 | \_ |
| 13 | **Ms. Rita Das** | Training Assistant | 15-12-2011 | \_ |
| 14 | **Ms. Shipra Chowdhury** | Training Assistant | 27-10-2011 | \_ |
| 15 | **Mr. Chris Kyriakides** | Technical Specialist (ICT) | ICT | 02-09-2012 | \_ |
| 16 | **Mr. Modhusudan Sarkar** | Senior Systems Analyst | 02-09-2012 | \_ |
| 17 | **Mr. Joel Jaisi** | Int’l Consultant (Software Developer for RMS) | 02-09-2013 | Contract expires- 01-08-2014 |
| 18 | **Mr. Mohammad Saiful Islam** | Programmer | 01-07-2011 |  |
| 19 | **Mr. Md. Waliul Hasan** | Programmer | 01-07-2011 |  |
| 20 | **Mr. Md. Iktiar Rahman** | Website Dev Coordinator | 01-09-2012 | 28-02-2014 |
| 21 | **Mr. ATKM Iqbal** | Operations Manager | Operations & Finance | 25-07-2011 | 24-01-2012 |
| 22 | **Ms. Shegufta Shireen** | Operations Manager | 01-02-2013 | 30-06-2014 |
| 23 | **Mr. Nurul Islam** | Finance Expert | 01-07-2011 | 30-04-2013 |
| 24 | **Mr. Shajedur Rahman** | Finance Expert | 13-11-2012 | 20-01-2013 |
| 25 | **Mr. Sajjad Hossain** | Finance Expert | 17-11-2013 | 24-12-2013 |
| 26 | **Mr. Md. Obeydur Rahman** | Admin & Finance Assistant | 21-07-2011 | 11-04-2013 |
| 27 | **Mr. Md. Delwar Hossain Khandakar** | Admin & Finance Assistant | 01-09-2013 | \_ |
| 28 | **Ms. Musarrat Khanam** | Project Assistant (Operations) | 15-07-2012 | 19-03-2013 |
| 29 | **Mr. S M Anwarul Karim** | Project Assistant (Operations) | 01-07-2013 | 31-12-2014 |
| 30 | **Mr. Md. Salim Miah** | Driver | 15-11-2012 | 14-11-2014 |
| 31 | **Mr. Hasan Raza Pasha** | Driver | 15-11-2012 | 14-11-2014 |
| 32 | **Mr. Nazrul Islam Panna** | Driver | 02-12-2012 | 30-11-2014 |
| 33 | **Mr. Kazi Abdul Qaium** | Driver | 07-12-2012 | 14-03-2014 |
| 34 | **Mr. S. N. Alauddin** | Driver | 15-04-2014 | 14-04-2015 |

# Annex VIII – Staff of SEMB

# Annex IX – List of Persons Met

| **Name** | **Position** | **Organization** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Siamul Huq Rabbany | National Programme Officer – Political Governance | UNDP |
| Caroline Kennedy | Communications Specialist | SEMB (UNDP) |
| Igor Dolgikh | Capacity Building Specialist | SEMB (UNDP) |
| Ahmed Rezwanul Zaki | Communications Office | SEMB (UNDP |
| S M Asaduzzaman | Director PR | Election Commission Secretariat |
| Md Delwar H Khandakar | Admin and Finance Asst | SEMB (UNDP) |
| Shipra Chowdhury | Training Assistant | SEMB (UNDP) |
| Rita Das | Training Assistant | SEMB (UNDP) |
| Jesmin Tull | Joint Secretary | Election Commission Secretariat |
| Khondker Mizanur Rahman | Director General | Electoral Training Institute |
| Md Salim Khan | National Expert (Training & Capacity Building/Project Coordinator) | SEMB (UNDP) |
| Alistair Legge PSM | Chief of Party | IFES |
| Silja Paasilinna | Deputy Chief of Party | IFES |
| Neal Walker | United Nations Resident Coordinator | IFES |
| Sultanuzzaman MD Saleh Uddin | Direct General (NID) & Project Director (IDEA) | National Identity Registration Wing/Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services Project |
| Lenka Vitkova | Attache – Head of Section – Governance, Human Rights & Economic Cooperation | European Union Delegation to Bangladesh |
| Luc Patzelt | Programme Manager Governance | European Union Delegation to Bangladesh |
| Md Sirazul Islam | Secretary Incharge | Election Commission Secretariat |
| Modhusudan Sarkar | Senior Systems Analyst | SEMB (UNDP) |
| Md Waliul Hasan | Programmer | SEMB (UNDP) |
| Md Abdul Alim | Director | Election Working Group |
| K A M Morshed | Assistant Country Director – Policy Support & Communications | UNDP |
| Mohammad Saiful Islam | Programmer | SEMB (UNDP) |
| Ifekhar Zaman | Executive Director | Transparency International Bangladesh |
| Farzana Akhter | System Analyst | Election Commission Secretariat |

# Annex X – Recommendations

**Monitoring and Evaluation and Reporting:** In general the project management is in compliance with standard UNDP Practices. According to the SEMB ProDoc the project has puts streamlined M & E at its core to ensure best-practice reporting of progress toward identified outcomes. However, these are not presently reflected in the quarterly or annual reports that the evaluation team received. The evaluation team also received some copies of monthly reports, however these did not accurately reflect the progress of results either. It is important that monthly activity reports develop a more honed results-based culture. In reports it is always a challenge to report on activities rather than reporting on results or the effects of completed activities. In order to aid this process, it is essential that a monitoring and evaluation specialist comes on board as soon as possible and an efficient Monitoring and Evaluation matrix is designed and adhered to. The reporting requirements should also adhere to this matrix. Monthly reports should where possible reflect what has been achieved and list the indicators of success. It should also highlight the challenges and areas of inefficiency and poor results. According to results-based management, quality criteria for results include the following five areas: 1. Completeness; 2. Balance (good and bad); 3. Consistency; 4. Substantiveness and reliability; and 5. Clarity. Although this criterion does not necessarily refer to monthly activity reports, monthly activity reports should be able to include these points to the extent possible in order to facilitate the writing of quarterly reports and annual reports and will have the overall purpose of identifying any challenges or obstacles for the intended outcomes to be achieved in a timely manner.

**Risk Management:** The ProDoc identified six types of risks. These risks should be closely monitored, especially with regards to the operational and organizational risks, which can be more easily addressed than those at a political level. The project is now entering a phase where in essence the political stalemate will not effect the outcomes of the project, and this should be seen as a window of opportunity to ensure established buy in of all future activities and ensure that such activities are in compliance with international standards and international best practice.

**Collaboration between International Partners:** The need for strengthened coordination and collaboration has been highlighted in the evaluation. Various other organisations such as NDI, IFES, IRI, EWG and Transparency Bangladesh are working either directly or indirectly with the Election Commission, therefore it would be very useful to coordinate the areas of work in order to maximise already established relationships and to avoid duplication of work.

**Renewed Leadership of the Project:** The evaluation has mentioned the need to have an overall technical lead of the project. This is not only important to guide and oversee all activities in the project, but also to ensure interconnectedness over the six outputs[[68]](#footnote-68) and to provide constant and consistent technical advice to the election commission as well as ensuring that the election commissions needs are being met.

**Cross Cutting Themes:** The original ProDoc did not necessarily identify any cross-cutting themes that apply through all six outputs. These should of course include gender and vulnerable groups but could also look at election violence and in the next two years electoral reform either from within the Commission or a more generalised approach to electoral reform on a larger scale.

Table 14: Recommendations for Project Management

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Recommendation** | **Responsible Parties** | **Timeline** | **Performance Targets** | **Output** | **Outcome** |
| **Project Management** | | | | | |
| **Monitoring and Evaluation and Reporting:** | | | | | |
| Ensure that a Monitoring and Evaluation Matrix is designed and that a monitoring and evaluation specialist is in-country under a permanent contract | SEMB | On-going till end of project | A comprehensive M & E framework designed and implemented | Drafting of a M & E Framework /Matrix and recruitment of an M & E specialist to work in-country | The Project is better able to monitor the results of the project and to identify challenges as and when they arise |
| Restructure the monthly and quarterly reports to reflect a more results based approach | SEMB | On-going till end of project | Reports should highlight results of the on-going programme using indicators provided in the Prodoc and should highlight challenges and areas of inefficiency and poor results | Results based monthly and quarterly reports produced | Project will better able to identify challenges and obstacles to achieving the targets in time and the project will become more results orientated. |
| **Risk Management** | | | | | |
| Ensure that Risk Management is strengthened and coordinated with key stakeholders to the process | SEMB under the leadership of ECB and other key stakeholders in the process | Immediate till the end of the Project | To ensure that the project is well informed on possible risks to the process and the outcome of the project | Proper horizontal &and vertical coordination and information seeking mechanisms which feed information from and to the project | The project is better able to mitigate risks |
| **Collaboration Between International Partners** | | | | | |
| Strengthen collaboration and coordination between other international partners and the Project SEMB | SEMB with organisations such as IFES, NDI etc | On-going till the end of the project | To create better synergies between all electoral projects to derive maximum impact | Renewed and strengthened dialogue with all main stakeholders, and especially the election commission for the provision of technical assistance services | The potential impact on the process is intensified, avoids duplication and key partners work on areas where their strengths lie |
| **Renewed Leadership of the Project** | | | | | |
| Ensure that the project is managed technically and creates a synergy between all the outputs | SEMB | On-going till end of Project | To improve the outreach of the project | The election Commission should be more responsive to activities and the project should achieve more “buy in” from the commissioners | The projects activities will more than likely be approved and implemented |
| **CROSS CUTTING ISSUES** | | | | | |
| Review the impact of cross cutting issues such as gender, reform and conflict analysis across all components and ensure that all output heads include how they are being mainstreamed in monthly reports | SEMB with ECB | Immediately till end of the project | To ensure better inclusiveness of all groups and to reduce potential amount of conflict related events as compared to 2014 elections | The mainstreaming of key cross cutting issues across the project and ensuring that these are reflected in reporting and all activities leading up till the election | The project will ensure that important aspects of key cross cutting issues impact on all parts of the project and contribute to a more peaceful, transparent and credible electoral process in the future. |

## Output one: Professionalised and strengthened training by the ECB

**Implementation of Strategic Plan:** The implementation of the strategic plan has been stalled since 2012 and it is yet to be approved by the ECB. It is essential that the plan is approved and ETI are guided in how to best implement it. It is equally important to have a yearly plan to ensure direction within the organisation.

**Gender Policy and Mainstreaming and elections:** It is essential that the ETI adopts a gender policy and undergoes training for gender mainstreaming so that they can apply this in their approach to their work and understand its relevance to all areas of the electoral process. This will ensure equality with regards to the number of women trained and also promote the importance of gender within the electoral process.

**Exposure to more training for ETI Personnel:** The staff of ETI are very enthusiastic but do not yet possess sufficient skills to carry out all types of training. They need to be exposed to different training methodologies and most certainly need to have at least two members of their team as fully qualified BRIDGE trainers.

Table 15: Recommendations for Component I

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Recommendation** | **Responsible Parties** | **Timeline** | **Performance Targets** | **Output** | **Outcome** |
|  | | | | | |
| **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN** | | | | | |
| Ensure continued support to ETI in implementing their Strategic Plan and to devise a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy | SEMB, ETI and ECB lend support to the implementation of its activities therein | Immediate to end of project | Successful implementation of the strategic plan according to established timelines. | Support to devising a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework as well as training of ETU Staff to ensure adequate tracking of the plan | ETI improves on efficiency |
| **Gender policy** | | | | | |
| Strengthen the support to ETI to ensure gender mainstreaming training of all staff and consider the possibility of adopting a gender policy | SEMB | On-going | Gender is successfully mainstreamed across all departments of ETI and the election process as a whole | Support to ECB To train key members of staff on gender policy as well as support to strategic sessions on how to mainstream gender into the everyday work of the commission | ECB becomes more gender sensitive and the elections are more gender sensitive |
| **SUPPORT EXPOSURE TO MORE TRAINING** | | | | | |
| Support ETI to further build their capacity to impart BRIGE training and other types of electoral training | SEMB | As soon as possible | ETI is able to impart BRIGDGE | Provision of BRIDGE training and other resources to facilitate better training methodologies | ETI is a fully fledged professional organisation which can lead in election training |

## Output Two: Strengthened ECB capacity to efficiently manage decentralisation and institutional growth

**Implementation of Strategic Plan:** The implementation of the strategic plan has been somewhat weak since the new commission took office in 2012. The impetus to implement has perhaps been lost as it was designed and approved by the previous commission and acknowledged their priorities and perhaps does not reflect their needs and the direction the current commission wants to go in. The SEMB has the mandate to accompany the commission in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and after the lessons learned exercise; the current strategic plan should be fine tuned to the needs of the current commission until 2017. Once a revised strategic plan is approved SEMB should help the commission to implement the activities therein. The project should also help assign an officer within the Secretariat/Commissioner who is able to monitor the progress of said plan. A focal point could be responsible for reporting and monitoring each output in order to ensure compliance thereto. For those activities that fall outside the remit of the Project but are included in the plan, it would be useful for the project to help the commission to keep track of these activities and to ensure that the implementing partners lending support to them are aware of the future M & E plan and assure adherence thereto.

**Consider providing legal assistance to the legal department:** Electoral Reform and the development of procedures and protocols which facilitate the process is gravely needed, therefore the project should consider providing assistance to the legal department so that they can better analayse the law and the procedures to make them more in line with international standards and international best practices.

**Strengthen and Support Gender mainstreaming and consider having a gender desk and gender focal points in the regions:** It is essential that integration of gender at all levels of the work of the Electoral Commissions is assured. In order to do this, all staff (or at least heads of department) should receive training on gender mainstreaming and why it is important to the electoral process. The possibility of producing a gender policy should be explored and setting up a gender desk should be set up. It is important that the revised strategic plan also encompasses gender and minority issues.. Under no circumstances should the gender unit stand alone, gender concerns need to cut across all areas of the implementation of the electoral process.

Table 16: Recommendations for Output 2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Recommendation** | **Responsible Parties** | **Timeline** | **Performance Targets** | **Output** | **Outcome** |
|  | | | | | |
| **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN** | | | | | |
| Ensure support to ECB in revising and implementing their Strategic Plan and to devise a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy | SEMB and ECB and possible other partners lending support to the implementation of its activities therein | Immediate to end of project | Successful implementation of the strategic plan according to established timelines. | Support to devising a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework as well as training of INEC Staff to ensure adequate tracking of the plan | ECB improves on efficiency |
| **Gender MAINSTREAMING** | | | | | |
| Strengthen gender mainstreaming throughout the ECB and consider support to establish a gender desk to ensure proper and strategic implementation of a possible gender policy | SEMB and key persons within the ECB | Till end of Project | Gender is successfully mainstreamed across all departments of the election commission | Support to ECB on training key members of staff on gender mainstreaming as well as support to strategic sessions on how to mainstream gender into the everyday work of the commission | ECB becomes more gender sensitive and the elections are more gender sensitive |
| **SUPPORT LEGAL CAPACITY** | | | | | |
| Support ECB to build their legal capacity | SEMB and ECB | As soon as possible | INEC is better able to analyse laws and conform to international standards | Provision of training and possible resources to facilitate work on legal issues in conjunction with the elections | ECB is better able to promote electoral reform and develop protocols and procedures in line with international add credibility to the process |

## Output Three: Reform of Communications and Strengthening Partnerships

**Support ECB to developing and implementing a communications Strategic Plan:** The project has supported ECB in producing a strategic plan however it was not totally approved and many activities were not implemented. It is vital that this be revised, and a new approved plan is designed in direct consultation with the ECB which will better engage stakeholders and improve transparency as well a perceived integrity of the election commission.

Table 17: Recommendations for Output Three

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Recommendation** | **Responsible Parties** | **Timeline** | **Performance Targets** | **Output** | **Outcome** |
| **SUPPORT TO IPAC** | | | | | |
| **STRATEGIC PLAN** | | | | | |
| Support the communications department in designing and in implementing its strategic plan as well as developing an M & E Framework to monitor its implementation | SEMB and Communications Dept | As soon as possible | To enable ECB communications to work according to an organisational framework | Support to ECB in tracking the Communications strategic plan as well as development of a M & E framework | ECB is more organised and is better able to work according to its mandate and transparency and perceived integrity is improved |

## Component Four: Professionalised and strengthened ICT wing of the ECB

**Continued support to ICT Department to improve the potential to develop programmes to international standards:** In order to improve the efficiency of the ECB, a number of systems are already in place, which have the potential to promote transparency and enable the ECB to better track staff, budgets and training. Nevertheless, the know how within the ICT department is still weak, and thus continued support to design adequate systems is needed

**Continued training of ICT staff to develop software development skills:** Basic training has been afforded to the staff to use the systems already developed, however in order to build their capacity to ensure sustainability, this has not been reached, therefore it is imperative that continued training is supported to enable key staff to develop skills on how to design and fine tune data systems.

Table 18: Recommendations for Output Four

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Recommendation** | **Responsible Parties** | **Timeline** | **Performance Targets** | **Output** | **Outcome** |
| **Component four:** | | | | | |
| **CONTINUED SUPPORT TO ICT DEPARTMENT TO IMPROVE POTENTIAL TO DEVELOP PROGRAMMES TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS** | | | | | |
| To continue support of advisors to ensure adequate development of software tools that meet international standards | SEMB and ICT Dept | Till the end of the project | To ensure that transfer of knowledge of international systems is adequately transferred | On-the-job training and acquisition of international systems | The iCT department will have the ability to design programmes which meet international standards |
| **CONTINUED TRAINING OF ICT STAFF** | | | | | |
| To continue training of key personnel to be able to develop software | SEMB and ICT department | On-going | To encourage ownership of development of systems | Provide on-the-job-training on development of systems | It would enable to the ICT dept to be sustainable in the future |

## Component Five: Enhanced capacities to prepare and disseminate a credible and accurate photo voter register

**To conduct an independent review of the accuracy of the current voters register:** The voters register is normally updated one a year in January. The decentralisation process may change this, however this is still delayed, therefore the project should use this time to undertake an independent review of the voters register, which will also provide recommendations on how to integrate the collection of data in the decentralisation process, including the type of voter education strategy and how to ensure that the voter register remains accurate and up to date.

Table 19: Recommendations for Component five

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Recommendation** | **Responsible Parties** | **Timeline** | **Performance Targets** | **Output** | **Outcome** |
| **Component FIVE:** | | | | | |
| **CONDUCT AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE VOTERS ROLL** | | | | | |
| To conduct an independent review of the voters roll | SEMB, ECB in partnership with NID | In the next 10 monhts | To assess the voters roll accuracy | Conducting of an independent review | To ensure renewed and persistent confidence in the roll |

# Annex XI– Bibliography

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1. For full details of these recommendations please see annex….. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Please see annex III for the full terms of reference [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. At present the parliament has 66 women [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Since the restoration of democratic government in the 1990s, BNP had won two parliamentary elections in 1991 and 2001 and AL in 1996. Their respective leaders, Sheikh Hasina from AL and Khaleda Zia from BNP, had both served as Prime Minister in the past. – EU EOM Final Report 2008 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Including the 5 January 2014 Parliamentary Elections [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. SEMB fact sheet on 10th Parliament & 4th Upazila Parishad Election [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. This included the freedom of movement, assembly, association and expression. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. .Source - European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM final report 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Source: Barrister Nazir Ahmed – Practicing Lawyer and Author – Article in Parisvision News [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Please see annex I for more details of the 15th Amendment [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The former Election Commission only had three members. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Please note that some sources quote over 400 - http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/01/bangladesh-vote-201416229528440.html [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Human Rights Watch [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/01/bangladesh-vote-201416229528440.html [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. In an interview with EWG in July 2014, the director stated that their observers had calculated approximately 20 per cent turnout. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. According to article 118 of the Constitution, the Election Commission is selected by the President for a term of no longer than 5 years. The former election commission which was headed by Dr Huda carried out the 2008 elections and their term came to an end in February 2012 when a new commission headed by Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad and four other commissioners replaced them. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See annex IV for a full list of activities under the six outputs [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Findings of the EU EOM Final Report 2008 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Source: Project Document on Strengthening Election Management in Bangladesh (SEMB) [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. In March 2012, the term of the former Election Commission came to an end, and in accordance with the Constitution, the President appointed four new members and a Chief Election Commissioner. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See the Registration and Election Review Committees Report [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. General Assembly resolution *AlRES/66/163* recommends that UN electoral assistance is provided throughout the timespan of the entire electoral cycle, including before and after elections, as appropriate, based on a needs assessment and in accordance with the evolving needs of requesting Member States, in order to help to strengthen their democratic processes [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The project seeks to construct a total of 464 buildings at the local level, including 394 Upazila Server Stations, 51 District Server Stations, 10 Thana Server Stations and 10 Regional Server Stations. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. In the update to the donors 2011 – Aug 2012 dated 6 September 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. The project was funded by the Asia Foundation, NORAD and the Government of Bangladesh (GOB). The original project had two main goals: i) To establish an effective and efficient Electoral Training Institute, ii) To assist in the institutionalization of democracy in the country by raising skills and awareness among the personnel involved in the electoral process [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. It has 11 at Class I (including 3 women), 18 at Class II (5 women) and 10 at Class IV (1 woman) [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. A new building is currently being constructed but will probably not be finalized until 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Please note that capacity assessments of all the Departments of ECB including ETI are planned in 2014/5 as part of the post-election review and positioning for 2015 programmatic support. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. This has not been achieved, as the buildings are not yet ready for handover. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. The evaluation team unfortunately does not have any updated figures on this. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Output 5 and output 6 has 22 and 29 per cent of results achieved respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Although they did ask for it to be videotaped. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. There were only four international observers [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. This particular activity was not in the priority list and therefore this has not been fully developed yet. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Please see under section nine for the impact of this activity. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. This has not yet been undertaken. It was in the AWP 2013, however there was an expression of interest to delay the actual assessment, The activity is currently under approval/consideration by the CEC/ECB [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. This particular activity has only been partially achieved due to the fact that the World Bank NID project has been substantially delayed. This activity will be included in the AWP of 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. This activity is closely linked to the decentralization process which has not yet been finalized therefore it has not yet been achieved. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. This is yet to be achieved, as decentralisation has not yet been implemented [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Support to the 10th Parliamentary elections had four outputs including:- Professionalised ICT based Result and Candidate Management System; Strengthened ECB capacity for professional training and the production of election reference materials; Enhanced capacity for communication and voter education and improved logistics, coordination and procurement of electoral materials for the 10th parliamentary elections [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. SEMB acts as a secretariat supporting the implementation of the activities funded through this project with SEMB staff providing technical assistance and coordination support for implementation. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. The actual budget is $10.5 but due to the boycotting of the elections, nearly half of this money has not been spent. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. This was not done as the biggest opposition party boycotted the election, and therefore it was not necessary to conduct candidate debates. Prior to the parliamentary elections, the project did pilot candidate debates for the mayorial elections. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See annex V for full terms of reference [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. 09 October, 2012, 16 April, 2013 and 23 September, 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. The meetings took place on 27 July 2011, 25 August 2011, 26 December 2011, 31 January 2012, 02 April 2012, 13 August 2012, 17 February 2013, 29 August 2013 and 8 December 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. This is a seven minute drive away from the ECB. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. According to UNDP roles, upgrades in level cannot be attained until 18 months at one particular level. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. An advert for the post of Project Coordinator was done, and interviews did apparently take place, however it would seem that no adequately qualified candidate was found. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. According to the NEX model the project coordinator should provide technical support, this is reiterated in his terms of reference whereby he should not only provide overall management of the project, but also knowledge services and policy and programme services (see page 64 of the PRODOC – October 2011) [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. According to the ProDoc page 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. P. 29 of ProDoc [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Unfortunately due to time constraints, the evaluator was unable to gain access to these. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Please note that for risk number 9, the appointment of a partisan Election Commission was outside of the remit of the project, and little could be done to change the appointment procedure without changing the law. The risk log notes that little could be done to address this within the project. Risk number 12, states that the project should support the ECB in undertaking a review of the legal framework, while a legal review was revisited by the new commissioners, changes to the law were not effected until 3 months before the election. Furthermore amendment 15 to the Constitution had the biggest influence over the success of the elections, and the project was unable to influence the decision to amend the constitution once it has been taken. The UN endeavored to bring the two parties together, nevertheless the political impasse continued. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. UNDP Project Progress Report on SEMB 1 April 2011 to 30 September 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. 7 May 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. 12 April 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Under the original agreement, the EU was to pay a total of $13,698,630, however as was mentioned under Section 2, the EU will only be contributing an additional $1 million dollars and thus their total contribution will be approximately $9,842,043 [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. In the original Prodoc, a value of $3,900,000 was to be disbursed but this was reduced to $3,773,199 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. 12 February 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. 01 May 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. “The Democratic Dimension of Aid Prospects for democracy building within the contemporary international architecture of development cooperation”. *Literature Review for International IDEA* (paper) by Lisa Horner and Greg Power, Global Partners and Associates, March 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. It should be noted that most electoral assistance projects are Direct Execution (DEX)/ Direct Implementation (DIM). [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Please see section on Efficiency and Value for Money for a full description of these group activities. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Prior to the construction of these buildings, most local ECBs were co-located in local government buildings. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. For full details of these recommendations please see annex….. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. However the number of outputs can be reduced at this stage [↑](#footnote-ref-68)