



PEACEBUILDING FUND (PBF)

GENERIC ANNUAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2012

<p>Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Title: Support to the Elections During the Transitional Period • Programme Number (if applicable) : 00063389 • MPTF Office Project Reference Number:³ 00081460 • PBF/IRF-46 	<p>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²</p> <p>(if applicable) Country/Region Yemen</p> <hr/> <p>Priority area/ strategic results Electoral management support and reform, constitutional referendum conducted and remaining elections during transitional period undertaken with enhanced participation</p>										
<p>Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supreme Commission for Elections and Referenda (SCER) • United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 	<p>Implementing Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government of Yemen, the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referenda (SCER) 										
<p>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>MPTF/JP Contribution: US\$1,000,000.</p> <p>Agency Contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP: US\$1,000,000. <p>Government Contribution (if applicable)</p> <p>Other Contributions (donors)</p> <p>United Kingdom/DFID: US\$2,476,851.</p> <p>Japan: US\$1,138,512.</p> <p>Germany: US\$950,000.</p> <p>Denmark: \$862,554.</p> <p>TOTAL: US\$7,427,917.</p>	<p>Programme Duration</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Overall Duration (months)</td> <td>30 months</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Start Date⁴ (dd.mm.yyyy)</td> <td>Feb 2012</td> </tr> <tr> <td>End Date (or Revised End Date)⁵</td> <td>30 June 2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Operational Closure Date⁶</td> <td>30 June 2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expected Financial Closure Date</td> <td>June 2015</td> </tr> </table>	Overall Duration (months)	30 months	Start Date ⁴ (dd.mm.yyyy)	Feb 2012	End Date (or Revised End Date) ⁵	30 June 2014	Operational Closure Date ⁶	30 June 2014	Expected Financial Closure Date	June 2015
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¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Performance Management Plan (PMP) for the PBF, Priority Plan or project document;

³ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to “Project ID” on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁴ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁵ As per approval by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

⁶ All activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF programme have been completed. Agencies to advise the MPTF Office.

Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.

Assessment/Review - if applicable *please attach*

Yes No Date: *dd.mm.yyyy*

Mid-Term Evaluation Report – if applicable *please attach*

Yes No Date: *dd.mm.yyyy*

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Support for Elections during the Transitional Period (SETP)

I. Purpose

Across the Middle East and North Africa, 2011 signaled a year of change. Peaceful movements demanding reform led to the resignations and removals of leaders ingrained in the psyches of their nations. Countries such as Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen, witnessed popular movements, which turned to popular resistance as conflicts sparked between opposition forces and ruling government forces.

Yemen witnessed such a profound change followed by intense crisis during the 10-month period that ensued after the first protest movement took to the streets and squares to unseat ruling President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Demands for good governance and dignity were at the root of such movements, and development mechanisms were required following a realigning of powers within nations as they transitioned from one party, or one-man rule, to new governing frameworks.

Such a mechanism was put into place in Yemen, when on November 23, 2011, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative was signed in Riyadh and signaled a transfer of power coupled with a series of key national reforms. Immediate, fair, and open elections were required to address the power vacuums and redistribution in many countries in order to signal some measure of catharsis.

The United Nations Development Programme's *Support to the Elections during the Transition Period (SETP)* was formed to provide such critical support for planned elections and a peaceful transfer of power to the Vice-President of Yemen Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi. The SETP programme was tasked with providing direct support to the Supreme Commission on Elections and Referenda (SCER). This support would come in the form of the SETP team planning, organizing and implementing partnerships, developing national capacities, instituting critical operations, procuring goods and services, and communicating results to national and international partners as well as the general public.

The five-member SETP team would assist the national stakeholder in successfully holding elections in 5,620 polling centres, representing some 292 districts out of 301 districts. This massive undertaking was produced in a 45-day period, requiring coordination both at the highest levels of the SCER and international donor agencies, while simultaneously organizing and planning at the ground-level with media and civil society organizations. The SETP project has thus taken on a central role in the transition of Yemen, signaling the start of the transitional process as well as representing the change in processes and frameworks that come with profound transformation of national identity and governance.

II. Results

Outcomes:

In order to ensure open, fair and representative electoral processes during the transitional period, the SETP project is engaged in providing not only financial assistance, but also technical expertise to buttress a two-pronged approach that pinpoints shortfalls as well as opportunities to enhance the electoral capabilities and capacity of both the SCER and the Government of Yemen. The first phase of this approach, required intensive immersion in the SCER, and knowledge of its capacity and capabilities during a 90-day lead up to

the Early Presidential Elections held in February 2012. This phase required both massive investments in goods and services provided to the SCER as well as extensive technical assistance in the fields of electoral management of processes, civil society engagement and public information planning and strategic deployment. These outcomes required identifying and organizing the appropriate expertise to conduct rapid, decisive technical assistance to the SCER. The outcomes would result in the successful hosting of the Early Presidential Elections, with a 65 percent turnout rate, and appropriate planning and coordination for electoral activities in Phase II of the transitional period.

The SETP project successfully organized and coordination delivery of ballots, ballot boxes, relevant training of staff, as well as multiple points of engagement with large swathes of society through direct civil society engagement projects and extensive public awareness and education campaigns. The SETP team also coordinated weekly donor meetings on the status of the electoral processes, updating relevant agencies and providing them with space for input and assistance throughout the election processes. Beneficiaries during this period were the general public, who were able to participate in an election process signaling the start of the transition period, as well as the SCER and the GoY, which was able to achieve and reach security goals and successfully claim that the vote was open, representative and comprehensive in its reach.

Outputs:

The SETP team fulfilled many of its projected outputs, including organizing and liaising with multi-donors, as a part of the Multi-Donor Basket Fund, and deploying a rapid action concept into practice in regards to procurement, technical assistance and program support. In coordination with the Joint Election Assistance Project (JEAP), similarly based at the SCER, SETP was able to identify communication and advocacy gaps, as well as capacity-building opportunities such as trainings and procurement prospects to assist the SCER staff.

The SETP team contributed to the enabling environment by performing these following outputs and scaling up the approach used by JEAP while pinpointing gaps and opportunities:

- A total of 24 different radio spots targeting women, youth, persons with disabilities, illiterate populations, as well as the general public, were produced to inform voters about the importance of the Early Presidential Elections. As well as some 20-television spots.
- A total of 100,000 posters were printed and delivered by the SCER to promote citizen participation, highlighting the importance of these Early Presidential Elections. These materials were distributed all over the country.
- A total of 125,000 leaflets containing information about how to vote were printed and delivered by the SCER. These materials were distributed all over the country.
- Promotional Items (Badges, Stands, Shirts, Caps, Hijabs, Pens, Stickers, Brochures, Audio Cassette Tapes, as well as Audio CDs) were produced and distributed to the population.
- Outdoor Campaign: (Billboards, Giant Billboards, Posters, Checkpoint Signs, Stickers, Buses, Taxis, Voter Education and Motivational Theater)

- **Implementation Delays:**

Disregarding serious objections among opposition parties, youth, and swathes of the public to the notion of a sole candidate election, Yemen is plagued by a milieu of conflicts that made enhancing and increasing voter participation cumbersome and complex.

- **Protesters Calling for Boycott of the Elections:** This group was further subdivided into three groups representing opposition movement subsets of the population. Al-Houthis in the northern province of Saada, who are engaged in fighting a war with the central government and Saudi Arabia, did not recognize the election. Hirak, the main separatist political party in the South, calling for secession. Members of the public were also perhaps swayed by the last of the opposition movement subset, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which also chose to launch its own, sometimes deadly campaign, against the notion of elections.
- **Independent Activist Youth Groups in “Freedom” Squares, i.e. Protest Camps:** Youth, who to many in the public eye deserved the credit for fueling the uprising, called for a general boycott of the elections based on the immunity offered to former regime members in the GCC agreement.
- **High Levels of Illiteracy and a Limited Level of Public Awareness:** Low-levels of education, especially in the rural areas where there was a demand for an intensive campaign to explain the political processes, election framework, and civic rights and duties of citizens was a clear goal of the overall campaign.
- **Daily Electricity Outages:** Millions of Yemenis suffer the consequences of repeated attacks on power supply towers, resulting in power cuts of up to 18 hours a day, which is direct hindrance to the dissemination of any voter information through broadcast means such as television and radio.

Security Risks: The fragility of the security situation in several regions of the country continually posed significant problems to the national campaign, which was further complicated by numerous attacks by thugs as well as armed gunmen in different governorates. These attacks affected election commission satellite offices, civic educators, media members, and members of the public

Three Objectives Identified as Response to Challenges:

- There was a concentrated effort to focus programs, campaigns, and the distribution of materials to marginalized communities as well as rural communities affected by varying degrees of the aforementioned challenges. In particular, women, youth, rural populations with limited access to information, persons with disabilities, and illiterate populations, became a specific target audience whom all needed message-specific and activity-specific programming.
- A cascade-training platform was developed to inform and motivate voters through materials focused on the reasons to, and how to vote. The cascade training framework focuses on educating a large number of civic educators for differing locales, as well as multiple organizations, in order to have the civic educators matriculate into becoming local civic experts who can then host trainings in their given locales based on their local contexts.
- A NGO partner program that could fill gaps in a national campaign strategy based on voter education for marginalized as well as local populations.

All these activities were grouped into two components for easy implementation and follow up.

- **Qualitative Assessment:**

As highlighted by the evaluation mission of Phase I of the SETP project, one of the best practices of Phase I was the inclusiveness and quality of stakeholders' coordination. In this context, the establishment of a Working Group on Elections (WGE), composed of key international partners, including donors and implementers who provided financial and technical support for the smooth holding of the early presidential elections in February 2012 was a key achievement in supporting elections. This practice will continue in Phase II and be enhanced to ensure project's coordination and consistency.

While UNDP will only be responsible for the implementation of the work plan of this project, the WGE will provide the forum of an oversight mechanism to coordinate all donor efforts in the support of elections. The WGE, chaired by UNDP, will meet at a minimum on a monthly basis, or as determined by the WGE participants, to assess and facilitate strategic coordination of the support provided by the international community to the electoral cycle.

To enhance coordination at the operational level and from a more technical viewpoint, the project will also set up an operations coordination group, with the participation of key national and international implementers. This technical working group will be co-chaired by this project's Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) and SCER. As per UNDP procedures, a Project Board composed of donors contributing to the basket fund, co-chaired by the President of SCER and the UNDP authority will also be set up for Phase II.

i) Quantitative Reporting on Results

INDICATOR BASED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

	Performance Indicators	Indicator Baselines	Planned Indicator Targets	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1⁷ Two elections (2012 & 2014) and one constitutional Referendum successfully carried out	Indicator 1.# of Presidential Elections 2. Parliamentary and local councils elections 3.Constitutional Referendum		Establishment of Election Basket Fund for the Transitional Period (2011-2014) Early Presidential Elections successfully carried out Parliamentary and local council elections carried out Constitutional referendum carried out Overhaul of Voter Registry	Establishment of Election Basket Fund for the Transitional Period (2011-2014)		SCER Early Presidential Elections February 21, 2012
Output 1.1 Resources for Elections during transition period	Indicator 1.1.1 Organize regular donor coordination		Organize regular donor coordination	Donor coordination carried out		UNDP SETP
	Indicator 1.1.2 Finalization of agreements between donors and UNDP		Finalization of agreements between donors and UNDP	Establishment of Election Basket Fund for the Transitional Period (2011-2014) secured		UNDP SETP
	Indicator 1.1.3 Establish regular reporting mechanism to donors		Establish regular reporting mechanism to donors	Regular reporting through website and coordination meeting accomplished		UNDP SETP
Output 1.2 Preparations for Early Presidential Elections	Indicator 1.2.1 Identification of capacities gaps		Gaps identified	Gaps identified and targeted by SETP team		UNDP SETP
	Indicator 1.2.2 Preparation of ToRs for all project International and National staff		ToRs prepared	ToRs advertised and finalized		UNDP SETP

⁷ For PBF: Either country relevant (from the Priority Plan or Project Document) or PMP specific.

	Indicator 1.2.3 Identification of candidates and recruitment process		Candidates recruited	Candidates recruited		UNDP SETP
	Indicator 1.2.4 Identification of procurement of all goods and equipment		Goods and equipment procured	Goods and equipment procured		UNDP SETP
Outcome 2 SCER Capacity gaps at central and local levels addressed	Indicator 2.1.1 Electoral needs assessment conducted		Electoral needs assessment conducted	Electoral needs assessment conducted		UNDP SETP and SCER
	Indicator 2.1.2 Electoral training manuals and guidelines developed and published		Manuals and guidelines developed and published	Manuals and guidelines developed and published		UNDP SETP and SCER
	Indicator 2.1.3 Prepare detailed training plan for SCER and implementation		Plan developed, approved and distributed	Plan developed, approved and distributed		UNDP SETP and SCER
Outcome 3 Outreach and advocacy plan prepared with SCER	Indicator 3.1.1 Communication engagement an advocacy plan and needs identified and action plan prepared with timeline		Plan prepared and timeline mapped out in coordination with SCER and JEAP	Plan prepared and timeline mapped out in coordination with SCER and JEAP Media products prepared and disseminated		UNDP SETP/JEAP and SCER
	Indicator 3.1.2 Conduct communications and advocacy plan with multi-media outreach and specific focus on rural and hard-to-reach populations		Successful implementation of the communication and advocacy plan and targeted outreach to hard-to-reach populations	Successful implementation of the communication and advocacy plan and targeted outreach to hard-to-reach populations		UNDP SETP/JEAP and SCER

iii) Success Story

Conflict dynamics being addressed:

As the Yemen Elections Law specifically stipulates, the SCER is responsible for educating “the public about the importance of elections” in order to “invite them to participate therein,” thus engaging the public through civil society and civic education programs became a central pillar of the SETP support to elections strategy.

Since only one candidate was on the ballot, as per the GCC agreement, programs for voter motivation and education required inventiveness.

The SCER and SETP designed a series of projects and outreach activities that sought to draw attention away from issues surrounding the selection of a sole candidate and instead chose to reframe the election as a means to move forward with a peaceful transition.

Project Interventions:

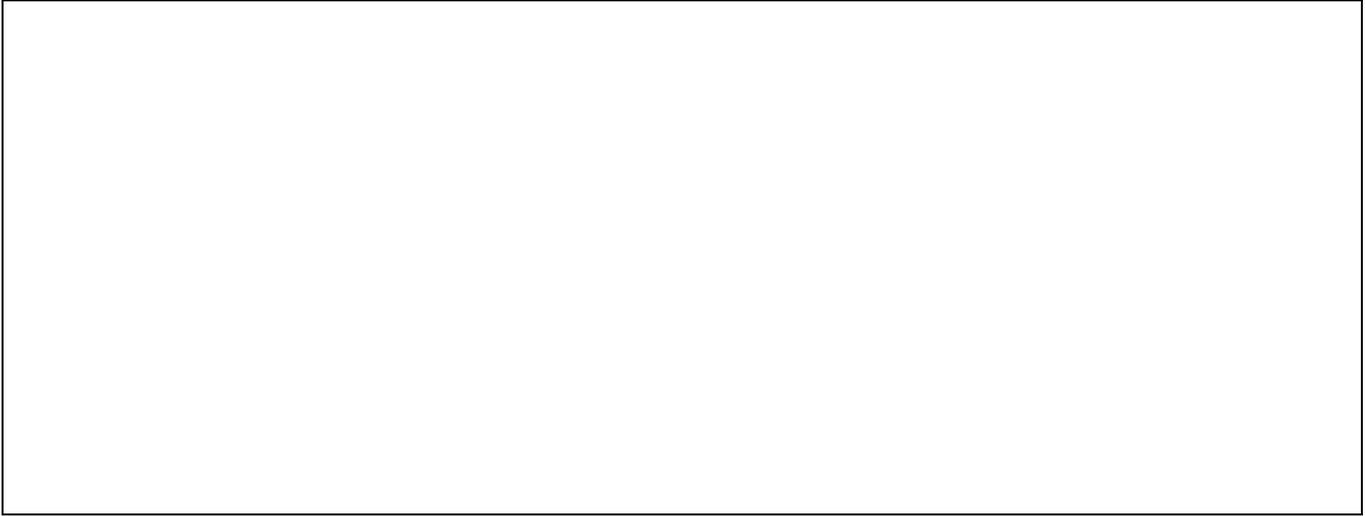
The process rather than the candidate became a driving force behind many of the initiatives and public outreach objectives. Activities were thus focused on the importance of the elections for the stability of the country. Furthermore, framing the process around the public-galvanizing message of bringing an end to President Ali Abdullah Saleh’s 33-year rule, and simultaneously rebuilding Yemen through unity around the concept of peaceful transition, was the modus operandi for the SCER, SETP, and the Joint Elections Assistance Project (JEAP).

“*Your Vote Protects Yemen*” was not only the voter education slogan, but also a rallying cry around the concept of guarding the transitional period against disharmony and violence.

The slogan also took on a principal role in the awareness campaign, through an election song, “*Sawanebneha*,” “*Together We Build Her*,” an allegory for building the Yemen of the future, and similarly through promotional and voter education materials.

Result:

Currently in Yemen, the “*Sawanebneha*” “*Together We Build Her*,” song has become a symbol of the transitional period and movement forward. The song is used in all of the public schools sung after the National Anthem, and is still frequently played on national television and state radio. It is often hard to determine the effectiveness of a single media product, however, “*Sawanebneha*” truly touched upon an intangible during the election period, which signifies Yemenis and their need to produce a better future during this transitional period.



III. Monitoring Arrangements

The Early Presidential Elections were intended to be a key measure of the transfer of power, and necessary for the establishment of an interim government to safeguard the transition process.

Consultations with stakeholders carried out in the initial and follow-up evaluation missions universally found that the election, despite being uncontested and therefore seen as rather atypical, provided a critical circuit breaker to escalating tensions in Yemen; have opened the way for the National Dialogue process and have confirmed confidence in elections as a democratic tool. Stakeholders also agreed unanimously that the election was managed competently and efficiently and enjoyed a high voter turnout and uncontroversial result.

Key Evaluation

Early coordination among donors was crucial to the success of the assistance undertaking. Frequent communication, discussion and a bit of planning among donors existed at least since eight months prior to the time when an election was announced. A Donor Working Group (DWG) at the highest level existed as well as an Election Working Group (EWG), which had been in place for years. From the DWG, the political will and funding energies were infused into the more operational group (EWG).

UNDP Role

An agency like UNDP could get quickly into operations because it was already operating in the field. UNDP was available to put together a diversity of efforts and define goals and activities related to funding towards those goals. The decision by UNDP on the use of some more flexible and efficient instruments like Delegation of Authority and Fast Track, complemented by bringing in senior people with experience of electoral cycles in order to become more operational was a leap forward at implementation. The agreement between donors on a common results framework was also instrumental for the effectiveness of this cooperative undertaking. There was unanimous recognition among both donors and SCER of the role played by UNDP as implementer of electoral assistance.

UNDP expressed gratitude for the generosity, openness, flexibility and understanding by donors regarding an operation to be undertaken under exceptional conditions. UNDP has improved its public image among donors and in the country. An effort should be made in sustaining this fresh image. In the context of the electoral assistance field, UNDP continues to be the agency in a better position to coordinate and funnel assistance from a variety of donors.

For a future electoral cycle, assistance funds should be set-aside in a flexible framework. Generally in transitional environments, earmarking funding by electoral items is not operational since many things may change in a short time period. Funding shall be allocated according to broad criteria on areas of assistance rather than by specific activities, even less by items. An open framework is necessary within which changes can be introduced depending on circumstances: timing, unexpected political events, availability of certain resources in and out of country, etc. In this sense, the multi-donor basket fund approach (that allows for a suitable combination of trust fund, cost sharing and in-kind donation - although the latter was not implemented in this project) proved generally useful.

At emergency situation, strategic planning is almost by definition absent as things are volatile and anticipation of events becomes highly unreliable for operational purposes. Once the emergency situation is surmounted,

both donors and implementing agencies as well as SCER should operate based on at least some basic planning; if not strategic at least managerial and operational planning. The project's UNDP internal management and donor coordination architecture reflected this priority.

Given the interconnectedness between the election support process and the National Dialogue and other aspects of the transition process, it will be critical that effective linkages and lines of accountability and communication are forged and agreed between the Office of the Special Adviser on Yemen as the UN's political lead in the transition process, and UNDP as the lead in election project support. To ensure harmonization in the UN approach overall.

Human resources, training and capacity building

A main strength of the Yemen electoral administration is that it should be considered a rather sustainable organization, in spite of the fact that it went through different names and organizational shaking-ups over its near two decades of existence. It is the oldest electoral commission in the Arab World. It remained fully operational largely due to continuing international assistance of varying degrees. Nevertheless, the structure and staffing of SCER are considered among its top authorities as burdensome, and needed of reform. A smaller and more specialized staff is needed. Consequently the need for training and capacity building is apparent. This should include both the members of the governing body and the technical staff.

As another weakness on the recipient side, training of security personnel and poll workers at the polling stations was deficient as comes out from different opinions from both inside the SCER and domestic observers reporting. Inconsistencies in following procedures as well as at the layout of polling stations were frequently observed. In this regard, the SCER should ensure that adequate training is provided to poll workers recruited under the legal framework.

The fact that the past elections were held under emergency circumstances should not let aside the importance of planning. The main recommendation is about the necessity of strategic, organizational, management and operational planning. While the SCER is familiar with the electoral procedures and processes there is some capacity deficiency, which would benefit from further partnerships at international levels. Under emergency situation, only a modicum of operational planning may be possible and effective. Nevertheless, within an electoral cycle, and even under the uncertainty resulting of a transitional period, proper strategic, organizational and managerial planning is a necessity.

Procurement and operations

Procurement represented a large proportion of the international support to the process for two projects directly supporting the SCER, the IFES project (around 68-70 percent of its budget) and the SETP project (71.7 percent - which does not include media time purchases). Strong time pressure had to be faced by all implementing agencies as well as SCER.

There has not been overlapping of expenditures from the different projects thanks to the efficient coordination between the projects teams as the list on procurement was shared among projects. On the contrary, the strategy of complementary and "gap-filling" among projects showed a great success. This good practice should be maintained.

While a close cooperation with the beneficiary is a standard good practice in defining the needs in terms of procurement, those should be based on a defined strategy and consequent operational plan. Given the short amount of time available, this was not possible for the Early Presidential Election (EPE) but should be implemented in the future. The SCER would benefit of more exposure to training and capacity building

experiments in terms of strategic and operational planning, which would include election procurement planning and inventory management.

The choice of the level of quality of an ink is a fraud mitigation process depending on factors such as the level of budgetary resources, level of public trust in the electoral process and particularly of trust in the voter register. In the case of the 2012 elections, the level of trust in the voter register was low. Due to decisions by the SCER to allow voters who are not on the register to vote with one form of identification, inking was the main safeguard against multiple voting. This explains why the SCER opted for a very high quality of ink (or better said, an ink with a very high percentage of silver nitrate) that resulted very expensive (USD\$1.2 million) whilst this level of concentration of silver nitrate (25 percent) would not have been necessary.

There was a serious issue with the indelible ink initially procured by UNDP for the 2008 elections, which became not re-usable for later electoral events. All main stakeholders are now aware of this problem, and there is no need to abound on it. Nevertheless, as a lesson learned, it should be noticed that the handling of problems like this one may create a confidence gap between donor and provider as well as between provider and recipient. In this case, UNDP has confirmed that no donor would bear the consequences of the ink issue.

On retrieval and storage of electoral materials, the SCER looks in a better shape than many other electoral bodies working under similar circumstances. As of now, the SCER has preserved almost all ballot boxes from previous elections as well as 20.000 metal screens and the 350 laptops, intended to be used in the special polling centres reserved for non-resident voters, which were left from a total of 385. But some items SETP purchased were not necessary or were underused.

There is an almost universal lack of confidence in the voters register and the legal framework pertaining to registration and the electoral process generally. Consideration must be given to the creation of a new viable register, taking into account concerns expressed in the UNDP Review of Election Support and the ICAI Review of DFID's Electoral Support of value for money, the use of appropriate electoral systems and technologies and the sustainability of systems outside continuing external financial and technical support. Interlocutors have high expectations of a new register linked to a (biometric) national ID card. In the timeframe available this may be ambitious and some mitigation of expectations for 2014 will be necessary.

Future interventions should be mindful of Recommendation 8 of the UNDP Review of Electoral Support which recommends a UNDP review of the chain of support, addressing procedural and efficiency issues especially as they relate to streamlining procurement and recruitment processes.

Communication, Engagement and Advocacy

Along with procurement of election materials, communication, engagement, outreach and advocacy were amongst the most visible outputs of all three projects delivering an intense, multi layered, innovative, creative and high-impact set of interventions taking an encompassing approach to the concept of media and moving beyond traditional print and electronic media engagement to also include billboards, theatre, mobile media, music, posters, face-to-face engagement in Change Squares as well as SMS, websites and other social media initiatives.

This area benefitted greatly from the coordination of activities between JEAP, SETP and IFES with the latter taking responsibility for the setting up and equipping of the SCER media center along with election-focused media training and engagement with SCER and support to accreditation while JEAP and SETP concentrated on messaging and media space and time production and placements for voter awareness and support to the CSO sector.

Civic education campaigns before and for this election clearly had a positive effect on voter mobilization in general and of women in particular. Voter education for this election was more intensive and of better quality than in previous elections in the opinion of experts who have been in the country for a long period of time. Concerning voter education campaigns, all the successful components of the campaigns should be retained in order to capitalize on them at Phase 2 (for example the motto “Your Vote Protects Yemen” plus the motivational song, ‘*SawaNebneha*’, which became very popular.)

The skills building, education, media strategies and participation of women, young people and other communities that will be required in the ongoing national dialogue and transition process should build upon the momentum, relationships and successes of the election period and should proceed without significant gaps

Regarding media relationships, the SCER seemed not to be fully aware of the importance of media relationships. They started quite late to engage in media activities until a media center was established 10 days prior to the elections. Technical assistance that leverages the pre-election experience; focuses on reform of the approach to media engagement in SCER; builds on the new vision encouraged by this election experience, and that enhances the SCER’s independent, professional, and transparent capacity in media strategy and planning and the use of media as a tool of education and social change is a recommended focus in Phase 2.

Women participation

Deeply embedded cultural, traditional and other impediments to the participation of women in politics are a deterrent to women nominating and standing as candidates and engaging in public life, despite the increasing rates of the participation of women as voters. Women’s participation was therefore a core pillar of the JEAP Programme from the outset, and the use of media and other outreach strategies to encourage the participation of women in the elections was a deliberate short term focus of the JEAP and SETP as well as NDI. In its voter education/GOTV campaign, NDI placed heavy emphasis on women participation, and in its training of monitors NDI ensured a 50 percent gender balance with YEMN.

While SCER has a Women’s Unit, it does not have the status of a department or section but rather is an office attached to the office of the Chairman. Gender mainstreaming is not reflected either in the staffing of the SCER, in the gender balance of SCER appointees or in its Programming. A significant impact of the targeted support to women’s participation both in the JEAP pillar and more so in the focus on women in the pre-election education, media and awareness raising activities, has been to shine the spotlight on the need to pay attention to SCER’s institutional approach to women’s participation including the harmonization of initiatives, policies and approaches within SCER.

Regarding public communication, outreach and advocacy as they pertain to the participation of women a number of activities have been identified. While the media and awareness activities afforded creative, positive visibility and prominence to women, unfortunately the perception of a tokenistic longer-term support to women’s organizations and the impossibly short timeframes for delivery of objectives does not reflect positively on the actual commitment of international assistance to women’s engagement in the electoral process.

SETP’s focus and outputs were on ensuring visibility to women’s participation as elaborated in the assessment report. The high turnout of voters and the very acceptable rate of women’s participation, along with the momentum generated by the innovative and hopefully agenda-setting education and promotional strategies to engage women in the electoral process should be leveraged in Phase 2. The continued strong support of advocacy for women’s political rights, voter mobilization and sharing in the electoral administration and operation in a fair manner is strongly urged.

Elections monitoring

The SCER accredited more than 16,000 domestic monitors, although it is hard to figure out how many of those were more properly political party poll watchers. NDI trained 1175 monitors for the YEMN network plus more than 200 upon request for the Resonate organization, and additional training was provided to people from another 15 organizations. The presence of domestic monitors around the country has worked, as at other occasions, as a tool of transparency, confidence building and lessons learned for improvement at future elections. In this regard, the YEMN observer report is particularly illustrative.

Regarding international observers, there were not missions deployed contrary to other elections in Yemen. It is recommended that, like in other previous elections, the presence of some standard international observer mission is deployed, which could help as an instrument of transparency and confidence building.

IV. Future Work Plan

Based on the lessons learned from Phase I, and taking into consideration the current legal framework and the stipulations of the GCC Agreement, several steps are needed in order to effectively support to the elections management body, before the next anticipated event (referendum) takes place.

I. Technical Need Assessment for the SCER

Early on during the period between Phase I and Phase II, a technical needs assessment should be performed in order to formulate parameters for the upcoming project and outline possible areas for donors' assistance.

The need assessment exercise should cover the following areas:

II. Headquarters and Regional Offices Needs Assessment

A comprehensive assessment of the exact needs of SCER headquarters, as well as regional offices, is needed. The assessment should primary focus on the current equipment inventory, in order to identify existing materials in stock that can be used in the coming phase. The assessment will allow the technical team to identify gaps and plan accordingly.

III. Headquarters and Regional Offices Permanent Staff Capacity Building Needs

Identifying staff weaknesses and drafting a work plan to address human capacity of the staff is needed in order to assess the ability of the SCER to undertake an extensive electoral agenda planned for the transitional period. The capacity-building plan can incorporate scheduled trainings not only on technical aspects of elections but also soft skill development. Soft skills such as ICT trainings, language development, and media planning and public relations are the most prevalent soft skill building exercises needed for the coming phase.

IV. IT Needs Assessment

SCER IT department is considered to be competent, but IT knowledge is not cross sectional, since beyond the doors of this department, the IT capacity of the SCER becomes minimal. A substantial portion of procurement

during the initial phase was that of IT equipment. Without cross-sectional knowledge related to operating and understating IT equipment, much of these materials will remain unused. In addition, an intra-SCER email system must be developed, and an interactive website should be launched. These actions are directly correlated to increasing transparency and easing, institutionalizing, and professionalizing communication between the SCER and its respective stakeholders, i.e. political parties, CSOs, and international community.

VI. Voter Registration Assessment

The Voter Registry was last updated in 2008, and the GCC Agreement clearly stipulates that a review of the VR is needed before the next election exercise. The earlier the start of the process of review of the VR the better the outcome. Several items must be examined at this stage in order to identify what VR strategy should be implemented. Currently, the two options for this exercise, are the enhancement of the current VR, or the creation of a completely brand-new VR. A plan of action should be chosen in order to develop a strategic and operational plan.

A voter registration exercise is both time consuming and costly. However, it is a necessity for the credibility of any upcoming elections. The VR might be affected by the legal framework yet to be developed. Some steps to plan can take place in the meantime. An assessment of a proposed VR strategy should take into consideration several aspects:

- Identification and facilitation of registration locations
- Identification and procurement of VR equipment
- Identification and training of the registration staff
- Development and execution of a VR media awareness campaign
- Development, printing and distribution of VR materials (forms, and public information materials)
- Development of VR challenge process
- Printing and distribution of the final VR.
- Creating a public information campaign for expatriate citizens

VII. Polling Locations

During the Phase I election period, the SCER faced several issues in regard to polling locations. Several polling locations were changed at the last minute, primarily due to security concerns. , Voters were confused and were unable to locate polling locations. In addition, some polling locations were not properly equipped to accommodate all voters.

Based on the aforementioned challenges, the following actions should be undertaken for successful future elections:

- Determining specific criterion for the selection of polling locations
- Reviewing issues of access for persons with disabilities
- Establishing a “Voter Hotline”