



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Local Project Appraisal Committee Meeting
Project “Enhancing democracy in Moldova through inclusive and transparent elections”
Minutes

Venue: Central Electoral Commission, Conference Room, 3rd floor, Chisinau

Date: Wednesday, 31 May 2017, 14:00

14.00 – 14.10 – Introduction and opening remarks:

Mrs. Alina Russu, Chairwoman of the Central Electoral Commission

Mr. Stefan Liller, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Moldova

14.10 – 14.40 – Presentation of the Project Strategy “Enhancing democracy in Moldova through inclusive and transparent elections”

Mrs. Tanja Hollstein, UNDP Electoral Specialist

Presentation of the Project management arrangements

Mrs. Alla Skvortova, UNDP Programme Specialist, Effective Governance Cluster Lead

14.40 – 15.25 – Discussion and recommendations

15.25 – 15.30 – Closing remarks

Participants:

1. Mrs. Alina Russu, Chairwoman of the Central Electoral Commission
2. Mr. Stefan Liller, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Moldova
3. Mr. Roman Purici, Project Management Specialist, USAID Moldova
4. Mr. Pavel Cabacenco, Center for Continuous Electoral Training
5. Mr. Oleg Rotaru, a.i. Director, Agency of Public Services
6. Mrs. Tatiana Negruță, Head of IT Department, Civil Status Service
7. Mr. Sergiu Răilean, General Director, State Enterprise “Registru”
8. Mrs. Angela Matcov, General Director, State Enterprise “Cadastru”
9. Mr. Eugeniu Ursu, Executive Director, E-Government Center
10. Mr. Constantin Bragoi, Director of the Center for Legal Information, Ministry of Justice
11. Mr. Ivan Comur, Chairman of the Gagauz Electoral Commission
12. Mr. Pavel Postică, Program Director, Promo-LEX Association
13. Mrs. Valentina Bodrug-Lungu, Chairwoman, “Gender Centru” NGO
14. Mr. Andrei Brighidin, Director for Development, Monitoring and Evaluation, East Europe Foundation
15. Mr. Andrei Rusanovschi, Deputy Director, National Democratic Institute (NDI Moldova)
16. Mr. Alexandru Balmoș, Head of IT Department, Central Electoral Commission
17. Mrs. Rodica Sârbu, Head of Communication Department, Central Electoral Commission
18. Mr. Evghenii Goloșceapov, Program Analyst, Justice and Human Rights, UNDP Moldova
19. Mrs. Victoria Ignat, Component Manager, Women in Politics Programme
20. Mrs. Tanja Hollstein, Electoral Specialist, UNDP Moldova
21. Mrs. Eva Bounegru, Senior Project Officer, UNDP Moldova
22. Mrs. Diana Zaharia, Senior Project Officer, UNDP Moldova

1. Opening of the meeting

Mrs. Alina Russu, Chairwoman of the Central Electoral Commission

Mrs. Alina Russu opened the meeting by welcoming the participants to the Local Project Appraisal Committee Meeting (LPAC meeting) of the Project “Enhancing democracy in Moldova through inclusive and transparent elections”. Mrs. Russu thanked the representatives of the beneficiary institutions and the development partners for all the support provided during the Democracy Programme/Electoral Component implementation and their openness and high interest in continuing the strengthening of the electoral processes for more transparent and inclusive elections.

Mrs. Russu highlighted the importance, relevance and promptness of all components of the proposed Project, emphasizing that it is imperative to continue the cooperation among institutions to consolidate the obtained results, solve the remaining issues and overcome future challenges.

Mr. Stefan Liller, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Moldova

Mr. Liller opened his statement by greeting the audience and thanked the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) for the excellent cooperation, strong ownership and leadership throughout the previous Programme implementation. Mr. Liller stressed that it is a great pleasure for UNDP to see such a wide number of Project beneficiary institutions at one table being willing to cooperate and work together to achieve great results.

Mr. Liller continued by mentioning that the presented Project constitutes a new phase of UNDP's electoral assistance and supports the new United Nations – Republic of Moldova Development Assistance Framework for 2018 – 2022 (UNDAF) that has been recently signed by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova and the UN Resident Representative. The UNDAF sets ambitious goals of strengthening the democratic governance in the country, including in the area of election systems and processes. Mr. Liller noted that, in the last years, UNDP supported the improvement of the electoral process standing firmly at the side of the Central Electoral Commission accommodating emerging needs, but at the same time, achieving the planned targets. The solid results achieved in this context were not only noted by ODIHR in their Report following the 2016 Presidential Elections, but also by citizens who felt and saw the improvements in the electoral process in the last elections.

To ensure finality and sustainability of the previous interventions, further work on certain still existing gaps is required to elevate Moldova's electoral process to the next level. The new Project was developed upon the request and in cooperation with the Central Electoral Commission and partners dealing with the population registration issues with the aim to address and close remaining gaps.

Mr. Liller thanked the USAID and the Ministry for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands that committed to finance the Project, though not all required funds are mobilised. Nevertheless, the UNDP is open for new development partners to join the initiative. Once approved at LPAC's meeting, the final Project Document will be signed and the Project will commence its work on the 1st of July, 2017.

Mr. Liller offered the floor to Mrs Tanja Hollstein, UNDP Electoral Specialist who presented the Project.

2. Presentation of the Project Strategy “Enhancing democracy in Moldova through inclusive and transparent elections”

Mrs. Tanja Hollstein presented the Project strategy, main objectives and key challenges, outputs and intervention points and risks. The overall goal of the Project is to achieve an enhanced transparency and inclusiveness of the electoral process in Moldova. Building on the accomplishments of the previous intervention, the new Project will address the root causes of the remaining key challenges hampering the further development and credibility of the Moldovan electoral process – an objective in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 16.

In comparison with the previous UNDP Programme, the current Project will no longer be focused on capacity building of the institutions, but will go beyond this level of intervention – by working on improving the technical developments, legal reform and increasing the political participation of citizens by setting up and implementing the voter information and civic education programs.

The overall budget of the Project consists of USD 3,972,039, out of which half of the amount is ensured by the USAID and Ministry for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands (USD 1,970,793). During

the Project planning, the government agencies expressed their willingness to cost-share for specific activities, thus, their contribution will be of high importance for an effective Project implementation.

(A detailed PPT presentation available upon request)

3. Presentation of the Project management arrangements

Mrs. Alla Skvortova, UNDP Programme Specialist/Effective Governance Cluster Lead presented the Project Management arrangements. Thus, the Project will be implemented as support to the National Implementation Modality (Support to NIM), including use of Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) for activities to be conducted by Center for Continuous Electoral Training. The Central Electoral Commission will be the Implementing Agency and the senior beneficiary, as the Project Steering Committee – the decision-making body. The UNDP will offer the programmatic, quality assurance, procurement, financial management and administrative support. The composition of the Steering Committee was proposed for approval:

- Central Electoral Commission
- Center for Continuous Electoral Training (CCET)
- Agency of Public Services
- E-Government Center
- Project Donors' representatives
- Coalition of Free and Fair Elections
- Promo-LEX Association
- UNDP Moldova

Other partners and stakeholders will be invited to participate in the Steering Committee Meetings as observers.

Mrs. Skvortova mentioned other Project financial, audit, anti-corruption, monitoring and evaluation arrangements, as follows:

- The Project Team will be located in the CEC premises offered as in-kind contribution;
- The Project Team will monitor progress towards the Project's objectives and report to UNDP and to Donors;
- Beneficiary institutions will appoint focal points for day to day interaction with the Project Team;
- A Working Group with the participation of partner institutions will be established for the effective coordination of the Project's activities;
- Decisions on the implementation of particular activities will be made by the Project Manager in consultation with the CEC and other partners, as relevant;
- The Project is subject to standard UNDP audit arrangements (internal and external audits);
- Financial management of the Project will be conducted under UNDP Financial Regulation and Rules (FRR) that ensure sufficient levels of controls and separation of duties;
- UNDP applies the UN Convention against Corruption and strictly follows the UNDP Policy of Fraud and Other Corrupt Practices;
- The Mid-year and annual narrative and financial progress reports will be developed and presented during the Steering Committee Meetings: inputs, results, challenges and required changes;
- Quality assessment in line with UNDP criteria and methods will be regularly performed;
- The Project Risk log will be regularly updated;
- Project Lesson-learned log will be regularly updated.

4. Discussions and recommendations

Mr. Liller opened the floor for comments, questions and answers.

a) How relevant and feasible are the Project objectives in relation to national priorities and strategies, aspirations and needs of the beneficiary institutions and the UNDP mission to promote sustainable human development (United National Partnership Framework and UNDP Country Programme Document)?

All participants stated that the Project is very important and in line with the national priorities and current CEC and other beneficiary institutions' needs, specifically those related to improving the quality of data imperative for transparent and inclusive elections. The Project is directly contributing to UNDP CPD Outcome 1- Increased transparency, accountability and efficiency of central and local public authorities.

b) Does the chosen Project implementation strategy represent the most promising approach to address the development problem?

The proposed Project implementation strategy and mechanism have been stated as being adequate and observing all principles for a successful implementation of the proposed intervention.

Mrs. Valentina Bodrug – Lungu, Chairwoman, “Gender Centru” NGO, thanked for being invited at the meeting and appreciated the results on gender equality and gender mainstreaming achieved by the CEC and CCET with the previous UNDP support. Mrs. Bodrug – Lungu expressed her expectations that the proposed Project activities will address the key gender issues, including the quota culture. Thus, Mrs. Bodrug – Lungu proposed the “Gender Centru” to be included as member of the Project Steering Committee and expressed the willingness of being actively involved during the preparation and implementation of gender related activities of the Project.

Mrs. Russu mentioned the strong position of the CEC in mainstreaming and promoting the gender equality, that resulted in delivering regional best practices on presenting sex-disaggregated data on candidates, elected officials, electoral administrators and voters, as well as mainstreaming gender in all CEC strategic documents. The CEC, jointly with the CCET, will focus the efforts during the proposed Project to conduct targeted outreach campaigns for women and young voters to enhance the transparency and inclusiveness of the electoral process.

Mr. Andrei Brighidin, Director for Development, Monitoring and Evaluation, East Europe Foundation appreciated the focus of the current Project that resonates with the East Europe Foundation (EEF) activities to promote more inclusive electoral processes for different groups of voters (people with disabilities, minority groups). Mr. Brighidin highlighted the willingness to continue the cooperation with the CEC in these directions, as well the support to the Coalition of Free and Fair Elections, and congratulated the CEC and UNDP for such important Project objectives and goals.

c) Have all the relevant stakeholders are committed to implementation of the Project?

The Project has been designed through a continuous collaboration between CEC, CCET, Civil Status Service, SE “Cadastru”, E-Government Center and UNDP from the early stages of Project development, being consulted on the Project’s strategy, approaches and activities.

Mrs. Tatiana Negruță, Head of IT Department of the Civil Status Service (CSS), on behalf of the CSS thanked UNDP for the previous significant support and expressed the strong commitment of the institution in implementing the planned Project activities.

Mrs. Angela Matcov, General Director, State Enterprise “Cadastru” thanked the UNDP for previous support in the Address Register development and mentioned that the restructuring of the public agencies, namely into one institution – Agency for Public Services, will not affect the proposed Project activities. Moreover, it could even speed up the process of implementing activities related to the Civil Status Service and SE “Cadastru”.

Mr. Sergiu Răilean, General Director, State Enterprise “Registru” stressed out the good previous cooperation with the CEC during elections. On behalf of the SE “Registru”, Mr. Răilean ensured full support for the Project implementation and active involvement at all Project stages. Mr. Răilean, also asked how the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be envisaged in the current Project, especially on activities related to data obtained by the Civil Status Service from diplomatic missions and consulates.

Mrs. Russu replied that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could be included as observer during the Steering Committee meetings.

Mr. Ivan Comur, Chairman of the Gagauz Electoral Commission appreciated previous cooperation and support offered by the CEC, CCET and UNDP in conducting the local elections (2015 Bashkan Elections

and 2016 People's Assembly Elections) and expressed his hope to continue the efforts in addressing the existing challenges, such as Register of Voters and improvement of the Gagauz electoral processes.

d) Accountability, Cost efficiency (value for money), Durability and Sustainability, Potential Risks and Monitoring and Evaluation. Does the chosen Project implementation strategy represent the most promising approach to address the development problem?

Mr. Pavel Postică, Program Director of the Promo-LEX Association, mentioned the possible challenges that may occur during the Project implementation and mainly those related to the personal data protection. Considering new IT systems and data exchange will imply the work with personal data, Mr. Postică suggested the National Center for Personal Data Protection to be invited as member or observer to the Steering Committee Meeting, as relevant.

Mr. Pavel Cabacenco, Director of the Center for Continuous Electoral Training (CCET) emphasized the important experience gained last years by implementing activities through HACT modality, that ensured transparency and accountability of services based on national legislation and requirements. Considering the lessons learned, CCET will continue providing best services in a timely and efficient manner. Concerning the Political Party Finance Module, if the Project will identify additional financial resources to cover the Output 3, then the CCET will develop training modules, curriculum, guides and materials.

e) Other questions and issues raised

Mr. Evghenii Golosceapov, Program Analyst, Justice and Human Rights, UNDP Moldova highlighted the relevance of the Project in terms of involving different groups of citizens, youth, women and Diaspora. On environmental and social impact of the Project, Mr. Golosceapov suggested two proposals:

- 1) additional provisions to be added into the Project Document related to the contribution of the Project to the implementation of the right to vote for minority, vulnerable and marginalised groups, especially for ethno-linguistic minorities and persons with different types of disabilities by ensuring the accessibility of all the elaborated systems, products, materials and information for people belonging to these groups.
- 2) Sustainable collection of publicly accessible data disaggregated on the number of grounds (e.g., age, sex, language, region of voting) to be an integral part of the Project implementation, especially through the I-Voting IT module. The data will provide quantitative information for the analysis and taking evidence-informed decisions for further realization of the right to vote, but also in such spheres as migration and Diaspora.

Mrs. Skvortova proposed the Local Project Appraisal Committee to approve the Project Proposal. No objections were registered.

Mr. Russu thanked all participants of the meeting, UNDP and Project Team and declared the meeting closed.

Decisions:

The following decisions were adopted by the participants:

1. Approve the Project Document, the Work Plan and the Multi-year Budget of the Project;
2. Approve the Project management arrangements;
3. Establish the Working Group of partner institutions for effective coordination of the Project's activities;
4. Approve the Project Steering Committee institutional members as follows:
 - Central Electoral Commission
 - Project Donors' representatives
 - UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
 - Center for Continuous Electoral Training
 - Agency of Public Services
 - E-Government Center
 - Coalition of Free and Fair Elections
 - Promo-LEX Association
 - Gender – Centru NGO

and observers:

- Civil Status Service
- SE "Cadastru"
- SE "Registru"
- National Center for Data Protection
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs representative
- Ministry of Justice representative
- Council of Europe
- Other stakeholders and partners

UNDP Moldova will approach the heads of the above organizations with the formal request to delegate representatives as members/observers of the Project Steering Committee.

Approved by:

Deputy Resident Representative UNDP Moldova
Mr. Stefan Liller



Chairwoman of the Central Electoral Commission
Mrs. Alina Russu

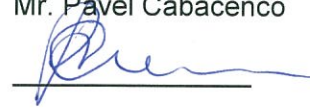


Signed by:

Project Management Specialist, USAID Moldova
Mr. Roman Purici



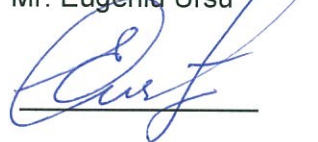
Director of the Center for Continuous Electoral
Training
Mr. Pavel Cabacenco



a.i. Director, Agency of Public Services
Mr. Oleg Rotaru



Director, E-Government Center
Mr. Eugeniu Ursu



Director, SE "Cadastru"
Mrs. Angela Matcov



Head of IT Department, Civil Status Service
Mrs. Tatiana Negruță



Director, SE "Registru"
Mr. Sergiu Răilean



Program Director, Promo-LEX Association
Mr. Pavel Postică



Chairperson, "Gender Centru" NGO
Mrs. Valențina Bodrug-Lungu

