



United Nations Development Group

PROGRESS REPORT

Provision of Electoral Support to Observer Groups of the Iraqi Elections

Summary

Participating UN Organisation:

UNDPA-EAD/UNAMI, UNOPS

Cluster:

Cluster 11- Electoral Support

Project No. and Project Title:

G11-06 Provision of Electoral Support to Observer Groups of the Iraqi Elections

Project Location/Region/Province:

Amman, Jordan

Reporting Period:

December 2004-February 2005

Report no:

1

Counterpart organisations / implementing partners:

National Democratic Institute/Iraqi National Information Network (NDI)
Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES)
European Union

Project cost:

US\$ 4,542,300

Abbreviations and acronyms:

(UN) Electoral Assistance Division-(UN)EAD
National Democratic Institute (NDI)
Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES)
Independent Electoral Commission Iraq (IECI)

Project Duration:

2.5 months;
December 2004 – February 2005

I. Purpose

Main objectives and outcomes expected as per approved Project/Programme/project document:

In December 2004 the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (UN EAD) approved a project to facilitate International and National Electoral Observation for the Iraq elections to be held on 30 January 2005. The Electoral observers support project provided the following agreed elements:

- Facilitation funding
- Electoral observation expertise
- Electoral observation manual
- Electoral information briefing packs
- Electoral observer's website



Main objectives: To provide a range of support services, electoral expertise and assistance to electoral observation groups for the January 2005 Iraqi elections.

Outcomes:

1. Provision of Electoral Observation expertise from the UN EAD Amman office through observer facilitation, an Observer Manual, Observer Identification Equipment, Electoral Website and a Briefing Pack for the National and International Observers
2. Media monitoring in the run-up to and following actual Election Day.

Reference to how the programme/project relates to the UN Assistance Strategy to Iraq and how it aims to support international and national development goals (National Development Strategy) including the Millennium Development Goals and other goals as pertinent:

The 'Provision of Electoral Support to Observer Groups of the Iraqi Elections' project falls under the guidelines for UN involvement in Iraq. As stated in the UN Assistance Strategy: *“Recognising the presently evolving and anticipated future circumstances leading eventually to peace and stability in Iraq, the UN system is committed to supporting the effective and efficient organisation and delivery of its humanitarian, rehabilitation, and development assistance and technical cooperation as opportunities and security conditions permit. UN assistance and technical cooperation seek to encourage, strengthen and support Iraqi authorities at all levels to exercise their leadership, managerial, co-ordination and accountability roles effectively and transparently, to empower civil society in the development of participatory processes and social capital, and to promote sound economic growth including the role of the private sector.”*¹

¹ A UN Strategy for Iraq, IRFFI Meeting in Abu Dhabi, 28 February 2004, p. 14

Main international and national implementing partners involved, their specific roles and responsibilities in project implementation and their interaction with the agency:

To provide assistance to recognised observer groups, the UNEAD resolved to facilitate the provision of support through partnerships with identified institutions.

UNEAD cooperated/assisted 3 major partners of the project:

- i) National Democratic Institute/ Iraqi National Information Network (NDI)*
- ii) Friedrich Ebert Foundation(FES)*
- iii) European Union*

UN EAD has signed Partnering Agreements with **NDI** and **FES**, who subsequently channelled UN support to the observers groups accredited and registered with the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI). Once the accreditation completed, the following services funded by the project were provided to the observer groups, with the support of the two implementing partners:

1. Provision of Information, including a stand-alone website with access to regulations, codes of conduct and any other publicly available material issued by the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq
2. Provision of financial support to observer groups. These needed to be accredited and verified by the UNOPS partner institutions as credible and undertaking their task in an objective manner
3. In addition, the institutional partners assisted in the distribution of electoral observer materials through their observer networks

The **European Union** developed a training package and provided information materials, which supplemented those having been delivered within the scope of the project.

II. Resources

Total approved budget and summary of resources available to the programme/project from the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund and non-Trust Fund resources where applicable:

The total budget of the project amounts to US\$ 4,542,300, which was transferred to UNOPS account on December 23, 2004.

As of March 1, 2005, the project disbursed US\$ 2,820,404.17

III. Results

An assessment of the extent to which the programme/project component / programme /project is progressing in relation to the outcomes and outputs expected for the year:

The project met all agreed criterion and was completed within the budget and deadlines. See results per output below for more information.

Main activities undertaken and achievements/ impacts:

Facilitation Funding:

The need to ensure that there was no perceived conflict of interest in the UN providing technical and operational advice to the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI), while at the same time facilitating electoral observation, dictated that the UN should not be seen to provide assistance directly to observer groups but instead through non-partisan umbrella partners.

These partners would ensure that any assistance provided to electoral observation groups was distributed in a fair and equitable manner. Appropriate partners were identified by assessing organisations that were initiating projects and training domestic electoral observation groups.

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FEF) were both considered to be appropriate umbrella organisations. Partnering agreements were drafted and signed by both parties, allowing funding to be provided to non-partisan electoral observer groups throughout Iraq.



Both organisations provided receipts to UNOPS (the facilitating agency), confirming that the funds had been received and were used for appropriate observation programs and facilitation of observer groups. All funds were accounted for and delivery of the funds took place according to a timetable agreed with the recipient observation groups.

The European Union mission in Jordan also agreed to participate in the project by providing documentation. This included standardised observer forms, observer handbooks and web site material.

Electoral Observation expertise:

The project provided briefings on electoral matters to Iraqi domestic observation groups undertaking training in Jordan and online assistance via the website to international and domestic observer groups. This assistance was made available in both Arabic and English. The briefing and background material was also made available to the observer groups online.



Observation Manual:

The electoral observation manual drafted by the European Union was non generic and contained the most recent material provided by the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI). The Electoral observer support undertook to edit this publication to ensure that the English and Arabic versions were clear and did not contain ambiguous information. The final version was agreed and accepted by all

participating partners. Following publication of the manual, additional Regulations and procedures were provided to the Observer groups online.

Briefing packs for International Observers:

The project made available Electoral observation briefing packs for International observers. This information was also made available online for Domestic observers. The packs included:

- All relevant regulations and procedures
- Civic Education Handbooks
- Electoral Observation Handbooks
- Legal framework information
- IECI Framework information
- Electoral fact sheets
- Standardised Electoral Observation forms
- Other appropriate information and updates

Electoral Observers website:

A website was developed and made available to all IECI accredited observer groups. The website provided printable copies of all current electoral information provided by the IECI, real time media monitoring of electoral activities (within and outside Iraq), simulated animations of the voting process from the point of view of the observer and the elector. Standardised electoral observation reporting forms were posted together with IECI Regulations as they became available.

The site also allowed observer groups to coordinate their activities through the use of a monitored chat room. Electoral experts were available to provide real time explanations to questions on electoral procedures raised by the accredited electoral observers.

Premises for project offices in Jordan were selected and leased for three months. Premises were upgraded to take into account operational security considerations. Interior and exterior CCTV, electronic security, access control and staff visitor identification were put in place.

Staffing profile:



Ten full-time national staff members were employed to undertake this project:

- 1 Arabic fluent project assistant
- 1 Arabic/ English Editor
- 4 Arabic/English translators
- 4 Internet researchers

Electoral expertise was provided by the project manager and EU and FES on-call. Arabic translations of online requests were undertaken by in-house translators.

- 2 UNOPS logistical support staff

In addition, UMS Security company were hired to provide building and access security.

Results Against Output

Output 1. Provision of Electoral Observation Expertise

Electoral expertise was provided using partners and Electoral Observer support Staff.

Output 2 Observation Manual

Production of objective manuals was negotiated with partners; costs borne by partners.

Output 3 Briefing Pack for National and International Observers

Briefing materials were produced and made available through the website. Transportation difficulties prevented additional material from being forwarded to distribution points within Iraq.

Output 4 Electoral Website

The website was successfully launched and populated, including updates.

Output 5 Support to Iraqi Electoral Observation Groups

Funds have been supplied to EIN and FES for further distribution to the beneficiaries, the Iraqi Electoral Observation Groups.

Total disbursements to FES amount to US \$ 1,006,000.

Total disbursements to EIN amount to US \$ 252,000.

Output 6 Observer Facilitation

Requested material and publications were forwarded to Iraq for distribution. Video conference material was purchased and installed.

Output 7 Observer Identification Equipment

Security concerns dictated that this component was not initiated.

The preparation of electoral observers' identification equipment and its distribution to electoral organisation groups' partners of the project was therefore cancelled.

Output 8 Media Monitoring

Net media sources were used.
BBC media monitoring was contracted.

Additional Activities

Briefing of foreign mission and analogous organisations was undertaken.
Foreign staff was employed and hosted.

Implementation constraints, lessons learned from addressing these and knowledge gained from assessments, evaluations and studies that have taken place during the reporting period:

Implementation constraints:

- Unstable security conditions in Iraq, which led certain entities, parties, and individuals being reportedly very wary about publishing specific information regarding themselves, thereby making research difficult
- The communication network in Iraq, including the telephone lines, TV cables, internet hubs and repeater towers, had been damaged during the war and then targeted by insurgent activity in its aftermath
- Some areas in Iraq do not have access to the internet
- Information provided by the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI), which was taken as the official source of information regarding Political Entities, included some inconsistencies in the naming, numbering and "Regulation" application in the final documentation.
- The changing political landscape within Iraq in the weeks preceding the Elections saw reports of groups of entities announcing their withdrawal from the elections but it was not possible to verify if these were 'political' withdrawals or if the withdrawal was an action sanctioned by the IECI

Lessons learned/Recommendations

By way of conclusion to this project, the Electoral Observers Support Project engaged in an intensive in-house "Lessons Learned" exercise, to capture some of the difficulties faced in its preparation. In addition, the project personnel identified potential means of improving the implementation of such a programme of work in the future:

a) Management

- Provide a full briefing to all staff at the inception of the project on the framework and modalities of the particular 'event' being researched. If the framework or procedures are amended, a briefing on the new project conditions and structures should also be provided. It is important that the legal aspect of the 'event' in question are clearly understood by all members of the project team to quickly and more easily identify erroneous information
- Where amended or new information is provided by an official source, it must immediately replace the former documentation. The superseded documentation should also be promptly withdrawn from use so as to avoid any potential confusion

b) Staffing

- Whenever and wherever feasible, efforts should be taken to engage local personnel,

who are engaged in and/or have experience of analogous work areas in order to reduce specialised training and supervision requirements

- For longer-term projects, staff should be rotated between the various specialised project areas, so that they all become aware of the specific needs of the various project work groups. By increasing intra-project understanding in this manner, it will be possible to improve cooperation between the different project sectors and simultaneously optimise the flow of information
- Those staff members who have a lighter workload at any particular time during the project should be used to crosscheck the information gathered by those under greater time pressures and constraints

c) Research

- In projects of a longer duration, it is advised that the project researchers try to avail of as great a range of potential information sources as possible. When viable, use should be made of trusted in-country sources, including UN missions, NGOs and observer groups, which can provide new information and verify what has already been collated
- A rapid and reliable link should be established with the official provider of information, whenever this is a possibility
- Whenever possible, use should be made of the website of the official provider of information to ensure that the basic documentation is in fact the latest information available

Key partnerships and inter-agency collaboration, impact on results:

The partnerships established under the project were crucial for the successful project implementation.

Highlights and cross cutting issues pertinent to the results being reported on, e.g. gender disaggregation, policy engagement and participation of the public:

n/a

IV. Future Work Plan

Priority actions planned for the subsequent reporting period to overcome constraints, build on achievements and partnerships, and use the lessons learned during the previous period:

n/a

Indication of major adjustments in the strategies, targets or key outcomes and outputs:

n/a

Estimated Budget required (including any major funding shortfalls):

n/a

	Outputs	Available from UNOPS Finance	Contracts
1	Provision of Electoral Observation Expertise	Electoral expertise provided using partners and Electoral Observer support Staff.	None required.
2	Observation Manual	Negotiated with partners to produce objective manual costs borne by partners	Transportation costs to UAE invoiced to UNOPS.
3	Briefing Pack for National and International Observers	Briefing materials produced and made available through the website. Transportation difficulties prevented additional material being forwarded to distribution points within Iraq	None required.
4	Electoral Website	Site launched and populated	DWT Web designers. Supply of webmasters. Additional costs associated with policy adjustment
5	Support to Iraqi Electoral Observation Groups	Funds supplied to both partnership groups.	MOUs
6	Observer Facilitation	Requested material and publications forwarded to Iraq for distribution. Video conference material purchased and installed	Logistics project used to provide transportation
7	Observer Identification Equipment	Security concerns dictated that this component would not be initiated	
8	Media Monitoring	Net media sources used, BBC media monitoring contracted	BBC Monitoring contract

I.A. Activities Check-list

Activities check list		
1	Recruit, appoint, train and equip Electoral Expertise staff to be in place by 15 th December	Completed
2	Establish and set-up office in Amman	Completed

3	Establishment and maintenance of project website for both public information and secure 'password-protected' intranet site for UN EAD and project partners	Completed
4	Uploading of relevant election materials to the website	Completed
5	Set-up secure password-protected chatroom on the website for exchange of relevant up-to-date information from the field using encryption software	Completed
6	Allocated funds distributed to accredited Iraqi electoral observation groups through umbrella network organisations	Completed
7	Develop, print, pack and distribute observation manuals to in-country and out of country observer groups	Completed
8	Develop, print, pack and distribute briefing packs to national and international observers	Completed
9	Provide real time and online advice to electoral observation partners and accredited electoral observers	Completed
10	Prepare electoral observers identification equipment and distribute to electoral organisation groups partner to the project	Not undertaken
11	Undertake a media monitoring campaign leading up the election and make these results publicised	Completed