

United Nations Development Group UNDAF Trust Fund
Project #88021: P1-06
Date and Quarter: 1 April to 30 June
2nd Quarter 2014

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	<p>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.</p> <p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>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.</p>				

Development Goal and Immediate Objectives

<p>UNDAF: Priority 1 Improved Governance, including the protection of human rights.</p> <p>UNDP CPAP: Outcome 1: GoI and civil society have strengthened participatory mechanisms in place for electoral processes, national dialogue and reconciliation.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Strengthened regulatory frameworks, institutions and processes in place for accountable, transparent and participatory governance at national and local levels.</p>
<p>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</p> <p>Output 2: IHEC has improved technological capacity to manage electoral processes in a sustainable manner</p>

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	<p>1.1 An improved Legal Framework for Electoral Processes.</p> <p>1.2 IHEC has improved Strategic Planning Processes.</p> <p>1.3 IHEC has enhanced external capacities relations</p> <p>1.4 IHEC has stronger female representation in the organization and is able to advocate effectively for the participation of women in electoral exercises.</p>
Output 2	IHEC has improved technological capacity to manage electoral processes in a sustainable manner
Activities	<p>2.1 IHEC has enhanced IT infrastructure and know-how to more effectively support electoral events.</p> <p>2.2 IHEC has enhanced voter registration capacities.</p>
Procurement (major items)	N/A

Funds Committed	UNDP: USD 890,109.12	% of received 1st tranche funds (USD)	81.25%
	UNOPS: USD 721,194.77		69.43 %
	TOTAL: USD 1,611,303.89		75.50%
Funds Disbursed	UNDP: USD818,584.21	% of received 1st tranche funds (USD)	74.73%
	UNOPS: USD 715,117.64		68.85 %
	TOTAL: USD 1,533,701.85		71.87%

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.			60%
	1.1.1. Electoral legal framework reviewed in support to UNAMI in cooperation with the CoR Legal Committee.	No	Yes	Continued guidance provided on electoral legal interpretations during the election period.
	1.1.2 IHEC complaints process reviewed with support of UNAMI	No	Yes	Guidance provided to the IHEC complaints categorization committees.
	1.1.3 Institutional framework for dispute resolution reviewed in support to UNAMI cooperation with CoR Legal Committee, AJC, EJP	No	Yes	N/A
	1.2 IHEC has improved Strategic Planning Processes.			74%
	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	Data management and archiving for Political Entities and Candidates developed.
	1.2.2. Organisational capacity and	No	Yes	-Advice on OCV

	structural review undertaken paying special attention to women's empowerment and gender equality			operations during COR elections provided.
	1.2.3 Specialised training modules developed for public speaking, strategic media management and strategic communications submitted and accepted	No	Yes	High level guidance on Strategic Communication was provided by UNAMI CEA during the electoral period
	1.3 IHEC has enhanced external capacities relations			62%
	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	-Interaction with Electoral Stakeholders during the COR electoral process to assess IHEC/Stakeholder relations
	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	An assessment was conducted. Progress was halted due to lack of physical space in IHEC.
	1.4 IHEC has stronger female representation in the organization and is able to advocate effectively for the participation of women in electoral exercises.			78%
	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	Bi-weekly meetings between the IHEC and UN Gender teams were

				conducted to address challenges to women participation in COR elections.
	1.4.3. Women friendly and women specific campaign strategies developed.	No	2	-Women campaigning monitored to detect challenges and recommend to IHEC for redress.
	1.4.4 Seminar to discuss regional experiences in women participation in the electoral process conducted	No	1	In-house meetings between IHEC and the UN Gender Team were held to discuss this.
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	70%
	2.1.1. Assistance to the IHEC in the development of an ICT strategy and technological roadmap provided that is gender sensitive	No	Yes	A draft strategy for Biometric Voter Registration and ICT was prepared during this period and is under discussion.
	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).	2	4	On-the-job training for Virtualization, Monitoring and Storage Area Network took place during the reporting period.
	2.2 IHEC has enhanced voter registration capacities.			25%
	2.2.1. Detailed guidance note on appropriate technological options for voter registration	No	Yes	The BVR strategy document has been created to assist IHEC in decision making for various technological options available.

	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	Initial discussions have taken place with IHEC on the processes and project plan for Biometric Voter Registration.
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Qualitative achievements against objectives and results

During the Quarter, IHEC conducted the Council of Representatives (COR) and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Governorate elections on 30 April 2014. Voting was conducted smoothly across the country despite serious security incidents in some Governorates prior to the polling day. Both electoral processes were commended by domestic and international observers for being relatively fair and transparent, with a high level of candidate and voter participation.

There were two important aspects to these elections: First, there was a high political participation with regard to candidates as well as voters comparing to the 2010 COR Elections. A total of 9,032 candidates, 6,425 male and 2,607 female, contested in the 2014 elections compared to 6,190 candidates, 4,414 male and 1,776 female, in the same election in 2010. Particularly interesting is the high number of female candidates, an increase of 47% from the 2010 election. With regard to voters, 12,716,854 people casted their votes, representing 62% of the 20,432,499 total registered voters. The second aspect is that this was the first time the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq have effectively managed an election of this magnitude without any external support. This is a clear indication that, with the support of the UN over the years, the Electoral Commission in Iraq has developed adequate institutional capacity to effectively manage electoral processes on its own.

During the reporting period, UNDP Electoral Team provided daily guidance and technical support to various departments of the IHEC during the implementation of the Council of Representatives (COR) and Kurdistan Regional Government Governorate (KRG GCE) elections which were conducted on 30 April 2014. This support was provided in the areas of procurement, external relations, electoral complaints categorization process and out of country voting (OCV).

UNDP Electoral Team also participated in poll watching during Special Polling on 28 April and Regular Polling on 30 April 2014. The purpose of the poll watching was to get first-hand information on the administration of the electoral process. Key observations were documented and these will be presented and discussed with the IHEC during the 2014 COR and KRG election lessons learnt workshops.

During this quarter, the support of UNOPS team's activities were primarily focused on the COR elections. The UNOPS application development team assisted IHEC with various application software used for the tabulation of results, out of country (OCV) voting, complaints and appeals, auditing and reporting and voter list activities related to issuance of Biometric Voter ID cards.

The UNOPS team assisted the Data Entry Centre (DEC) with the preparation of the facilities for the tabulation of results for COR and KRG elections. This included setting up a new computer environment, refreshing the 500 workstations used for data entry with the latest security policies and

procedures as well as pro-active monitoring of the entire DEC environment to identify and resolve availability and performance issues before they happened. The DEC reported a 100% uptime with not a single issue causing partial or full outage, resulting in IHEC meeting all the deadlines for results tabulation and announcement.

Output 1.1: An Improved Legal Framework for Electoral Processes

- UNDP Project Manager worked with one of the four IHEC Electoral Complaints Committees during the polling and results tabulation period to provide guidance and advice on electoral complaints categorization. A total of 2117 electoral complaints were received and categorized during the electoral period and most of them were to do with voting irregularities. Of these complaints 2030 were related to the COR election while 87 were for the KRG Governorate election. A total of 107 complaints, all for the COR election, were categorized as “serious” and recommended for thorough investigation and resolve before the announcement of the election results.

Output 1.2: IHEC has improved strategic planning capacities

- The Procurement Adviser supported the IHEC’s Procurement and Logistics Department in procuring, receipt and distribution of electoral materials. The Advisor played a major role in following up with IHEC Procurement technical committees on progress of material production and coordinated with suppliers on the delivery of these materials into Iraq as well as their distribution in accordance with polling station requirements. After the polling process, the Procurement Adviser supported the IHEC in planning and implementation of the retrieval process for polling results forms from polling centres to the Recount Centers in Governorates and subsequently to the IHEC Data Entry Center in Baghdad.
- The Procurement Adviser continued to provide technical guidance and support to the Out of Country Voting (OCV) Management Committee, in planning and implementation of the OCV operations. During the quarter, the OCV Management Committee established the operational timelines, reviewing the countries where the OCV was to be conducted based on the Iraqi population data received by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the 2010 COR election data. The Advisor also provided guidance and support in the procurement and transportation of OCV electoral materials. With this technical support, the IHEC effectively opened 656 polling stations in 20 different countries on 28 and 29 April to allow Iraqis residing abroad to register and vote. Upon verification of the voter data, a total 157, 086 votes were declared valid by IHEC.

Output 1.3: IHEC has enhanced external relations capabilities

- In the period under review, the Political Entities Advisor supported the IHEC Political Entities section in the registration and verification of political entities and candidates for the April 30 CoR election. This election is the third CoR election to be conducted under the 2005 constitution. Administering the registration process formed a major plank of activity of the Political Entities section. The advisor worked with the acting head of the section to develop data management and archiving template. At the end of the exercise IHEC certified the listing

of 102 political entities and coalitions and registered 9,043 candidates for the Council of Representatives election.

- The Political Entities Advisor coordinated election observation activities for the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG)-Political in his capacity as the head of the UNAMI Election team in Basra. Activities undertaken in this regard included organizing briefings and working visits to the Basra IHEC Governorate Electoral Office, head of security, media and civil rights activists. On Election Day, the Political Entities Advisor in company of the DSRSG visited and compiled election observation reports from more than 24 polling stations across 9 polling centers in the Basra Governorate Council. The feedback and reports from various electoral stakeholders that were met during the 2014 COR elections will inform the IHEC-UN election evaluation process which is aimed at drawing lessons and best practices for improving the conduct of future elections.

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.

- During the quarter, UNDP, in coordination with the UN Gender Task Force worked with the IHEC Gender Team in identifying and addressing various issues that could negatively impact on the effective participation of women candidates and voters in the electoral process. One major problem that was identified is the stigmatization of women candidates by the male youths. This matter was raised with the Ministry of Women who issued a Press statement strongly condemning such malpractices. On its part, the IHEC also issued a stern warning against such acts and set a punitive measure for anyone found committing such a crime.

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

In the reporting period, UNOPS Information and Communication Technology (ICT) team primarily focused on the COR and KRG election events and accordingly, the following activities were undertaken:

- The UNOPS ICT team assisted the Out of Country Voting (OCV) committee with developing an application to securely collect and exchange voting information between the IHEC national office and OCV offices around the world, where voting took place.
- Assistance was provided for the “Complaints and Appeal” software in the area of reporting and data validation. The outcome was fast turnaround time for complaints resolution and improved management oversight.
- UNOPS team also assisted the results tabulation development team by resolving several issues that were either causing or had the potential to cause performance issues. Additional reports requested by the Electoral administration were also programmed during the results tabulation process. The database administrators monitored the database environment throughout the event, which made it possible to have 100% uptime of the tabulation environment which

peaked at around 15,000 forms from the counting centres being entered in a single day.

- A sophisticated monitoring and event management system was prepared for the results tabulation period and continuous monitoring of various performance and availability indicators was undertaken by the UNOPS ICT team throughout the COR and KRG electoral events. The DEC ICT staff were trained in the use of these monitoring environments, which has empowered them to use these tools for future events.

Output 2.2: IHEC has enhanced voter registration capacities

- Several programs and software were developed to assist IHEC with the distribution of the electronic voter cards (EVC), based on the voter registration database. A public website was also developed and published to provide detailed information to voters about their EVC collection and polling station data. This website was heavily used throughout the COR and KRG election events. Improved security mechanisms which had been put in place in advance ensured that there was not a single compromise of this very sensitive data.
- A concept note which will also serve as IHEC's strategy for future voter registration activities is being developed in consultation with various stakeholders. The document presents various possible approaches for voter registration in Iraq, along with their Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) and a project management approach based on Prince2 principles, which IHEC management has been trained on by UNOPS. The UNOPS ICT advisor attended a workshop on lessons learnt about the EVC and future roadmap, where these options were discussed between the IHEC management team and ICT Advisor.

Challenges

Lack of adequate funding to implement support activities for the IHEC remained a major challenge in the quarter. However, the programme continued to implement its activities on a cost-share basis with the IHEC. In May, the programme submitted a request for additional funding to UNDAF Trust Fund Steering Committee. If the additional funds are provided, the project will be able to support IHEC's implementation of key activities including workshops on lessons learnt from the 2014 COR and KRG Governorate elections.

During the implementation of the 2014 Council of Representatives elections, the security situation in Anbar and Ninewa governorates was worse. This had a negative impact on electoral operations and voter turnout on the polling day. The delivery of result forms from polling centres to Branch Counting Centres and IHEC National Office in Baghdad was also delayed in the affected governorates. However, this had a minimal impact on the UN electoral support.