Annex A: Implementer Quarterly Report Template



UK Conflict Stability & Security Fund

Quarterly Project Progress Report from Implementer to Post

	Basic information						
Project Title:	Electoral Suppo	Electoral Support Project in Armenia-3 (ESPA-3)					
Implementing organisation/s:	UNDP						
Country/ies – region/s covered	Armenia	Armenia					
Timeframe of the Project From mm/yy to mm/yy	25 May until 31 M	larch 2022	Qu	arter number	3		
Original Total Budget for FY (£):	155,797 GBP	Original Budget for current qua (£):	rter	12,564.16 GBP As of UNORE, I GBP = 0.742 USD	Actual amount spent in current quarter (£):	12,564.16 GBP As of UNORE, I GBP = 0.742 USD	

1. Progress in Project Implementation

Context update

Provide a brief update in maximum 300 words on the general context in which the Project is being delivered, focussing on events and issues relevant to project implementation (including relevant political, economic, and social changes). Where possible, draw on evidence, including any analysis/assessments conducted by yourself or other parties. If the changes in operating context have increased risks or provided new opportunities (including that impact on gender and conflict sensitivity) the implementer should set out how they are responding to those risks/opportunities and any further mitigation or actions required.

Since 2016, Armenia has been making strides in community enlargement, aiming to merge almost 500 smaller communities into 79. As a result of amalgamation, Armenia held the first local elections to form the newly established local authorities representing the newly formed communities each year. Within the reporting period, Armenia held a series of local elections on 14 October, 17 November, and 5 December, most of which were the first elections for the enlarged communities, while lesser part were regular local elections in the communities which were enlarged before or haven't been enlarged yet.

As a result of recent amendments to the Electoral Code, Armenia applied two electoral systems for these local elections: a closed-list proportional representation system for the communities with more than 4 000 citizens and a first-past-the-post system for the rest communities. In the communities with more than 70 000 inhabitants, a single ballot paper for each political party was used, while in smaller communities, the multi-party ballot paper was used. Using different electoral systems and voting methods was challenging for the election administration management and voters' understanding of their electoral rights, requiring the Project's support on voter education.

For the first time in Armenian history, a 30-% gender quota applied for the political parties' lists at the local level, Project supported raising awareness and capacity-building efforts to implement this provision. Local elections were organized by the Central Electoral Commission and were administered by the Territorial Electoral Commissions for more than one mIn of Armenian voters. COVID-19 situation has been worsened comparatively to the parliamentary elections, and Project supported COVID-19 mitigating measures to prevent further spread of the virus.

As an outcome of the local elections, the ruling party reaffirmed its support in many communities, however, it lost important elections in the two biggest cities – Vanadzor and Gyumri.

Key achievements in this quarter

In maximum 300 words, describe key achievements in this quarter as a result of activities delivered by the Project (linking with specific Outcomes and Outputs).

With the Project's support, the CEC continued to enhance its electoral operations, including voter authentication and introducing the new modules to the electoral management system. As a result, an interactive map of the accessible polling stations published on the CEC website was introduced, providing comprehensive information on the accessibility of the polling stations for persons with different types of disabilities, contributing to the accessibility of the electoral process. Furthermore, candidates and observers management systems were introduced with Project's support, providing political parties and citizen observer organizations opportunities to submit documents online and election administration to process their requests more efficiently and transparently, eliminating the human factor and ensuring the level playing field. In addition, the project supported the enhancement of the dispute resolution system providing all electoral stakeholders with reliable, accurate, and timely information on the adjudication of their complaints. This enhanced the electoral operations' inclusion, integrity, and transparency in line with Output 1.

The Project helped the CEC in conducting a comprehensive voter education campaign specifically tailoring underrepresented groups, including women, people with disabilities, and people living in rural and remote areas ahead of the local elections. For the first time, Armenian CEC worked jointly with the civil society organization on conducting voter education campaigns in line with the best international practices. Such actions helped voters get information through different channels – media, social media, and face-to-face activities, ensuring that messages reached various target audiences considering their needs and preferred ways of getting information. This approach helped to enhance the capacity of the CEC in conducting public outreach and external communication, specifically targeting participation of women and under-represented groups in line with Output 2.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues and the number of new cases within the reporting period has increased drastically, Project's support on training TEC members and voter awareness campaign on ensuring the COVID-19 mitigating measures accompanied by providing personal protective equipment to all electoral stakeholders for three rounds of local elections, played an important role for protecting citizens' from further spread of the virus, contributing to the achievement of the Output 3".

Detailed Assessment of Progress against Outcome and Outputs during the reporting period

Please attach your "Results Framework" to your Quarterly report with sections "Achieved/Progress" updated with evidence of progress against the relevant milestones and provide an evaluative narrative on progress.

Within the reporting period, the following basket-fund activities have been implemented:

Output 1: Enhancing the inclusion, integrity, and transparency of the electoral operations, including smooth voter authentication process and learning lessons for the improvement of the electoral process.

Activity 1.1: Maintenance of Voter Authentication Equipment

The Project continued to support smooth voter authentication through the maintenance of the voter authentication devices (VADs) and their preparation for the local elections. Nine technical specialists were hired from 08 November to 29 November to check up, charge, and prepare 4505 VADs. In addition, the inventory of VAD was conducted with the VAD inventory software developed with the support of previous UN electoral assistance, revealing that 4299 are fully operational.

Activity 1.2: Upgrade of the CEC IT infrastructure

To support the CEC IT infrastructure upgrade and digitalization of the electoral operations, the Project developed the modules for 'candidates' and observers' management, election dispute resolution/case

management, interactive map of the polling stations accessibility, as well as enhanced and revamped the CEC e-Learning platform.

Candidates' management module designed and developed with Project's support was hosted on the CEC existing website. The system allows political parties and candidates to submit the registration documents online, to withdraw their candidacies, and election administration to register candidates, political parties and their alliances, to reject the candidates, and to recognize candidates, political parties, and alliances' applications as invalid.

Upon submitting the necessary documentation to the CEC, the political party/alliance will get credentials to access its account at: <u>https://e-lists.elections.am/</u>. The section "Current Elections" shows the active elections at the given polling stations for TEC users or active elections at all polling stations for CEC operators.

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Screenshots of the system – login page and current elections starting page from the administrator side

For the first time, this system was used for 17 October local elections and then for 14 November local elections in a testing mood, providing access just to the Territorial Electoral Commission (TEC) staff to enter the data on political parties lists into the system.

For 05 December local elections, the system was presented to the parties as an alternative way of submitting electoral lists, and 16 parties applied to receive an account in the system to be able to submit the electoral lists online. Out of the 132 lists submitted for 36 community elections, about 100 were submitted online by parties that received their user accounts. The rest of the lists sent by political parties to the TECs via e-mail were entered by the relevant TEC staff.

With another automation system developed by the project support, **'Observers' management module, now** CEC is able to manage the registration and accreditation processes of the observer/media organizations quickly and efficiently. The module allows the CEC to create an account for an observer or media organization and to provide them access to it to enroll representatives for corresponding elections, to generate certificates with QR code for an observer, a well as to check the validity of the certificate by scanning the QR code: https://accreditation.elections.am

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Accreditation certificate for the media organization representative or observer generated by the system

The system allows checking through the QR code the validity of the accreditation certificate eliminating the possibility to use fake certificates. The system was operating in a testing mood for the recent local elections and will be applied for the next electoral events.

To enhance the election dispute resolution process, the Project supported the design and the upgrade of the **Election Dispute Resolution module**. The module is available at <u>https://www.elections.am/CEC/Notification</u>. The original Election Dispute Resolution module was developed with previous UN support, however, it was more an internal case management system not available for the general public. The upgraded system is available to all general users who are interested in any administrative proceedings or appeals submitted to the CEC and can track their appeals in the online mood providing for transparency of complaints adjudication, building ground for electoral integrity. This is a searchable database of electoral appeals, where one can search

by the name of the appealer and the notification ID or filter the appeals by dates. One thousand six hundred seventy-four users benefited from the updated Election Dispute Resolution module.

The system is available in interactive and tabular interfaces. The interactive interface allows seeing the full information regarding the complaint and the workflow for its consideration, downloading the complaint and the decisions taken on its consideration. Such an interface will provide full and comprehensive information on the particular complaint to all users interested in its adjudication.

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The interactive interface of the Elections Dispute Resolution module

The tabular interface allows reviewing all the complaints in a brief format, filtering the complaints and searching for a needed complaint, and tracking its consideration quickly. Such format will provide a comprehensive overview of all complaints received by the election administration and will allow filtering the complaints by subjects, issues appealed, date of submission.

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The Projects cooperated with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) on developing the **interactive map of the polling station accessibility** for 1987 polling stations. The data on the accessibility was collected as part of the assessment of the accessibility of polling stations implemented by "Agate" Rights Defense Centre for Women with Disabilities NGO as part of the "Accessibility and Political Inclusion" project, which is funded by the USAID through IFES.



Screenshots from Interactive map of polling stations' accessibility

The interactive map provides voters with different types of disabilities comprehensive information on the accessibility of polling stations, including the photos of the polling stations' accessibility, in line with the recent amendments to the Electoral Code obliging the CEC to provide such information contributing to the accessibility of the electoral process.

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Additionally, the Project supported the CEC in the enhancement of the existing CEC **e-Learning platform** to make it more interactive. Since 2018, within the scope of ESPA and ESPA 2 projects (the predecessors of the current ESPA-3), the project team designed and developed the CEC e-Learning portal (<u>https://elearning.elections.am</u>) which includes various online materials for the training and continuous education of the CEC, TEC and PEC personnel. The existing courses (course for VAD operators and for PEC members) contained text, images, and some video materials, plus the navigation, revealed to be hardly understandable for some groups of users. Hence, to address the need for modernization of the platform, the ESPA-3 Project hired a company and a team of trainers/course developers to work towards remodeling the platform and existing courses, as well as to add additional ones.

The courses for VAD operators and for precinct election commissioners (PEC members) were redesigned to make them more interactive and user-friendly. The new modules include podcasts, game-like quizzes, images, and videos, changing the learning methods and keeping learners' attention to ensure the effectiveness of online education. The online training course for VAD operators will give the participants the following abilities:

- To recognize the principles of electronic voter authentication;
- To understand how the VAD works, how to set up the equipment, and how to fix the failures which may occur in the VAD functioning;
- To know the workflow for voter authentication using the VADs.



Screenshot of the online course for VAD operators

The online training course for PEC members will give the participants the following abilities:

- To recognize the international standards and best practices for conducting democratic elections;
- To understand the legal framework for conducting the parliamentary and local elections in Armenia;
- To understand the subjects of the parliamentary and local elections in Armenia: election administration, political parties, and candidates and their proxies, election observers, media.
- To know the status of the precinct electoral commissioners in parliamentary and local elections in Armenia: the procedure for nomination and registration of candidates for parliamentary and local elections in Armenia, the rights and duties of the political precinct electoral commissioners;
- To be familiar with the main stages of the electoral process: calling for elections, voters' registration, agitation, election day procedures, counting, and tabulation.

The online training course has the following structure:

Module	Topics
Module 1 International Standards and Best Practices for Conducting Democratic Elections	 International principles, standards, and best practices for conducting democratic elections
Module 2 Legal Framework for Conducting Parliamentary and Local Elections in Armenia	 Structure of the Electoral Code of Armenia Legal Framework for Conducting Parliamentary and Local Elections

Module 3 Subjects of the electoral process on parliamentary and local elections in Armenia	 Electoral systems used for parliamentary and local elections in Armenia Election Administration Political parties, candidates, and their proxies Observers Media
Module 4 Status of the Precinct Electoral Commission in Armenia in parliamentary and local elections in Armenia	 She system of electoral commissions Procedure for registering the members of Precinct Electoral Commission in Armenia Rights of the Precinct Electoral Commission in Armenia Organizing the work of Precinct Election Commission in Armenia Duties of the Precinct Electoral Commission in Armenia Procedure for dismissal of the Chairperson and Secretary of the commission
Module 5 Main stages of the electoral process on parliamentary and local elections in Armenia	 Calling for elections Voter registration: the right to vote, a compilation of voter lists Candidates' nomination and registration Rules for conducting agitation Election day procedures: opening polling stations, voting, closing polling stations Counting and tabulation of election results



Screenshots of an online course for PEC members

Additional courses for observers and political party proxies were designed and developed from scratch.

The online training course for observers will give the participants the following abilities:

- To recognize the international standards and best practices for citizen electoral observation;
- To be familiar with the Code of Conduct for citizen observation;
- To understand the legal framework for conducting the parliamentary and local elections in Armenia;
- To understand the subjects of the parliamentary and local elections in Armenia: election administration, political parties, and candidates and their proxies, election observers, media.
- To know the status of the citizen observers in Armenia: the procedure for registration of citizen observers, the rights and duties of the citizen observers;
- To be familiar with the main stages of the electoral process: calling for elections, voters' registration, nomination and registration of candidates, agitation, election day procedures, counting, and tabulation.

The online training course has the following structure:

Module	Topics
Module 1 International Standards and Best Practices for Citizen Election Observation	 International principles, standards, and best practices for conducting democratic elections International standards and best practices for conducting citizen observation
Module 2 Code of Conduct for Citizen Observation	 Why is citizen observation important? International Code of Conduct for conducting citizen observation
Module 3 Legal Framework for Conducting Parliamentary and Local Elections in Armenia	 Structure of the Electoral Code of Armenia Legal Framework for Conducting Parliamentary and Local Elections Electoral systems used for parliamentary and local elections in Armenia
Module 4 Subjects of the electoral process on parliamentary and local elections in Armenia	 Election Administration Political parties, candidates, and their proxies Observers Media
Module 5 Status of the citizen observers in Armenia	 Procedure for registering citizen observers in Armenia Right of the citizens' observers in Armenia Duties of the citizen observers in Armenia
Module 6 Main stages of the electoral process on parliamentary and local elections in Armenia	 Calling for elections Voter registration: the right to vote, a compilation of voter lists Candidates' nomination and registration Rules for conducting agitation Election day procedures: opening polling stations, voting, closing polling stations Counting and tabulation of election results
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Screenshot of the online course for observers

The online training course for political parties proxies will give the participants the following abilities:

- To recognize the international standards and best practices for conducting democratic elections;
- To understand the legal framework for conducting the parliamentary and local elections in Armenia;
- To understand the subjects of the parliamentary and local elections in Armenia: election administration, political parties, and candidates and their proxies, election observers, media.
- To know the status of the proxies in parliamentary and local elections in Armenia: the procedure for nomination and registration of candidates for parliamentary and local elections in Armenia, the rights and duties of the political proxies;
- To be familiar with the main stages of the electoral process: calling for elections, voters' registration, agitation, election day procedures, counting, and tabulation.

The online training course will have the following structure:

Module	Topics
Module 1 International Standards and Best Practices for Conducting Democratic Elections	 International principles, standards, and best practices for conducting democratic elections International principles, standards, and best practices for proxies activities
Module 2 Legal Framework for Conducting Parliamentary and Local Elections in Armenia	 Structure of the Electoral Code of Armenia Legal Framework for Conducting Parliamentary and Local Elections Electoral systems used for parliamentary and local elections in Armenia
Module 3 Subjects of the electoral process on parliamentary and local elections in Armenia	 Election Administration Political parties, candidates, and their proxies Observers Media
Module 4 Status of the proxies in Armenia in parliamentary and local elections in Armenia	 Procedure for registering proxies in Armenia Right of the proxies in Armenia Duties of the proxies in Armenia Guarantees of proxy activity in Armenia
Module 5 Main stages of the electoral process on parliamentary and local elections in Armenia	 Calling for elections Voter registration: the right to vote, a compilation of voter lists Candidates' nomination and registration Rules for conducting agitation Election day procedures: opening polling stations, voting, closing polling stations Counting and tabulation of election results
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Screenshots of the online course for political parties' proxies

Another additional course on cyber-hygiene will is currently under development and will be fully ready at the end of January 2022 within the cybersecurity activities of the Project.

Now, with the courses of the e-Learning platform, the users will have the opportunity to understand the legal framework of local and parliamentary elections in Armenia, familiarize themselves with international best practices, recognize the duties, responsibilities, and rights of proxies and observers, learn about the voter authentication process and serve as VAD operator, learn the principles of work of PEC members, as well as to understand the main rules of secure and safe online behavior for election officials.

In addition, in order to organize the proper set-up of the CEC network systems and ensure the smooth application of the new systems used in the local self-government elections, the Project engaged an ICT network and hardware specialist to check the required software packages on computers in TECs, configure the 'candidates' management system for local elections, perform blade server testing, replace the network equipment in the TECs as well as copy and back up the data from the CEC electronic systems.

Activity 1.3: Training of VAD operators

The Project continued to support the CEC in training the VAD operators to ensure smooth voter authentication through VADs. As VAD operators were recently trained ahead of the 20 June 2021 snap parliamentary elections, in anticipation of the three rounds of local elections, the Project supported the update of the manuals for the VADs operators to reflect recent amendments to the Electoral Code and printed more than 2000 copies of the manual to complete the VAD kits for the Election Day.

To support the flawless work of voter authentication operators on the Election day, the Project produced VAD manuals incorporating legal implications of voter authentication process during local elections, as well as onepage memos with instructions on authentication procedures during COVID-19 pandemic for hands-on usage of operators in polling stations on the Election day.



In addition, the Project supported the enhancement of the VAD operators online course described for Activity 1.2 "Upgrade of the CEC IT infrastructure" and the production of a memo for VAD operators on conducting voter authentication in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic described for Activity 3.1.

Key results for Outcome 1: Assistance, provided by the Project within Outcome 1, enhanced electoral operations through the introduction of specialized IT solutions for candidates, media representatives and observers management, election dispute resolution, and an interactive map of the polling station accessibility that helped the CEC to automate and manage several large-scale processes in a more optimized and resource-waving way, ensuring cost-efficiency of the electoral operations, eliminating the human factor for implementing electoral procedures and contributing to the enhancement of the inclusion, integrity, and transparency of the electoral process.

Outcome 2. Enhancing the capacity of the Central Election Commission in conducting public outreach and external communication, specifically targeting participation of women and under-represented groups

Activity 2.1: Develop and support the implementation of a national campaign on inclusiveness and women's participation & representation

The Project supported the development and assisted with the implementation of the voter education campaign on inclusiveness and women's participation & representation in light of the preparation for three rounds of local elections in Armenia, through support the CEC in developing and dissemination voter education printed and video materials, production and broadcast of the series of TV shows, conducting electoral schools for underrepresented groups and BRIDGE workshop and International Accessibility Day for persons with disabilities, supporting the CEC and grass roots organizations on conducting voter education campaigns together in line with best international practices. Such an approach allowed to cover maximum audience, to convince messages through the different channels corresponding to target audiences needs, increasing effectiveness of the campaigns.

Support the CEC in developing and dissemination voter education materials

Based on the concept of the voter education campaign for local elections designed by the participants of the BRIDGE workshops on civic and voter education conducted in August and September 2021 for the CEC and civil society representatives, the Project supported the development of two leaflets and two posters: 1) On structure and functions of the local self-government; 2) On the electoral systems for local elections and gender quota.



Leaflet on structure and functions of local-self-government



Leaflet on local elections

Sixty thousand copies of each booklet and 3000 copies of each poster were disseminated among voters. Two posters and 50 leaflets were placed at each polling station where local elections on 14 November and 5 December were conducted and disseminated by the civil society organizations engaged by the Project to work with the CEC on conducting voter awareness campaigns.



Posters and leaflets placed at the polling stations

Two hundred fifteen copies of each poster and 4150 copies of each leaflet reached the voters in Aragatpson, Armavir, Tavush, Lori, and Vaytsdzor regions through the Infotuns in the respective regions were disseminated through regional Infotuns - the Eurasia Partnership Foundation's network of youth- and civil society-centered telecommunication centers spread across Armenia that were established in 2011 within the framework of the USAID funded Alternative Resources in Media project and is ran by young community leaders and engaged a large number of active citizens empowering and supporting them in their initiatives.



Dissemination of voter education materials in Armavir region by Infotunes

Such an approach allowed to provide more than one mln Armenian voters comprehensive and reliable information regarding the role of the elected authorities and electoral system applied in their communities for local elections.

In addition, the Project supported the CEC in producing two public service announcements explaining the electoral systems for local elections and procedures for conducting local elections. The videos were produced in an authentic Armenian style as a conversation between the granddaughter and the grandfather, allowing to explain complicated processes in a simple and user-friendly manner. The public service announcements were broadcast at national TV channels covering millions of Armenian citizens and were posted on the CEC Facebook page, reaching more than 340 000 views.



Video 1: https://www.facebook.com/100064302235369/videos/399145371679297/



Video 2: https://www.facebook.com/100064302235369/videos/242816541236529/

Support CEC on production and broadcast of the series of TV shows

The Project supported the CEC in cooperating with the public broadcaster covering 99% of the territory of



Armenia on conducting the voter education campaign through the production and broadcast of five TV shows "Your Right to Vote" devoted to the specific topic of the electoral process, specifically focusing on women and people with disabilities participation in the electoral process as mainstream for each show. All 5 TV shows were aired in primetime on 1 TV channel (and additionally were repeated in other time slots) and posted on their YouTube channel, reaching different target audiences – watching TV and

using social media. According to the information provided by Public TV, the TV shows were ranked for the firstsecond place for the timeslot among all TV channels. TV shows were produced in a format of vox pop on the questions suggested by the CEC conducted by a popular showman and providing the clarification of each issue as a comment to each question discussed, a simple graphic was used to visualize the complicated information making it more accessible for different target audiences, including people with mental disabilities. The CEC Chairman and the CEC Secretary were guest speakers at the shows, explaining the most complicated issues of the electoral process.



Name	Duration	Broadcast time	Link
Voter lists	17:18	27.11 16:10, 02.12 19:30	https://youtu.be/slvMhW gK04s
Election Campaign	22:25	02.12 20:00	https://youtu.be/qGNy4l Bpe6g
Local Elections	20:00	04.12 16:10	https://youtu.be/JrUjuTe 9Sh4
Counting of votes	18:07	10.12 19:50	https://youtu.be/MVFPG H4Vcdc
Public Accountability	20:45	12.12 19:50	https://youtu.be/oQ- JGBMvIXI
Inclusiveness of Electoral Process	5:41	social media	https://youtu.be/uMk2Rg TICn4

Screenshots of the TV shows

This new format used for voter education allowed the CEC to conduct a targeted and comprehensive voter education campaign being able to explain the most complicated issues of the electoral process in a simple and user-friendly manner. The CEC appraised the new method for conducting voter education campaigns, finding it as one of the most effective.

Conducting Electoral Schools for local activists from vulnerable groups

Ahead of local elections in October-November 2021, the Project organized ten Electoral Schools in all regions of Armenia. The target audience of the Electoral Schools were people living in the rural and remote areas, national minorities, women, people with disabilities, youth. Each School was a two-day intensive and collaborative workshop, providing information on the international standards for conducting democratic elections, explicitly focusing on inclusiveness and women's participation in elections, types, and electoral systems from the international perspective, containing comprehensive information on electoral stakeholders and stages of the electoral cycle, as well as detailed information on local elections in their respective community.

The UNDP Chief Technical Advisor developed the curriculum and training materials for electoral schools, providing international best practices and the most interesting examples and ensuring the interactivity of the training methodology and on October 11-13, in collaboration with the CEC Secretary trained four national master-trainers (3 women and 1 man) who were selected through the competitive process. The national master-

trainers adjusted the training materials to the Armenian context developing part of the curriculum and training materials on local elections in Armenia.

The selection of participants was organized through the open call. The call was posted on UNDP in Armenia Facebook page and was widely spread among universities and alumni's associations, women's and people with disabilities NGOs, national minorities communities, local self-government authorities where local elections were conducted on 14 November and 5 December and were also shared among networks of relevant UNDP's projects working on local self-government and women's participation. As a result, 170 participants were selected based on their motivation for applying their knowledge from around 500 applicants applied.

Ten two-day electoral schools were held in the following localities of Armenia:

- 1. Armavir, October 31-November 1, 16 participants
- 2. Tsakhkadzor, November 5-6, 18 participants
- 3. Tsakhkadzor, November 7-8, 18 participants
- 4. Amberd hotel, November 12-13, 18 participants
- 5. Amberd hotel, November 14-15, 18 participants
- 6. Vanadzor, October 29-30, 15 participants
- 7. Vanadzor, October 31-November 1, 16 participants
- 8. Gyumri, November 5-6, 12 participants
- 9. Dilijan, November 7-8, 17 participants
- 10. Jermuk, November 12-13, 22 participants

Within Electoral Schools, the participants were trained to exercise their electoral rights, effectively contributing to the local decision-making. The training course covered all key legislation aspects establishing the procedure for conducting national and local elections and its practical usage. Particular attention was paid to how the electoral laws, rules, and procedures impact the ability of women and men, youth, national minorities, people with disabilities, other underrepresented groups to participate in elections and the political process.

The course participants became familiar with different electoral systems, election administration procedures, stakeholders of the electoral process, and their role to ensure gender equality in elections, campaign regulations, campaign finance, and effective exercise of passive and active electoral rights. Special attention was given to international standards and best international practices on electoral matters.

Through the interactive manner, the trainers focused on practical exercises and "small groups" format to make participants actively involved and analyze the problematic issues covering the electoral law, rules, and procedures impacting the ability of women and men, youth, national minorities, people with disabilities, other underrepresented groups to effectively exercise their electoral rights. Using practical exercises made the whole theoretical part of the course easily understandable and more interesting, helping participants to understand all aspects of the electoral process and to assess challenges that different groups face participating in the electoral process, providing opportunities for building effective partnerships for advocacy campaigns.

Women were well-represented as the participants of the electoral schools, constituting 67 % of all participants. In addition, some participants were persons with different types of disabilities, whom trainers provided special assistance, helping to gain knowledge at the same level as other participants and participate actively and interactively in all workshop activities. Mixing different target audiences allowed to achieve a multi-effect raising awareness on the challenges that each group may face and building understanding on the necessity to overcome them collectively and consistently.

To measure the effectiveness of the Electoral schools, participants completed pre- and post-tests before and after each School, which show an increase in 43-64 % for the participants of different Electoral Schools, proving the effectiveness of the training methodology and the quality of the developed materials. In addition, Electoral School participants also filled-out workshop evaluation forms revealing that participants were highly satisfied with the School content, organizational aspects and actively used the opportunity to share experiences with each other and to reflect on common challenges.

One of the participants has acknowledged: "First of all, the biggest plus for me was that the electoral School had a theoretical and practical part, and somehow it was experimental. We had the opportunity to implement our ideas differently, which helped us remember what we have learned. It was a discovery that an election is a humanitarian act, a unifying institution, and on that day, the isolated layers of the society feel like full members."

As a result, the training methodology helped the participants to reveal and assess different challenges of electoral processes. Methods and tools used by the trainers gave an opportunity for the participants for self-reflection on their level of participation in electoral processes. As a result of the Electoral schools, 170 regional representatives from underrepresented groups are now capacitated on the main electoral processes, electoral legislation, and international best practices and more confident and skillful to exercise their passive and active electoral rights. The participants mentioned that they gained valuable and practical knowledge, which will help them to get engaged in electoral processes in the future as voters and candidates.



Electoral Schools participants

Information about Electoral schools was posted on the UNDP FB page:

https://www.facebook.com/UNDPArmenia/posts/4607155512699015

BRIDGE workshops for the CEC and civil society/persons with disability-related NGO representatives on the accessibility of the electoral process

A two-day BRIDGE workshop, "Access and Elections" was held on November 25-26, 2021, in Yerevan. The workshop was organized jointly by the Project, the CEC, and IFES and aimed to examine international standards, barriers, solutions, and discrimination aspects for the persons with 'disabilities' participation in elections. Thirty-one participants from the civil society organizations specialized in disability issues, the CEC of Armenia, and the UNDP, participated in the workshop. Participants were trained on how to build inclusive voter education campaigns and develop advocacy strategies on inclusion.

The facilitators of the workshop applied an inclusive approach and developed special energizing exercises to engage participants with disabilities in the workshop activities. The participants highly valued this inclusive and

interactive approach, group work, and mixed group exercises. They also underlined inclusion as the most actual topic for Armenia to develop procedures and policies that will ensure full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in political life. In addition to this, participants noted that both international practice and experience of other countries bring many useful models that they can use during the whole election cycle and especially for inclusive voter education.





Bridge workshop "Access and Elections"

The BRIDGE workshop "Access and Elections" capacitated civil society activists working on the accessibility of the electoral process to empower them with the understanding of the international standards and best practices for ensuring the inclusivity of the electoral process and building partnership between the civil society activists and the CEC representatives responsible for ensuring the inclusivity of the electoral process enabling them to work together on promoting rights of people with disabilities.

Post on BRIDGE workshop "Access and Elections" on UNDP Armenia Facebook account: <u>https://www.facebook.com/UNDPArmenia/posts/4622403021174264</u>

International Day of Persons with Disabilities: Accessibility of the Electoral Process

To increase public awareness on inclusiveness and accessibility of the electoral process for persons with disabilities (PwDs), the Project, in cooperation with CEC and IFES, marked the International day for PwDs by organizing a high-level event to present the Interactive map of accessible polling stations. Representatives of

state institutions, the diplomatic community, civil society organizations, media, as well as persons with disabilities gathered together for this special event.

The event was opened by Tigran Mukuchyan, the CEC Chairman, followed by the welcome speeches of Andrea Wiktorin, EU Ambassador to Armenia, Lynne Tracy, US Ambassador to Armenia, John Gallagher, UK Ambassador to Armenia, Patrik Svensson, Ambassador of Sweden to Armenia, Fukushima Masanori, Ambassador of Japan to Armenia, George Monsanto, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Netherlands to Armenia, Jelena Milosevic, UN Resident Coordinator a.i. in Armenia, Natia Natsvlishvili, UNDP Resident Representative in Armenia, Aghasi Yesayan, IFES Officer in Charge, and Suren Maghakyan, the President of the "Full Life" NGO.

The event's participants underscored that inclusiveness of the electoral process is a crucial pillar for its democratic path and, through it, the election of the legitimate authorities representing all layers of the society. Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions and without unreasonable restrictions, to vote and to be elected at genuine elections. And this establishes an obligation for the state to create such opportunities.

The CEC presented a new tool for enhancing the accessibility of the electoral process – an interactive map of the accessible polling stations published on the CEC website, providing comprehensive information on the accessibility of the polling stations for persons with different types of disabilities.

During the event, persons with disabilities, as direct beneficiaries, international and national stakeholders had the opportunity to test the accessibility of the polling stations as voters with different types of disabilities. Additionally, a photo exhibition highlighting the accessibility of the elections was displayed at the event. Persons with disabilities highly emphasized the importance of such events for enhancement of the accessibility of elections and expressed hope that this event will significantly contribute to raising awareness on challenges they face when exercising their electoral rights.



International Day of Persons with Disabilities: Accessibility of the Electoral Process

The event was well covered by the national TV channels, including Public TV evening news: <u>https://youtu.be/PSkunMAg7r4?t=2723; https://youtu.be/uMk2RgTICn4;</u> <u>https://www.facebook.com/lurer1tv/posts/1115316575974243</u>

The event was also highlighted on social media:

osts/267910415382646
369760264
osts/278101284356593
263428608
<u>4400500817926</u>
74321565982410
<u>1251342342</u>
presscenter/pressreleases/
sib.html
110102246
3246501555573
2712461451
094696435373

Supporting the CEC in conducting public outreach campaigns in close collaboration with grassroots organizations at the local level

According to the best international practices, the CEC should work closely with the civil society organizations on voter education in order to reach the maximum effectiveness of voter education campaign, as civil society organizations have their networks on the ground and could reach a wider audience who knows and respects them allowing to convey the right messages and to convince voters to change their behavior if needed. In the past, the CEC hasn't worked with the civil society organizations considering them only in a watchdog capacity. During the BRIDGE workshop "Civic and Voter Education" in August, the CEC members and staff learned on the best international examples on the collaboration between the electoral management bodies and civil society organizations as a proven successful approach for conducting effective voter education campaign and agreed to try this approach in Armenia.

The Project announced the selection of the CSO to conduct the voter information campaign engaging grassroots organizations specifically targeting the underrepresented groups, including people living in the rural and remote areas, people with low-income, national minorities, youth, people with disabilities, and ensuring gender mainstreaming. For the first time, the CEC was a part of the selection committee, ensuring the national ownership of the process and building the ground for the effective collaboration for joint voter education efforts.

As a result, Yeghvard Youth Ecological NGO was selected to conduct a voter education campaign in the enlarged Yeghvard community. Representatives of the selected CSO were trained during the BRIDGE workshop on voter education on 31 August – 3 September 2021, building their capacity on conducting effective voter education and networking with the Central Electoral Commission.

Yeghvard Youth Ecological NGO project aimed to enhance the level of awareness of the population in Yeghvard consolidated community and neighboring communities within the frameworks of a multi-phase public awareness campaign raising their awareness of the importance of participation in the electoral process; aiming to contribute to the development of such a civic behavior in the population when participation in the elections is considered an effective tool for influencing important political decisions affecting their life.

To achieve this goal, the following important issues were addressed through project activities:

- 1. Enhancing the interest and trust of project target groups in the electoral process.
- 2. Providing them with basic civic education, developing skills and capacities promoting their civic activeness.

- 3. Familiarizing citizens with regulations under the Election Code of the Republic of Armenia, voter rights and responsibilities, exercise mechanisms of those rights with a special emphasis on the importance of women participation, as well as involvement of the vulnerable groups in the electoral process.
- 4. Instilling, through knowledge, discussions, and interactive communication models, perception of such a civic behavior in target groups, where voters' power is viewed as a potency much more powerful than any administrative or financial lever accessible to this or that political force or group.

Yeghvard Youth Ecological NGO worked closely with the CEC and the UNDP on developing the voter education materials, including training curriculum and training materials, leaflets, posters, and public service announcements, and took into account all the recommendations provided and adjusted the voter education materials accordingly. All the materials were approved by the CEC, ensuring the accuracy of the information provided and the quality of the disseminated materials.



Meeting of the Yeghvard Youth Ecological NGO with the CEC Secretary and UNDP Chief Technical Advisor

Considering positive initial cooperation between the civil society and the CEC, the latter initiated the extend of such cooperation in other communities. Within the framework of this Project, through 12 October to 05 December, Yeghvard Youth Ecological NGO conducted an inclusive voter education campaign, initially in one community (Yeghvard enlarged community and neighboring localities) then scaled up to six more (Vanadzor, Noyemberyan, Akhuryan, Jermuk, Ashtarak, Gavar). The campaign overall consisted of three aspects: production and dissemination of information materials, two-day trainings for women in the mentioned communities, and information sharing through a mobile awareness-raising bus/info bus.

> production of information materials:





Yeghvard Youth Ecological NGO also produced and disseminated two public service announcements (PSAs) aimed to inform voters on their voting rights, local elections, and women's participation in elections and motivate people to vote.

The first video is an animated PSA dedicated to the Electoral Code amendments and respective changes of voting procedures. The main message of the video is to inform voters of new procedures and explain how they are linked with the communities enlargement process.

<u>Video 1</u> has reached 48809 audiences and 18800 views on the NGO Facebook page. The second video is motivational and promotes the idea of taking civic responsibility, identifying oneself with their community. <u>Video 2</u> has reached 39819 audiences and 16100 views on the NGO Facebook page.



Two-day trainings for women in communities.

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Yeghvard Youth Ecological NGO has conducted seven two-day trainings for 282 women living in Yeghvard, Vanadzor, Noyemberyan, Akhuryan, Jermuk, Ashtarak, Gavar enlarged and adjacent communities. The first training took place in Yeghvard enlarged community on 24 and 25 October with the participation of 60 women. Based on the positive feedback of the participants, the CEC requested additional trainings to scale up similar activities in six more communities. A total of 282 women with different age groups and backgrounds participated in the trainings held in all seven enlarged communities:

	Community	Place	Date	Number of participants	Social media post
	Akhuryan	Araks hotel in Gyumri	13-14.11	37	https://bit.ly/3Ey9utz
ſ	Ashtarak	Perch Proshyan house museum	16-17.11	45	https://bit.ly/3FBweu0
ſ	Gavar	Gavar TV	20-21.11	35	https://bit.ly/3mHFipP
	Vanadzor	Innovation knowledge hub Lori	23-24.11	35	https://bit.ly/3sFzDEw

Jermuk	Grand resort Jermuk hotel	29-30.11	35	https://bit.ly/3sH96GQ
Noyemberyan	Noyemberyan high school	01-02.12	35	https://bit.ly/3pAKYnv



Two-days training for women

The training primarily covered three main topics: "Democracy and Women", "Women's civic and political participation" and "Local Elections 2021". All sessions were conducted with non-formal education methodology combined with interactive learning tools such as discussions and exchange of views.

To make the training more substantial, as well as to promote civic and political activeness among trainees, a special session presenting success stories of local women's activities/public figures was included in the Agenda. During this session, the participants had the opportunity to ask questions and receive feedback and expert advice from prominent women activists – former MPs.

The trainings were accompanied by active group discussions and group works, which helped the participants to reveal and assess different challenges women face in electoral processes, and gave an opportunity for self-reflection. Many women participating in the training share opinion that after the training, they are ready to reconsider their role in local decision-making and will examine opportunities to run for local elections.

> a mobile awareness-raising bus/info bus

Yeghvard Youth Ecological NGO has conducted face-to-face awareness rising activities based on innovative pro-active communication methods, discussions and interactive communication models via info buses moving between communities to conduct voter awareness campaigns. The aim of the activity was again to convey comprehensive information regarding the recent electoral changes and the voting procedures, on local democracy, local governance, and community enlargement process, as well as to promote participatory behavior, women and people with disabilities participation build thrust towards the electoral process.

Yeghvard Youth Ecological NGO launched so-called "Voter's Power" bus, which toured through 21 localities (Proshyan, Qasakh, Qanaqeravan, Zovuni, Aragyugh, Saralanj, Bujakan, Zoravan, Tegheniq, Qarashamb, Argel, Nor Geghi in Yeghvard enlarged community, Oshakan, Sasunik and Agarak in Ashtarak enlarged community, Darpas, Gugarq and Shahumyan in Vanadzor enlarged community, Berdavan, Koghb and Jujevan in Noyemberyan enlarged community) from November 11 to December 3. In each community/village, the "Voter's Power" bus made 30 minutes stop at the center of the village and then made 1 hour30 minutes tours with several stops through the main streets of the village. During it, the Yeghvard NGO experts approached passers-by and raised their awareness on upcoming elections, explaining the voting system and procedures, women's participation in elections, as well as answers to any inquiries and questions addressed to them. During the info bus tours, the population expressed interest and appreciation, mentioning that it made them value the significance of their voice/vote more.



Social media posts covering Yeghvard Youth Ecological NGO activities:

Yeghvard enlarged community:

https://www.facebook.com/YeghvardYouthEcologicalNGO/posts/4747707861955991

https://www.facebook.com/YeghvardYouthEcologicalNGO/posts/4741081389285305

Ashtarak enlarged community:

https://www.facebook.com/YeghvardYouthEcologicalNGO/posts/4790219004371543

Noyemberyan enlarged community:

https://www.facebook.com/YeghvardYouthEcologicalNGO/posts/4813076758752434

Considering positive experience in conducting voter education with Yeghvard Youth Ecological NGO, the CEC requested to expand the collaboration, and the Project opened another call for proposal. One of the NGOs – Armavir Development Centre (ADC), inspired by the conduct of electoral schools, suggested an interesting approach for conducting voter education campaign to foster citizens' participation in the local elections of Armavir, Ararat, Aragatsotn, and Gegharkunik regions through increasing the civic activism and involving underrepresented groups through development and dissemination of booklets and poster specifically designed for each community explaining the communities enlargement process and conducting massive shorter versions of the electoral schools in each community.

Armavir Development Centre conducted a voter awareness campaign in Armavir, Ararat, Aragatsotn, and Gegharkunik regions through:

• Publication and dissemination of voter education materials

In close cooperation with the CEC, ADC developed and published one poster and two booklets for each region, incorporating the geographical and community consolidation specifications. Considering the

number of voters in each province, 14,000 copies of booklets were produced and distributed, and 160 copies of posters were published for 4 regions.



The ADC conducted the three-day Training of Trainers for trainers from 4 regions who further conducted electoral schools in these regions. The intensive course incorporated interactive workshops and printed materials was conducted in Gyumri: <u>https://www.facebook.com/armavirdc/posts/10165605868020704</u>



Photos from ToT in Gyumri

• Electoral schools

Following the electoral School ToT, the participants from each region conducted 12 electoral schools/community meetings each in their respective regions. Seven hundred thirty-nine citizens of different age groups participated in 48 community meetings in 4 regions. The interest in the electoral schools in regions was quite high: the number of participants exceeded the initially planned target of 600 people. Citizens from rural communities were excited to learn about the enlargement process and about the changed voting specificities in their local community elections. The interactive methodology of the workshops itself, combining interactions, games, group works, and discussions also ignited genuine curiosity and interest of school participants. The participants mentioned that the electoral schools were very important in the rural areas, where the awareness level of the population is very low on both the electoral process, procedures, and their rights. In some of the schools, even secondary school pupils were involved as future voters.



On December 17, 2021, the CEC and UNDP met with the Yeghvard Youth Ecological NGO and Armavir Development Centre to discuss the key findings, challenges, and success stories of conducting a joint voter education campaign, and to provide recommendations for future campaigns. Civil society organizations mentioned initial distrust to the activists conducting info buses and starting the discussions on the electoral process with ordinary citizens expecting the talks on electoral campaigns traditionally conducted by political parties' representatives and rapid change of the attitude upon seeing the CEC logo on the voter education materials that are well-trusted and reliable sources of information. In addition, civil society organizations shared a finding that ordinary citizens living in rural areas lack opportunities to get in-depth information regarding the electoral process and recent amendments to the Electoral Code. The process of enlargement has been conducted without enough consultations, and clarifications and many people in the rural areas do not understand which communities will be enlarged, for which purpose, and why do they need to elect new local authorities. Face-to-face activities conducted - electoral schools, trainings, and info buses helped to fill this gap and allowed representatives of local communities to discuss the enlargement process and to understand its purpose and, through this, to build trust in the electoral process. In its turn, the CEC Chairperson expressed sincere appreciation to the civil society representatives on the collaboration for voter education that helped the CEC to conduct a comprehensive and effective public outreach and hope that such collaboration will continue in the future, taking into consideration findings from this campaign and building on effective and trustful partnership between the CEC and civil society organizations.



Meeting of the CEC Chairperson and Secretary, UNDP Chief Technical Advisor with civil society organizations

Key results for Outcome 2: Assistance, provided by the Project within Outcome 2, enabled the CEC to use different approaches for conducting a comprehensive public outreach campaign specifically targeting the underrepresented groups, including women, people with disabilities, youth, national minorities, people leaving in remote and rural areas, combining traditional media channels, social media, dissemination of printed materials with the face-to-face activities, corresponding to different learning methods and audience's needs. As a result, the CEC, in close collaboration with grassroots organizations and media, has conducted a comprehensive voter awareness campaign ahead of the local elections ensuring a quite high voter turnout for the local election and raising voters awareness on the new electoral procedures, including on women's participation in elections, promoting inclusivity and accessibility of the electoral process. For the first time, the CEC and civil society were working together in line with the best international approach for conducting voter education, ensuring inclusiveness and effectiveness of voter education campaigns.

Output 3. Ensuring health and safety measures during electoral operations to mitigate risks of COVID-19

Activity 3.1: Support the development and dissemination of voter information materials on ensuring health and security measures within electoral process

Within the qualitative research conducted through the focus groups and in-depth interviews among voters, election commissioners, VAD operators, political parties' proxies, and citizen observers, the assessment of the voter education materials on the COVID-19 measures has been performed. Most of the interviewed acknowledged the importance of the voter education campaign on compliance with the COVID-19 regulations and appreciated the efforts that have been made for the parliamentary elections stating that ensuring COVID-19 mitigating measures built their confidence in safe participation in the electoral process.

While overall voter education campaigns on COVID-19 were assessed positively, interviewees expressed critical points on the design of the COVID-19 poster. The Project supported the update of the COVID-19 poster for the local elections and created an additional one. One of the posters explains to the commissioners the COVID-19 procedures, and the second one explains to voters how to comply with COVID-19 measures at the polling station. Four thousand fifty copies of each poster were produced and distributed to all polling stations, where local elections were conducted on 17 October, 14 November, and 5 December 2021.



Updated and new poster on compliance with COVID-19 measures at the polling stations



Covid-19 posters placed at the polling station during 14 November 2021 local elections

In addition to that, one-page memos with instructions on authentication procedures during COVID-19 for VAD operators were printed and put in each VAD operator's kit.



COVID-19 leaflet for VAD operators on safety measures during the voter authentication

The results of the qualitative research also showed that despite the fact that election commissioners were provided training materials on compliance with COVID-19 measures, many required more training on this. To address this, the Project, in cooperation with IFES, supported the CEC in updating the Agenda and training materials for the Training of Territorial Electoral Commissions on COVID-19 mitigating measures issues and the conduct of nine trainings for the territorial electoral commissioners. 176 Territorial Election Commissioners were trained, providing further training to the precinct electoral commissioners on compliance with COVID-19 mitigating measures.



Activity 3.2: Support the procurement of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Considering that the COVID-19 situation in Armenia has been worsened ahead of the local elections compared to the parliamentary elections, the Project continued its support on ensuring the COVID-19 mitigating measures through providing PPE to all electoral stakeholders at the polling stations contributing to the perception of a safe environment where election officials, political parties proxies and observers could perform their duties and voters exercise their electoral rights without fear of being infected at the polling station. Based on the calculations provided by the CEC, the Project supported the procurement of the needed quantity of the PPE and its dissemination to the Territorial Electoral Commissions, where it was further distributed among the precinct election commissions.

Overall, the following quantities were procured and distributed (considering remaining PPE stored from the parliamentary elections):



PPE used during 14 November local elections

Key results for Outcome 3: Assistance, provided by the Project within Outcome 3, enabled the CEC to ensure compliance with COVID-19 mitigating measures at the polling stations allowing election officials, political parties proxies, and observers to perform their duties and voters to exercise their electoral rights without fear of being infected at the polling station building ground for democratic elections within COVID-19 pandemic.

Progress against Project Activities Please provide a brief comment below whether the Project is on track to complete all planned activities towards anticipated outputs. Include the details in the below table.

List activities relevant to the quarter below	Progress and modifications What activities were implemented and how did they go? Have you implemented everything as planned and if not, explain the reason for any changes and whether you propose any changes in relation to initial plan (number, duration and frequency of activities).	Progress Mark whether the activity is completed, in progress, or Not completed	Actual expenditure for each activity (matching the QFR)
Activity 1.1: Support the maintenance of Voter Authentication Equipment	Activities are implemented as planned, considering the need to support the local elections, additional voter authentication equipment inventory has been conducted, as well as the support provided for preparing the equipment for local elections	completed	1,593.36 USD
Activity 1.2: Upgrade of the CEC IT infrastructure	Activities are implemented as planned. Within the framework of the assistance provided, additional needs for the CEC IT infrastructure were identified and are being supported. The Project also supported the preparation of the CVIS system for the local elections.	completed	
Activity 1.3. Training of VAD operators	Activities are implemented as planned, considering the need to support the local elections; the training materials for VAD operators were updated to bring them into compliance with the amended Electoral Code, printed and disseminated.	completed	
Activity 1.4. Organization of a lessons-learned conference and development of a report	Completed in the previous quarter	completed	
Activity 2.1: Develop and support the implementation of a national campaign on inclusiveness and women's participation & representation	Activities were implemented as planned; considering the willingness of the CEC to expand its cooperation with the civil society, which is happening for the first time, the Project has initiated additional activities and expanded cooperation with media.	completed	14,139.87 USD
Activity 3.1: Support the development and dissemination of voter information materials on ensuring health and security measures within the electoral process	Activities were implemented as planned, considering the need to support the local elections, and taking into account the findings of the lessons learned, the approach has been adjusted through the introduction of the additional activities – training of TEC members and updating/developing additional materials on COVID-19 measures.	completed	
Activity 3.2: Support the procurement of the PPE	Activities were implemented as planned, considering the need to support the local elections, additional voter authentication equipment inventory has been conducted, as well as the support provided for preparing the equipment for local elections	completed	
Activity 4: Project Management			0.21 USD

GMS	1,199.31 USD
TOTAL	16,932.83 USD
Based on what you have achieved this quarter, does your Activ Budget/ABB and Action Plan (content, timeline etc.) need to be	
If YES, please, explain the modifications briefly here, and upda and ABB accordingly and attach to the Quarterly report. Please, attach Quarterly Finance Report (QFR) (with actual ex- updated ABB and Action Plan.	

2. Review risk

Please paste in the table below the updated risk matrix that you included in your Project Proposal Form. Quarterly update should include the review of existing risks and including any new risks which have arisen (if applicable) due to changes in the operating context (including gender and conflict sensitivity risks). Review and update (as required) the issues relevant to project delivery included in the conflict sensitivity baseline. For each risk, compare the original likelihood and impact (at the start of the Project) with the risk now. Demonstrate clearly if any risks have been closed or require modification.

Risk (link with specific Outcomes)	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation strategies What have you done to mitigate the risks in this quarter?	Post- mitigation Impact	Post- mitigation Likelihood	Date of the last review
1. The Project may overlap the activities with other electoral assistance providers	L	M	Close coordination with International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), National Democratic Institute (NDI), and International Republican Institute (IRI), among others, to avoid overlap of activities.	L	L	30.12.2021
2. Change of Electoral Code may influence the course of the Project implementation	L	L	Close monitor of the changes to adjust the course of project implementation	N/A	N/A	30.12.2021
 Political instability in the country caused by ongoing conflict and election-related events may influence the timely and efficient implementation of the Project. 	н	M	Close monitoring of the political and security situation of the country and flexible implementation plan.	М	M	30.12.2021

3. Financial management

Is your budget still appropriate? Are there any financial risks to report about? If you didn't spend what you had predicted, please provide a narrative on the reasons for this? Please also be ready to provide evidence of expenditure (receipts) to the Project Officer at the end of the quarter. If there are any reasons why this is not possible or any discrepancies to report, please do so here.

The budget of the Project in the reporting period was appropriate, and there were no financial risks revealed.

Following the no-cost extension request for 30 September – 31 December 2021, the Project fulfilled the planned activities within the initially approved outputs.

As revealed by the assessment of the cybersecurity knowledge of the election officials, and in line with the recommendations as revealed as a result of the lessons-learned exercises conducted in July 2021, a need for cybersecurity enhancement activities was identified. The Project identified that the CEC should receive comprehensive assistance based on the initial cybersecurity assessment, which will identify needs for hardware and software procurement, training of the CEC IT personnel, developing cybersecurity protocols, and cyber hygiene trainings for all electoral stakeholders, especially for election officials. Additionally, assessment of the cybersecurity knowledge of the VAD Trainers, Technical Support Specialists, and the CEC / TEC IT officials served as a basis for the development of a Cyber-hygiene training course.

Consequently, to achieve the fulfillment of the identified gaps and shortfalls, the Project developed a proposal of activities for which it applied to the FCDO for additional funding. The funding was approved with the period until 31 March 2021 and with the approved budget of 85,798 GBP. The planned activities are the following:

- 1. Cybersecurity Assessment
- 2. Cyber-hygiene Trainings
- 3. Study visit to Ukraine on Cybersecurity in Elections

4. Value for money

Please demonstrate evidence as to how your Project demonstrated value-for-money?

The strictly followed UNDP rules and regulations in pursuing good value-for-money. As revealed by the due diligence check, UNDP's principal method of ensuring value for money is the process with which it solicits offers for work, for instance, in selecting a contractor where competition is maximized, as well as an impartial and comprehensive evaluation of solicited offers is assured. Where time allowed, the Project sought the vendors through open competitions and tenders.

Additionally, the Project made use of the UNDP Long Term Agreement holders' list, selecting vendors directly from it. Long Term Agreements are signed by the UNDP CO and vendors selected on a competitive basis. Such an approach helps to procure goods and services with the competitive market price and with the high level of quality and reliability of vendors, providing UNDP the goods and services in the best possible way, valuing long-term cooperation with the UNDP.

Overall, using the UNDP procurement system for purchasing goods and services, including personal protective equipment, allowed to procure the latter through a highly competitive process with the best price providing budget-saving and the possibility to support the local elections within the same budget. Engaging international experts supporting the project implementation through roster ensured competitive hiring of the world-best professionals within the established rate that they are exclusively providing to the UNDP.

What activities have you carried out to **monitor the projects** (meetings and telephone calls with beneficiaries, experts and stakeholders, site visits, literature reviews, collection of beneficiary feedback, etc.), and how you ensured **gender** and **conflict-sensitivity** of your M&E?

The Project closely follows the M&E plan of the Prodoc. As in the previous quarter, the project regularly met with stakeholders to discuss the project progress. During the reporting period, the Project's relevant experts and staff regularly met with the ICT department to discuss, keep focus and collect feedback on ICT solutions developed by the Project. Generally, any activity carried out by the Project was implemented in close coordination with relevant Commissioners of the CEC responsible for a certain area.

Furthermore, to measure the effectiveness and impact of its activities, at the end of any learning event, such as workshops and trainings, the Project collected feedback from the participants: during the reporting period, the Project carried out nine trainings for TEC members, 10 Electoral schools and a BRIDGE training on "Access and Elections". At the end of each training, the participants filled out evaluation forms where they provided feedback on the content of training and recommendations for further improvement. In addition to that, the participants of each of 10 Electoral Schools filled out also pre- and post-tests where the change in the knowledge was revealed. As shown by the test result, 43% - 64% knowledge increase rate was observed amount the participants. The improved compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures during the local elections on 17 October, 14 November, and 05 December and the behavior of PEC members proved the effectiveness of the COVID-19 session designed by the Project for nine trainings of TEC members.

The project team monitored all the events organized by the civil society partners ensuring the quality of the activities delivered and engaged the interns who are communicating with events participants to collect their feedback and further application the knowledge gained within the capacity-building activities.

In terms of gender sensitivity, the Project paid close attention to gender equality within all of its activities to ensure equal participation and opportunities for all. All the materials, courses, solutions, activities, and interventions were designed and carried out with consideration of gender sensitivity. To include the gender aspect in its monitoring actions, the Project collected gender data from all its events, analyzed, and disaggregated it.

In addition to that, the Project closely monitored the political and security developments in the country to minimize the risks of negative consequences of the Project's activities, including the selection of vendors, timelines of the goods/service delivery, and the calendar of the events.

What results and lessons have your M&E activities revealed this quarter, and what have you done as a result of each lesson?

Describe **lessons learned** and planned efforts to analyse these lessons. In addition, explain how you are planning to take these lessons into consideration and to **adapt the Project** as necessary.

Present each lesson in bullet point format into the table below and reference relevant sources of evidence of learning, where possible.

Using the reviewed and updated conflict sensitivity issues baseline as a reference, consider **unintended** *harm* as well, and if identified in this quarter, explain your efforts averting or minimising the harm. Same for the unintended benefits – explain what you did to adapt the Project in order to maximise these benefits.

The collaboration between the CEC and civil society partners proved to be an effective approach for conducting the voter education campaign allowing to expand the coverage of the beneficiaries by face-to-face activities to conduct in-depth discussions of the issues and providing opportunities for changing mindsets and behavior patterns convincing voters on the importance of political participation and promoting the inclusivity of the electoral process.

The Project regularly collected feedback from project activities' beneficiaries to reflect their considerations and incorporate them into the course of its implementation. During the Electoral Schools operations, the

Project revealed the following lessons learned (based on the evaluation sheets filled out by the participants):

- The Agenda was a bit more intensive for the audience who wasn't much familiar with elections. Hence, it is recommended to redesign some materials to make them easier for participants to understand.
- The training module includes various exercises/games, which require time to fully engage participants. Therefore, it is recommended that the optimal number of participants is 12-15 maximum so that the participants can have more productive group works, discussions, and exercises outcomes.
- There was a huge interest from future voters (aged 15-17) to participate in the electoral schools. As the curriculum is developed for adults and could be complicated for the school students, such participants were not invited to participate in the Electoral School. Considering their strong interest in the topic, the Project will consider piloting Electoral schools for 15-17 years old youth with a more targeted module.

Continuing its efforts towards the realization of recommendations revealed from the lessons learned exercises in July 2021, during this quarter, the Project formulated and submitted a proposal to the FCDO for addressing Cybersecurity challenges for the CEC. The proposal was approved, and the Project will utilize the generous contribution of 85,798 GBP from FCDO to conduct cybersecurity assessment, introduce cyber-hygiene trainings for CEC, and organize a study visit for CEC staff to Ukraine to exchange views and practices on cybersecurity in elections during January – March 2021.

Before embarking on any activity, the Project carefully studied the political, security, social and economic situation to minimize any risks that could possibly jeopardize the project implementation and its time-sensitive activities. For example, while procuring the PPE for local elections, the Project discovered that the land transportation checkpoints are overloaded because of the weather conditions - this could result in the delay of the delivery, which in its turn would endanger the proper compliance of the COVID-19 prevention measures on the local election days. Therefore, to avoid unintended harm, the Project opted for a vendor that could produce the necessary quantity of PPE in-house and provide them in time, thus making the local elections fully compliant with COVID-19 prevention measures.

If there have been any changes to the Project (*outputs, activities, budgets, duration, etc*) (or to the wider context) in the reporting period? Is the Project still viable?

In the reporting period, the Project fulfilled all the outputs and activities within the planned budget and duration as approved by a no-cost extension agreement.

However, as revealed by the lessons-learned activities conducted in July 2021, an additional need for assistance is required to support one of the most important areas for the CEC – cybersecurity. Therefore, to address the identified challenges, the Project applied for additional funding to FCDO. The MoU for 85,798 GBP was signed on 22 November 2021 for the activities below:

1. Cybersecurity Assessment

Pre-term parliamentary elections on June 20, 2021, when the CEC website was under massive cyberattack, revealed the need for the comprehensive cybersecurity assessment aiming to identify cybersecurity vulnerabilities focusing on emerging cybersecurity crisis in the pre-election period during voter registration and dealing with cybersecurity threats and attacks on election day. Cybersecurity assessment of the CEC will evaluate the status of hardware, software, network, and the knowledge of personal working with CEC information systems and infrastructure.

2. Cyber-hygiene Training

UNDP will develop the training curriculum and conduct cyber hygiene awareness training to representatives of the CEC, TECs, and PECs on the best cyber hygiene practices, including how to prevent phishing, security basics on the Internet, and guiding cybersecurity principles that can keep data safe and well-protected. Cyber hygiene training will help election officials think proactively about their security to resist cyber threats and online security issues.

3. Study visit to Ukraine on Cybersecurity in Elections

The study visit to Ukraine aims to study experiences of the Ukrainian CEC, which is frequently used as the playground for hackers. Within the visit, representatives of the Central Electoral Commission of Armenia will meet with representatives of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine and other relevant officials. The study visit will allow participants to get first-hand information from experts and officials who have faced significant cyberattacks, to learn from their experience and strategies, and to discuss with peers the approaches that could be successful in terms of mitigation of cyber threats and addressing cyber-attacks.

The Project will last till 31 March 2022.

6. Gender

Please explain how project activities ensured gender equality during this quarter and/or did not reinforce existing gender inequalities (including a snapshot on gender disaggregated data of project beneficiaries at activity/Output level), and your assessment of positive progress towards equality.

As in the previous quarter, during the reporting period as well, the Project mainstreamed gender equality into all its activities. The collection and disaggregation of gender data from its events helped the Project to monitor and, where necessary improve its strategy on ensuring more inclusive and equally- accessible interventions and technical assistance.

During the voter education campaigns conducted within the reporting period, the Project paid special focus to women. Within ten Electoral Schools conducted by the Project, 114 out of 170 participants were women, constituting 67 % of the total number of participants:



The activities implemented by the subgrantee organization, Yeghvard Youth NGO, were primarily focused on women living in rural areas: 282 women living in Yeghvard, Vanadzor, Noyemberyan, Akhuryan, Jermuk, Ashtarak, Gavar enlarged and adjacent communities participated in the trainings where they learned on their electoral rights, gained knowledge on different means of active citizenship, on ways to become more politically active and influence the governance of their local communities. As a result, these women were capacitated to become active citizens of their respective communities.

Women's participation was in the focus of another subgrantee organization - Armavir Development Centre NGO. Women were well-represented at the electoral schools, 586 out of 739 participants were women, constituting almost 80 % of the total number of participants.



The constant monitoring, collection, and visualization of gender data help Project to always keep its focus on gender equality and to channel more efforts where necessary.

According to the UNDP "Women in Politics" project's "Public Perceptions of and Policy Gaps regarding Women's Leadership and Participation in Decision-Making in the context of Local Self-Government Reforms" 2021 survey (yet unpublished), the responses to "In what positions the respondents would like to see women were:

Member of local Council of Elders' is 77 percent, Community Head- 63 percent, Prime Minister – 42 percent, Minister - 62 percent, and Deputy Minister 70 percent.

UNDP qualitative research conducted in the form of in-depth interviews and focus groups with political parties' representatives, election officials, citizen observers, and voters after the 20 June 2021 snap parliamentary elections shows that most of the interviewed target group representatives noted that women's participation as voters was high in the parliamentary elections of 20 June 2021. The majority of informants have generally rated the level of women's involvement in political life low in terms of women's running for top governmental positions. The respondents who shared this position note that women's low level of involvement in political life is conditioned by socio-cultural factors such as (1) the stereotypes and clichés about women's lack of leadership qualities and their role is limited to family, (2) the negative attitude towards politics, (3) women's skepticism towards their own capacities and knowledge, (4) the physical impossibility for women to manage both with public roles and the household. On the other side, a minority group among the respondents noted that at the moment, women's participation in the political life of Armenia is on a medium level and is gradually increasing, and the appearance of a female leader among the candidates is considered a vivid example of an increasing women's involvement in the political life of the country.

Within the current Project, UNDP strengthened the capacity of the CEC and civil society on conducting effective public outreach, specifically tailoring underrepresented groups through conducting BRIDGE trainings sharing the best international practices and experience in conducting civic and voter education and supporting the CEC and civil society to work together to conduct voter education. For the first time, the CEC and civil society are working together in line with the best international approach for conducting voter education, specifically tailoring women and people with disabilities.

Overall, Armenia has made progress in putting in place a legislative framework addressing women's political participation, and it is generally conducive to addressing women's historic marginalization in politics and public life. The results of the analysis of the elected Members of the National Assembly shows that the number of women elected is 34,58 %, showing the increase from the 2018 parliamentary election from 24.24 %, constituting more than 10 %, and women are getting at least 30 percent of representation in all communities, in some even higher (Gyumri – 39 percent), evidently proving the effectiveness of applying gender quota for increasing the women's participation in politics and showing the impact of the previous assistance provided.

However, the problem with women's leadership persists, the number of women in leadership roles has decreased, and many political parties in Armenia still fail to prioritize gender equality in their internal policies or platforms, the promotion of women in their governing boards, and rarely have gender policies.

Since the recent NK conflict, the political culture has "toughened and harshened" to become "more masculine" making it harder for women to be active and to be heard. There is an urge for "strong speech" and for decisions to be made without much consultation. Often, in public discourse, security is being put forward as irreconcilable with democracy, representing a psychological change and making it more challenging to protect democratic gains and empowering women's political and electoral participation. Continuing support in this area should remain one of the priorities for electoral assistance programming.

Please provide update on how Project included other groups (e.g. elderly, disabled, youth) i.e. how did they project deliver inclusively?

To increase the accessibility of the electoral process, the Project carried out several activities.

- Interactive map of the accessible/partly accessible polling stations: in cooperation with IFES on developing the interactive map of the accessible/partly accessible polling stations, the Project finalized the entry of the available data (accessibility features and photos) on 1987 polling stations. With this tool, the voters will now be able to examine the accessibility features of polling stations on the CEC website ahead of each election.
- BRIDGE workshop "Access and Elections": a two-day workshop on the accessibility of the electoral process was held on November 25-26, 2021, in Yerevan. Thirty-one participants from the civil society organizations specialized in disability issues participated in the workshop. As a result of the training, the participants were capacitated to build inclusive voter education campaigns and develop advocacy strategies on inclusion. The workshop was organized jointly by the Project, the CEC, and IFES and aimed to examine international standards, barriers, solutions, and discrimination aspects for the persons with disabilities participation in elections.
- International Day of PwDs: within the efforts to increase public awareness on the accessibility of the electoral process, the Project, in cooperation with CEC and IFES, marked the International day for PwDs by organizing a high-level event during which the Interactive map of accessible polling stations was presented to the public for the first time. Representatives of state institutions, the diplomatic community, civil society organizations, media, as well as persons with disabilities gathered together for this special event.

At the same time, 10 Electoral Schools focused on the inclusion of the underrepresented groups, such as again PwDs and people living in far and rural communities.

7. Sustainability

Provide any update (positive or negative progress) relevant to the Project's sustainability (as articulated in the project proposal). In the last quarter did the key stakeholders (including government) change their level of support or engagement? If so, explain how, and why (has it been due to the actions under your Project or due to external reasons)?

The Project continued to keep the focus on ensuring sustainability and national ownership of all the interventions and products it creates. For this purpose, the project staff keeps the CEC relevant staff engaged in all the knowledge materials it produces. As a result, some activities, such as VAD operators'

training and VAD preparation in the warehouse, require less and less advisory intervention from the project side.

All the ICT solutions are developed in daily close collaboration with the CEC ICT department. The source codes and databases are all transferred to the CEC. Such tools will have a long-standing effect allowing the CEC to digitalize electoral operations, decreasing the costs for managing elections as a result of eliminating the human factor for processing the requests of the electoral stakeholders for candidates, observers, and media representatives registration, contributing to the transparency of the electoral operations and ensuring the level playing field through automatization of some of the processes that will be carried on electronically and thus impartially.

Within the design and development of the e-Learning platform, it is also planned to conduct training for the CEC staff to capacitate them for future independent usage and operation of the platform. As the world is going towards digitalization in all spheres, the CEC will use the ICT solutions produced with the project support far beyond the project implementation period, keeping pace with the time and allowing millions of Armenian to benefit from their use.

The partnership built between the CEC and the civil society organizations proved to be an effective approach for conducting voter education campaigns and increasing its effectiveness. The CEC accepted a new practice of working with civil society organizations, which could be expanded on other areas.

8. Visibility and communications plan

Provide short summary and assessment of the visibility of your activities against the communication plan (including whether you have highlighted the UK support for the Project); if you have chosen not to make activities visible, please explain why.

The use of the visibility materials with the UK logo on them was priorly discussed and approved by the Embassy's relevant officials. The Project put its logo string and disclaimer with all the donor logos and the UK among them on all the materials it produced. In addition, the banner featuring the logo string is present at all the public events that Project holds.

Add any (web-)links to online (or other) reports referencing your Project and provide further evidence of positive or negative feedback and coverage (including any social media, analytical data, newspaper clips, quotes from relevant stakeholders about the Project and its benefits etc.)

- 1. Social media coverage of women trainings conducted by the subgrantee organization, Yeghvard Youth NGO:
 - **Training in Akhuryan** on 13-14.11: <u>https://bit.ly/3Ey9utz</u>
 - > Training in Ashtarak on 16-17.11: https://bit.ly/3FBweu0
 - Training in Gavar on 20-21.11: <u>https://bit.ly/3mHFipP</u>
 - > Training in Vanadzor on 23-24.11: https://bit.ly/3sFzDEw
 - Training in Jermuk on 29-30.11: https://bit.ly/3sH96GQ
 - Training in Novemberyan on 01-02.12: https://bit.ly/3pAKYnv
- 2. Social media coverage on Infobus tours conducted by the subgrantee organization, Yeghvard Youth NGO:

> Yeghvard enlarged community:

https://www.facebook.com/YeghvardYouthEcologicalNGO/posts/4747707861955991 https://www.facebook.com/YeghvardYouthEcologicalNGO/posts/4741081389285305

- > Ashtarak enlarged community:
- https://www.facebook.com/YeghvardYouthEcologicalNGO/posts/4790219004371543

> Noyemberyan enlarged community:

https://www.facebook.com/YeghvardYouthEcologicalNGO/posts/4813076758752434

3. FB post on BRIDGE workshop on "Access and Elections" on UNDP Armenia account:

https://www.facebook.com/UNDPArmenia/posts/4622403021174264 4. FB post on TOT for Electoral Schools conducted by subgrantee organization, ADC: https://www.facebook.com/armavirdc/posts/10165605868020704 5. FB post on Electoral Schools conducted by the Project: https://www.facebook.com/UNDPArmenia/posts/4607155512699015 6. Voter education videos on local elections: Video 1: <u>https://www.facebook.com/10006430223</u>5369/videos/399145371679297/ Video 2: <u>https://www.facebook.com/100064302235369/videos/242816541236529/</u> 7. Series of TV shows "Your right to vote": Your right to vote – Voter lists: <u>https://youtu.be/slvMhWgK04s</u> Your right to vote – Electoral Campaign: https://youtu.be/gGNy4IBpe6g Your right to vote – LSG elections: <u>https://youtu.be/JrUjuTe9Sh4</u> Your right to vote – Counting of votes: <u>https://youtu.be/MVFPGH4Vcdc</u> Your right to vote – Public Accountability: <u>https://youtu.be/oQ-JGBMvIXI</u> 8. Videos and FB posts covering the event dedicated to the International Day of PwDs: Video 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGZHwYLWYbg Video 2: <u>https://youtu.be/uMk2RgTICn4</u> > FB post: https://www.facebook.com/UNDPArmenia/photos/pcb.4574321565982410/4574274179320482 Please explain or list any follow up actions you would like the British Embassy to consider taking forward which could improve the quality of service as a donor and/or project delivery N/A

Signature	Docu§igned by:
Name	Yuliya Shypilova
Position	UNDP Chief Technical Advisor on Electoral Support
Date	10.01.2021

Now submit this form to your contact at the British Embassy to complete the final section:

Project Officer Comments	
Having read this report are you satisfied this is a fair and	
accurate description of progress to date?	
Do you believe the Project is still viable?	
Please provide some feedback on visibility of activities	
conducted during reporting period	
Comment on risks, including what steps you have taken	
to manage current or new risks; and whether you have	
escalated risks to the Programme manager	
Is the plan for the next quarter realistic and appropriate?	
*If the answer to any of these questions is No please	
provide details:	

Name of the Project Officer	
Signature	
Position	
Post	
Date	