United Nations Development Group UNDAF Trust Fund
Project #88021: P1-06
Date and Quarter: 1 October to 31 December 2013
4th Quarter 2013

Participating UN Organisation: UNDP ,UNOPS   Sector: Governance and Human Rights

Government of Iraq – Responsible Line Ministry: Independent High Electoral Commission - IHEC

Title	Institutional Development Support to the IHEC Phase II				
Geographic Location	Nationwide				
Project Cost	US$2,134,050				
Duration	15 months				
Approval Date (SC)	14 October 2013	**Starting Date**	25 October 2013	**Completion Date**	31 December 2014
Project Description	This programme has been jointly developed by the UN and the Iraqi Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to support the IHEC in its continued institutional development as a sustainable institution within the government structure of Iraq, carrying out its constitutional mandate independently, efficiently, transparently and accountably, in line with professional standards. The programme objectives are based on the results of a mid-tem review of the current Institutional Development Support to the IHEC initiative (G11-23) which took place in March 2012 and the Elections Needs Assessment Mission from the UN Electoral Assistance Division of DPA which took place from 20th November to 2nd December 2012. It is also based on discussions with the senior management of the UNAMI led International Electoral Assistance Team (IEAT) and with discussions held with the current Board of Commissioners. The suggested outputs set out in the project document, as well as the corresponding activities, also take into account the work accomplished to date with IHEC. Finally, it takes on board recommendations from the current international advisors working closely with the IHEC on a day-to-day basis, and lessons learned from recent electoral events. These objectives aim to address significant gaps in the following areas: 1.Institutional framework and organisational capacity of the IHEC as Iraq's permanent electoral institution, established under the constitution; 2. Human resource capacity of the IHEC (staff skills, knowledge and resources) at both central and governorate office levels; 3. Technological capacity to manage electoral processes in a sustainable manner. The programme will be implemented through strong partnerships between the IHEC and the various UN entities mandated and experienced in the sector of electoral support to Iraq. The successful implementation of programme activities is expected to contribute significantly to the achievement of outcomes prioritised in the UN Development Assistance Framework 2011-2014.

Development Goal and Immediate Objectives

UNDAF: Priority 1
        Improved Governance, including the protection of human rights.
 	
UNDP CPAP: **Outcome 1:** GoI and civil society have strengthened participatory mechanisms in place for electoral processes, national dialogue and reconciliation.
 	
        Outcome 3: Strengthened regulatory frameworks, institutions and processes in place for accountable, transparent and participatory governance at national and local levels.	

Output 1: IHEC has strengthened institutional framework and organizational capacity to effectively conduct electoral processes as Iraq's permanent electoral institution, established under the constitution
Output 2: IHEC has improved technological capacity to manage electoral processes in a sustainable manner

Outputs, Key Activities and Procurement
Note: Activities are in relation to section 4 page 10 of the project document

Output 1	**IHEC has strengthened institutional framework and organizational capacity to effectively conduct electoral processes as Iraq's permanent electoral institution, established under the constitution**
Activities	1.1 An improved Legal Framework for Electoral Processes. 1.2 IHEC has improved Strategic Planning Processes. 1.3 IHEC has enhanced external capacities relations 1.4 IHEC has stronger female representation in the organization and is able to advocate effectively for the participation of women in electoral exercises.
Output 2	**IHEC has improved technological capacity to manage electoral processes in a sustainable manner**
Activities	2.1 IHEC has enhanced IT infrastructure and know-how to more effectively support electoral events. 2.2 IHEC has enhanced voter registration capacities.
Procurement (major items)	N/A

Funds Committed	UNDP: USD 179,772.42 UNOPS: USD269,301.05 **TOTAL: USD 449,073.47**	**% of received 1st tranche funds (USD)**	16.4% 26% **21%**
Funds Disbursed	UNDP: USD178,111.34 UNOPS: USD269,301.05 **TOTAL: USD 447,412.39**	**% of received 1st tranche funds (USD)**	16% 26%

				21%
Receipt of 2nd Tranche	All the approved project funds were received. Additional funds left over from the previous project may be allocated in April 2014.			
Forecast final date	31 December 2014		**Delay (months)**	0

Quantitative achievements against objectives and results

Result /Goals	Activities	Baseline Info	Performance Benchmark and Targets	Implementation Progress in reporting quarter
Output 1: IHEC has strengthened institutional framework and organizational capacity to effectively conduct electoral processes as Iraq's permanent electoral institution, established under the constitution	**1.1 An improved Legal Framework for Electoral Processes.**			**15%**
	1.1.1. Electoral legal framework reviewed in cooperation in support to UNAMI with the CoR Legal Committee.	No	Yes	Guidance provided. Election Law passed in November 2013
	1.1.2 IHEC complaints process reviewed with support of UNAMI	No	Yes	No progress
	1.1.3 Institutional framework for dispute resolution reviewed in support to UNAMI cooperation with CoR Legal Committee, AJC, EJP	No	Yes	Plans underway for a study visit to Australia.
	1.2 IHEC has improved Strategic Planning Processes.			**20%**
	1.2.1. Detailed Guidance note and recommendations for a new strategic plan for IHEC submitted, with special focus on women's empowerment and gender equality measures	No	Yes	No progress to report for the quarter.

	1.2.2. Organisational capacity and structural review undertaken paying special attention to women's empowerment and gender equality	No	Yes	IHEC election observation mission to India
	1.2.3 Specialised training modules developed for public speaking, strategic media management and strategic communications submitted and accepted	No	Yes	Not yet implemented
	1.3 IHEC has enhanced external capacities relations			**15%**
	1.3.1. Guidance and recommendations for an IHEC external relations strategy submitted, paying special attention to measures to include women and other marginalised groups	No	Yes	Concept on political party dialogue prepared.
	1.3.2. Staff development training on political entities delivered targeting a minimum 30% women	0	10	No progress
	1.3.3. Recommendations for establishing a Political Entities resource centre submitted	No	Yes	No progress
	1.4 IHEC has stronger female representation in the organization and is able to advocate effectively for the participation of women in electoral exercises.			**20%**
	1.4.1. Recommendations for affirmative recruitment policy to ensure adequate representation of women in IHEC submitted.	No	Yes	No progress to report
	1.4.2. Promotional activities to assure incorporation of gender in all electoral activities conducted.	No	2	2 meetings held with the IHEC Gender team
	1.4.3. Women friendly and women specific campaign strategies developed.	No	2	Not yet implemented
	1.4.4 Seminar to discuss regional experiences in women participation in the electoral process conducted	No	1	Not yet implemented

IHEC has improved technological capacity to manage electoral processes in a sustainable manner	**2.1 IHEC has enhanced IT infrastructure and know-how to more effectively support electoral events.**	No	Yes	**20%**
	2.1.1. Assistance to the IHEC in the development of an ICT strategy and technological roadmap provided that is gender sensitive	No	Yes	- Assessment of ICT infrastructure conducted. - Outline for ICT Strategy developed. - A competency inventory and development plan developed.
	2.1.2 Specific trainings delivered to IHEC in the area of specific technologies and database, especially on-the-job knowledge transfer and mentoring/coaching (minimum 30% female participation).	0	4	-On-the-job training for Networking concepts implemented.
	2.2 IHEC has enhanced voter registration capacities.			**15%**
	2.2.1. Detailed guidance note on appropriate technological options for voter registration	No	Yes	Recommendations on specifications for data centre made to IHEC.
	2.2.2 Voter registration with Subject Matter Experts and thought leaders organised to allow IHEC to gain insights in its own registration processes and roadmap for the future that allows for sex disaggregated data	0	1	Not yet implemented

Qualitative achievements against objectives and results

During the reporting period, extensive time was assigned to ensure a focused start on the project in agreement with the IHEC. Therefore the IHEC and UN conducted a series of meetings to define priorities for institutional development over the next year. A series of discussions with the IHEC Capacity Building Department were therefore conducted.

The subsequent passing of the Election Law Number 11 amendment in November 2013 cleared the

way for the conduct of 2014 Council of Representatives elections. The sticking issue in the amendment was the seat allocation. Electoral laws will remain a challenge to Iraq's electoral process as they are not permanent and require amendment before each election.

In the quarter, UNDP Iraq and UNDP India facilitated the establishment of a South-South Cooperation agreement between the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq and the Electoral Commission of India (ECI). These discussions were followed by an Election Observation Mission to India by five IHEC officials.

Output 1.1: An Improved Legal Framework for Electoral Processes

- Planning is ongoing for a study visit to the Australian Electoral Commission by the IHEC officials and members of the Election Judicial Panel (EJP), which will take place between late January and early February 2014. This study visit aims to allow IHEC to assess an established example of an electoral dispute resolution process at the judicial level. The study visit is intended for seven to nine IHEC officials involved election dispute resolution processes and the KRG Election Judicial Panel. The activity will be implemented by UNDP.

Output 1.2: IHEC has improved strategic planning capacities

- Discussions took place between the programme and IHEC on how various departments of the IHEC could be technically supported in their strategic planning processes which should feed into the overall strategic plan for the IHEC. The planning discussions will continue in the next quarter and implementations of any agreed actions will be conducted after the 30 April Council of Representatives elections.

- Five IHEC officials participated in an Election Observation Mission for India's State Elections from 29 November to 5 December 2013. This Mission was one of the many activities which will be implemented under a South-South Cooperation between the IHEC and the Electoral Commission of India (ECI) aimed at strengthening the management of electoral processes. While in India, the IHEC delegation observed elections in Delhi and Rajasthan States and discussed with the Indian Counterparts on activities to be carried out under the cooperation agreement. The delegation had been very impressed with the electronic voting process and the well organized and implemented polling process. The activity was fully funded by UNDP India and co-facilitated by UNDP Iraq.

Output 1.3: IHEC has enhanced external relations capabilities

- Preparations are ongoing for a series of IHEC engagements on inter-party dialogue. This aims to strengthen relations between the IHEC and the political entities as well as among the political entities themselves. The activities are expected to be conducted in the first two quarters of 2014.

Output 1.4:   IHEC has stronger female representation in the organization and is able to advocate effectively for the participation of women in electoral exercises.

- Two meetings were held between the IHEC Gender Team and UNDP Gender Specialist to discuss the implementation of the IHEC Gender work plan. The discussions also reviewed a UNDP Consultant report on "Women Participation in Politics in Iraq" which was prepared towards the end of the Institutional Development Support to the IHEC Phase I project. The report contained recommendations for enhancing the engagement of women in the electoral processes of Iraq and would form part of the reference documents for designing and implementation of activities to ensure gender mainstreaming of the IHEC as an institution as well as the electoral process.

- Plans are underway to link up the IHEC Gender Team members with regional gender initiatives. In this regard, discussions are underway with UNDP Romania to include IHEC representation in the regional gender workshop for countries holding elections in 2014. This workshop will take place in March 2014.

- Discussions are with UN Women and UNDP took place to discuss the possibility of two IHEC officials to attend a UNDP Bridge Training organized by the UNDP Regional Office in Cairo, Egypt. The nomination of the officials took place and the activity will be conducted in February 2014.

Output 2.1:   IHEC has enhanced IT infrastructure and know-how to more effectively support electoral events.

During the reporting period, UNOPS Information and Communication Technology (ICT) team was engaged in the following activities:

- The ICT Advisor performed an assessment of the IHEC ICT infrastructure. Deficiencies identified were presented to the IHEC Information Technology (IT) Manager and remedial action was initiated for items rated as high or critical.

- A Patch and Vulnerability Management (PVM) system has been introduced into the IHEC IT production environment to address known risks and vulnerabilities.

- The outline for the ICT strategy was developed and shared with stakeholders and counterparts for comments and suggestions. These will be incorporated into the final strategy document and shared with IHEC Management.

- A competency inventory and development plan has been developed and presented to the IHEC management. The competency development plan is based on the latest SFIA standard.

- Various options for backup and disaster recovery procedure for IHEC database platform using the new Virtualization and Storage Area Network (SAN) technologies were considered, tested and finalized.

- On-the-job training on "Networking Concepts" was conducted for the IHEC IT staff.

- The telecom equipment shipment was received in IHEC during the first week of December, 2013. The UNOPS ICT team has started the installation and configuration which is expected to take between four to six weeks. The deliverables include video conferencing and Call Centre telephony.

Output 2.2:   IHEC has enhanced voter registration capacities
- The IHEC CEO requested for recommendations on the specifications for the data center to be prepared for the biometric electronic voter registration project. Subsequently, the recommendations were submitted, which have since been approved by the IHEC management and the procurement process has been initiated**.**

- The UNOPS team also assisted IHEC with several application development and management activities, related to Voter Registration activities which included the Audit Software, Web Search used by VRU call centre and the system used to register complaints. Several consultations were held and recommendations for optimization and operations including adding resilience to the current database hosting platform were carried out.

Challenges

A major challenge for the programme is the lack of funding to implement support activities for the IHEC. The available funds in the quarter were just enough for personnel costs. The success of this programme will hugely depend on availability of adequate resources to support planned key activities. Discussions will however continue with the IHEC to scale up their cost-share commitment for the programme activities in view of the funding situation.

The security situation in Iraq remains a serious risk during the implementation of the programme. It constantly poses the potential of delaying the implementation of both the project as well IHEC core activities. In addition, it is very difficult for project interventions such as public outreach for the enhancement of political participation to make a positive impact with this negative external factor.

Some of the risks include unstable political situation, political interference of the electoral process and perpetual violence. All these have a high impact on the programme. Much as there has been on-going intelligence gathering and situation analysis of such risks, very little can be done by the programme to mitigate these threats. However, the programme has been designed in such a way that the external factors will not jeopardize the implementation of its activities.