



Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands (SECSIP)



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PROGRESS REPORT

Period: January 1st to June 30th 2017

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project ID: 00085818

Duration: January 2012 – 30 June 2017

UNDP Strategic Plan Component: Democratic Governance

Total Budget: USD \$ 8.4m

Work Plan Period January- 30 June 2017 (revised): USD \$938,856.25

Implementing Partner: Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC)

Chief Technical Advisor: Olga Rábade

DONOR PARTNERS



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

A/CEO	Acting Chief Electoral Officer
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CAT	O/SIEC Communication and Awareness Team
CD	Capacity Development
CDA	Capacity Development Assessment
CEO	Chief Electoral Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
EMB	Electoral Management Body
EU	European Union
ICTSU	Information and Communication Technology Support Unit
LPAC	Local Project Appraisal Committee
MASI	Media Association of Solomon Islands
MERHD	Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MPGIS	Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening
MWYCFA	Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NVAS	National Voter Awareness Strategy
ORPP	Office of the Registrar of the Political Parties
O/SIEC	Office of the Solomon Islands Election Commission
PPC	Political Parties Commission
SECSIP	Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands
SIEC	Solomon Islands Election Commission
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
ToT	Training of Trainers
TSI	Transparency Solomon Islands
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 30 June 2017, SECSIP concluded its initial phase of implementation which had commenced in 2013. A major focus during this final semester was to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the project implementation to achieve outputs and outcomes assessing its weaknesses and strengths with a view to inform the design of the project successive phase and its project formulation. An independent evaluation was conducted which provided valuable information for the formulation of the new project document providing findings and recommendations to enhance the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of a future electoral assistance programme in the Solomon Islands.

Throughout this transitional period UNDP SECSIP engaged national stakeholders and international partners in collective and consultative exercises including round tables and bilateral discussions for the formulation of a new project document. The process culminated in the presentation and general endorsement of the new project document during the meeting session of the Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) held on 22 June 2017. SECSIP wants to express its appreciation to the active support and partnership of the national authorities and our excellent donor partners and looks forward to successfully meeting the challenges of the new phase.

Regarding the provision of electoral technical assistance during this final period, the project supported a number of actions addressing the areas of voter registration, institutional strengthening and electoral related awareness.

With respect to the registration of electors, SECSIP at the request of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC), procured the services of ESI¹, the vendor previously engaged by the Government authorities which provided the biometric system introduced in 2014. The aim of this action was to contribute to the building of the skills for the use of the existing software through the provision of trainings and manuals not previously facilitated by the vendor. The project, however, identified the need to have an independent assessment conducted by an expert on biometric electoral registration to provide a detailed technical analysis of the existing system and present possible alternatives and recommendations for its efficient operation and its future sustainability. During this exercise, particular attention was provided to the urgent need to enhance the data protection and data recovery measures of the existing system shared during the LPAC presentation.

An important contribution towards capacity building and management of the electoral cycle was the launching of the new BRIDGE operations module in collaboration with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). All SIEC senior staff benefited from the one week training facilitated by a UNDP Electoral Operations Expert who had developed the

¹ Electoral Service International Incorporated.

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module and two AEC experts in electoral training. Other significant input in this area was the assessment conducted by SECSIP Senior Electoral Adviser Carlos Valenzuela identifying weaknesses in electoral procedures with respect to secrecy of the vote and making recommendations for the strengthening of electoral procedures.

In line with the 2016-2019 SIEC Voter Awareness Strategy, SECSIP supported the Memorandum of Understanding establishing the collaboration between the Media Association of Solomon Islands and SIEC. As a result of this strategic partnership an initial round of Electoral Media Trainings was conducted during the months of April and May which was much appreciated amongst media professionals. The success of this initiative has established the foundation to expand future collaboration through formative and awareness raising actions.

Part A –Narrative Report

1. Purpose and project outputs.

SECSIP commenced its operations in 2013 and it was initially expected to close in December 2015. A United Nations Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) was deployed in September 2015 in response to the request from the national authorities of Solomon Islands to the United Nations on the continuity of UN electoral technical assistance beyond December 2015. The NAM recommended continuing providing electoral assistance until the next legislative elections² and post electoral activities. Accordingly, SECSIP initial duration was extended for a transitional period up to June 2017 enabling for the drafting and endorsement by all stakeholders of a new Project submitted to the Local Pre-Appraisal Committee (LPAC) on 22 June.

UNDP electoral assistance is provided throughout the entire electoral cycle (pre-election; elections/polling and post-election) and designed to support SIEC in its core mandate, conducting inclusive and credible electoral processes. SECSIP, funded by the European Union and the Government of Australia focuses on the five components: capacity development, voter registration, electoral reform, civic engagement/voter awareness and women’s political participation/gender mainstreaming³.

With a view to support SIEC and contribute to the implementation of its mandate, SECSIP has developed synergies and strategic partnerships with a range of national stakeholders including government and civil society entities to contribute to an enabling environment for credible and inclusive elections. The overarching objective is to strengthen the link between the electoral cycle and other key governance processes and institutions, and contribute to social cohesion and the development of a pluralistic society.

2. Resources

Financial Resources Programme Budget. The total committed funds since the commencement of the project are USD 8.404.313 (EU USD\$ 4,391,468; Australia USD \$ 3,512,845; UNDP USD \$ 500,000). Out of the committed funds, below table shows yearly expenditure during the period 2013- 30 June 2017 in USD \$.

Donor	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (Jan-June)	Total
EU	-	896,418	292,060	645,506	363,822.18	2,197,806.18
DFAT	745,942.88	896,418.17	623,147	632,197	519,215.85	3,416,920.90

² Provided that the Parliament serves its full term in application of the relevant constitutional provisions, the election could be held within the period commencing from 19 December 2018 until 17 April 2019

³ A revision of the project document was conducted in 2015 resulting in the addition of a new dedicated project output (5) focusing on female leadership and political participation

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UNDP	195,482.69	109,589	105,065	89,864	55,818.22	555,818.91
Total	941,425.57	1,902,425	1,020,272	1,367,567	938,856.25	6,170,545.99

The Balance of Funds not yet utilized is USD \$ 686,435 ⁴

SECSIP Phase I- Expenditure Summary

Details of liquidity (2013 - 30 June 2017)	Amount (USD \$)
Total Income (Disbursed funds)	6,856,981
Total Expenditure	6,170,546
Balance of Funds	686,435
Total Utilization Rate	90%

Project Human Resources

Project Staff name	Post	Designation Start Date-End date
Rudolf Elbling	CTA	(AUT) 4/9/2013 - 3/9/2015
Olga Rabade	CTA	(SPA) 5/10/2015
Marianne Oru	Project Assistant	(SI) 1/7/2013 -5/2/2016
Lovelyn Tora	Project Assistant	(SI) 14/3/2016-13/3/2017
Hyemin Yeo	Project Assistant	(SI) 01/05/2017
Deborah Kole	Gender Officer	(SI) 27/4/2016
John Raymond	Driver/Logistics	(SI) 1/11/2013
Sotere Tuaveku	Procurement officer	(SI) 1/2/2014 -24/09/2014
Crystal Saelea	Procurement officer	(SI) 1/12/2014

⁴EU committed funds not yet disbursed are USD \$ 2,443,640. A no-cost extension for the utilization of these funds has been agreed up to 27 December 2018

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**Consultants
(temporary)**

Carlos Valenzuela	UN Elections Expert	Consultant (COL)	24 working days (18 in-country and 6 home based)
Chahine Hamila	BVR Software Expert	(TUN/CAN)	45 working days (25 in-country and 20 home based)
Ben McNair	Civic, Voter Education & Media Adviser	(AUS)	14 working days (8 in-country and 6 home based)
George Dennis	NOVUS Ltd. Managing Director		January 2017 and November 2017
Adriana Estrada	Support to project administration	(GUA)	27/03/2017-30/06/2017
Lily Chekana	National Assistant	Media (SI)	130 working days (September 2016- November 2017)
Anne-Sofie Gerhard	Electoral Operations		25/05/2017-3/06/2017
Ednal Palmer	Media Expert		100 working days (July to November 2017)

3. Project Management

Project Board

A meeting of SECSIP Project Board was held on 13 February 2017. In attendance were the Chair of the Board and Chairman of SIEC, Hon. Ajilon Nasiu, members PS Home Affairs, George Palua and UNDP Country Manager Azusa Kubota. Also in attendance were Fiona Hoggart, Counsellor (Political) of the Australian High Commission, Alexandra Little, Second Secretary of the Australian High Commission, Pavlos Evangelidis, Head of Development of the EU Delegation, Brenda Wara, Programme Officer, EU Delegation, Alphonsus Pero, Acting Chief of the Office of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission, Stephen Morris (ESSP), Brian Lenga (UNDP Governance) and SECSIP project staff.

SECSIP CTA presented an overview of results & expenditure and the projected figures for 2017. The CTA clarified to the Board that the draft projected budget under discussion was for the full year and it had taken into consideration the expected finalization of an Addendum for a no cost extension with the EU expected to be disbursed in the coming months and that this would require further adjustment upon approval of the new project document. The Board endorsed the plan presented including the proposal of the Australian representatives to establish a grant agreement with Transparency Solomon Islands (TSI) with a view to enable this organization to continue its work in the area of good governance, democracy and rule of law. Other issues discussed included the support of SECSIP towards the provincial tour consultations. The Board also endorsed the proposal to recruit a Deputy Project Manager.

New Project Document revision and Project Evaluation.

On 8 May, UNDP Regional Electoral Adviser, Simon Finley, conducted a one-week mission focusing on consultations on the draft Project Document Revision for SECSIP Phase II. This involved a number of bilateral sessions with stakeholders and concluded with a round-table discussion held on 11 May. During this session, SECSIP Phase II was presented to national authorities and representatives of the international community. Participants included PS MOHA, PS Foreign Affairs, PMO Adviser, MDPAC representatives and international partners including EU Head of Development Pavlos Evangelidis, Australian High Commission Political Counsellor Fiona Hoggart and Second Secretary Alexandra Little, the New Zealand Ambassador and a representative from Japan.

The draft project document for the successive phase presented a two-fold approach identifying a range of priority activities focused on the preparation of the upcoming electoral events as well as others to continue building on electoral capacities and skills with a long-term focus, in line with the electoral cycle approach and with the recommendations of the UN Needs Assessment Mission. Accordingly, during the new phase, the Project is expected to continue providing electoral technical assistance⁵ with

⁵ Voter registration, electoral management and capacities, voter awareness, support to the reform initiatives, and women's leadership and political participation

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a special focus to prioritize the enhancement of SIEC capacities on voter registration, voter awareness and electoral operations for the next general election.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee was held on 24 May to provide a summary of the draft Project Document and to distribute it to the national and international partners. SECSIP CTA also presented indicative figures of the draft's projected budget.

Copies of the draft project document were distributed amongst the attendants, which included the Acting Chief Electoral Officer Alphonsus Pero, the Head of Operations Fredrick Bosoboe, the Australian High Commission Second Secretary Alexandra Little, Brenda Joy Wara from the EU Delegation Office, ESSP Advisers as well as SECSIP staff.

Project Evaluation

SECSIP engaged an independent evaluator, Sue Nelson, to conduct a project evaluation of SECSIP phase I. The evaluator conducted an in-depth analysis of project documentation including previous assessments, project minutes, reports, ToRs and deliverables and outputs. She held meetings with SIEC Commissioners, OSIEC staff, Chair of the PPC, members of the Political Parties, representatives from CSOs, international partners and current and former SECSIP project staff. The evaluation report was delivered on 15 June. The findings and recommendations of the report were instrumental for the formulation of the new project document and led to a management response on the actions to be adopted by UNDP and SECSIP to address weaknesses and recommendations.

Project Appraisal Committee (Pre-PAC)

A meeting was conducted on 9 June. The objective of this meeting was to analyze the draft project document in line with UNDP quality assurance assessment criteria amongst various UNDP specialists. The resulting revised draft project document will be subsequently presented to the Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) for its endorsement.

Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC)

The LPAC meeting session was held on 22 June 2017 to seek feedback as to whether the formulation of SECSIP II Project Document responded to national needs, and to receive endorsement from all LPAC members, donors and stakeholders. SECSIP CTA presented the new project document stressing four areas of priority: the sustainability of the Biometric Voter Registry (BVR); continued efforts toward voter awareness actions and civic education; support towards the increased participation and involvement of people with disabilities, and increased political participation of women. Additionally, in detailed information, including challenges and opportunities, was presented in relation to each project output, SECSIP's exit strategy and budget gap. Contributions from BVR Senior Expert including findings on the weaknesses of the existing system and

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recommendations to improve its operation as well as from UNDP Electoral Regional Adviser (via Skype) were made throughout the presentation. Time for an open discussion was allocated at the end of the presentation where SECSIP CTA addressed committee members' questions prior to proceeding to the final endorsement. The expected duration of SECSIP phase II is from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2020. Attendees included representatives from Parliament, the office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, ministries (MOHA, MOFT, MDPAC), SECSIP donor representatives (EU, Australian High Commission), civil society (TSI, ECL), members of SIEC and O/SIEC, UNDP Country Manager and the Team Leader for Effective Governance, UN Women, ESSP advisers, and SECSIP staff.

5. Results

Output 1: Sustainable voter registration system created to strengthen the inclusiveness and integrity of the electoral cycle

Technical skills enhanced

At the request of Office of Solomon Islands Electoral Commission, SECSIP engaged Dries De Vleeschauwer from the Electoral Service International Incorporated⁶ (ESI). The expected output of this action was to contribute to the transfer of technical know-how for the use of the existing BVR system. The technical aspects identified by OSIEC Head of Operations included BVR database administration and maintenance, import and export of data, biometric matching and adjudication as well as delivery of manuals not previously provided by the vendor. These training modules were considered particularly important in preparation for the update of the voter's roll expected to commence in the second half of the year⁷ (provincial elections of Choiseul and Western Province).

Assessment of BVR system

SECSIP engaged expert on BVR Systems Chahine Hamila to conduct an assessment of the BVR system including its priority needs, and to develop an Options Paper proposing recommendations to enable SIEC to gain autonomy for the efficient management of the BVR database and to strengthen the sustainability of the BVR. During the first in-country mission carried out during the month of April, the expert gathered initial feedback from stakeholders (Permanent Secretary of MOHA, MPGIS, ICTSU, civil registry unit, donors and civil society) and identified possible scenarios of collaboration.

A second in-country mission was carried out in June to finalize the information gathering process and an in-depth technical assessment of the existent database. As a result of the technical analysis, the expert highlighted the urgent need to take action to protect

⁶ SECSIP issued a contract to ESI in November 2016, following upon their services provided as software and hardware developers of the BVR system.

⁷ Despite provincial elections are not under SIEC's mandate, the Electoral Commission collaborates with the MPGIS for the registration of electors.

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the existing database and to establish risk mitigation measures and a data recovery strategy. Additionally, the paper proposed possible courses of action for a more efficient management of the BVR system as well as to address its long term sustainability expected to enable SIEC to gain autonomy to manage this system.

A presentation on the findings and recommendations was held during the Local Project Appraisal meeting held on 22 June 2017. Additionally, the Office of the Prime minister took the initiative of calling for a round table discussion with senior government authorities and key stakeholders who agreed on the presentation of a cabinet paper to inform on the BVR options and to establish a Task Force on electoral related issues.

Progress made

- Enhanced technical skills on BVR database needed to carry out functions for the update of the electoral roll.
- Identification of strengths and weaknesses of the existing BVR system and recommendations for a more efficient and sustainable system.

Follow-up actions

- Endorsement and implementation of the recommendations for the strengthening of the BVR system
- Assessment of the status of the BVR equipment
- Training of field registration officials
- Support voter registration update in Choiseul and Western Province

OUTPUT 2: More efficient and effective administrative procedures designed and implemented for the Solomon Islands Election Commission to fulfill its mandate

2.1 Enhanced capacity of the SIEC to manage an electoral cycle.

As a follow up action in response to the lack of confidence on the secrecy of the vote identified in public surveys and reflected by the media, SECSIP engaged Senior Elections Adviser, Carlos Valenzuela to conduct an assessment of SIEC procedures to safeguard the principle of the secrecy of the vote. The Senior Adviser conducted an in-depth study of the measures and procedures set by the Electoral Commission and produced a paper assessing their strengths and weaknesses and providing recommendations in line with international best practices. The paper exposes possible mechanisms and recommendations to further guarantee the secrecy of the vote and to strengthen the overall confidence of the citizenship in the electoral process. The proposed measures include: the removal of the serial number from the ballot paper; counting at polling centres mixing ballots in batches from various polling stations; and measures to enhance the autonomy of people living with disabilities through increased precautions to maintain the secrecy of their votes (i.e. tactile ballot papers for the visually impaired). The findings and recommendations of the assessment were presented at a debriefing session held on 6 April at the UNDP Country Office, attended by the Australian High Commission Political Counsellor and Second Secretary, UNDP Country Manager, and SECSIP CTA. Similarly, a second session was conducted on 7 April at the EU Delegation

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Office to debrief the European Union Head of Development and the EU Programme Manager

Formative actions for SECSIP staff

OSIEC IT Senior Officer participated in the ICPS (International Centre for Parliamentary Studies) Development and Technology course held in March in the UK. Capacity building in this area plays a key role in the progression of SIEC's mandate enabling SIEC IT Senior officer to gain knowledge on the key principles of technology and development and best practices to improve technology uptake and responsible innovation.

Strengthening of electoral operations skills

Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE), launched a new operations module in Honiara during the last week of May. The author of the new module, Anne-Sofie Gerhard was one of the facilitators together with 2 trainers from the Australian Electoral Commission and one from Samoa Electoral Office. The course was participated by all 7 SIEC senior officials as well as by 17 officers from other electoral management bodies in the Pacific region. SIEC acting Chief Electoral Officer and the Head of Operations, as well with SECSIP international development partners considered this as an excellent opportunity to build the capacities of SIEC officials towards the upcoming electoral events as all SIEC senior staff members were to benefit from this formative action.

2.2 Improved Infrastructure for more efficient electoral management

Support to infrastructure.

Improvement towards a more efficient infrastructure included contribution to increase storage space and enhance logistics and accessibility at SIEC premises by the acquisition of 2 containers to store non-sensitive materials. Additional infrastructure work for the upgrading of the electrical system resulted in the enhanced performance and safety of heavy-duty equipment at SIEC HQ.

Progress made

- Identification of measures and procedures to enhance the secrecy of the vote
- Enhanced knowledge of best practices with respect to an enhanced use of technology / innovation towards development
- Operations planning of electoral events and strategic preparation improved
- Increased storage capacity at SIEC premises
- Safer use of heavy equipment contributing to its improved life cycle

Follow up actions

- Review of training manuals to design a foundation course on electoral administration with a view to broaden the pool of potential staff (including women & youth) with the appropriate skills to be engaged for the next general election

OUTPUT 3: National authorities and local networks have better capacity to train and educate the population on voter awareness and civic engagement

3.1 Strategic ability of the SIEC to conduct and coordinate a Public Awareness campaign enhanced

Identification of areas for voter awareness activities

In February 2017, SECSIP Voter Awareness Adviser Ben McNair was engaged in a short-term contract to identify voter awareness actions and provide recommendations for the development and implementation of the 2017 SIEC Voter Awareness and Media activities. The adviser’s familiarity with SIEC Media team and SIEC Voter Awareness and Media strategy contributed to the formulation of a proposed plan of activities to strengthen voter engagement and participation.

Redevelopment of SIEC’s website

SECSIP engaged NOVUS LTD to conduct a comprehensive review of SIEC website and provide and implement recommendations to rebuild this site. This was done with a view to address the frequent technical difficulties including accessibility issues, ensuring its periodical updating and enabling it to serve as a tool to enhance voter awareness and institutional visibility.

Media Election Training

The Solomon Islands Electoral Commission and the Media Association of Solomon Islands (MASI), supported by SECSIP, designed and implemented a series of trainings for media professionals on topics and aspects paramount to the election process. This initiative was envisaged as an open collaboration partnership to ensure a free and fair flow of information on election related activities. The Media training initiative intended to provide the essential tools to equip journalist and media professionals with the knowledge and skills required to perform their role contributing to a peaceful, transparent and credible election process

SECSIP National Media Consultant, Ednal Palmer worked with SIEC Senior Media Officer in the design of the 8 week training operational plan which commenced in April holding sessions every Saturday until the end of May.

The turnover to these trainings exceeded the initial estimates of the National Media consultant, Ednal Palmer (see table 1).

Table 1.

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Attendance (number of people)	35	46	42	44	45	42	42	45

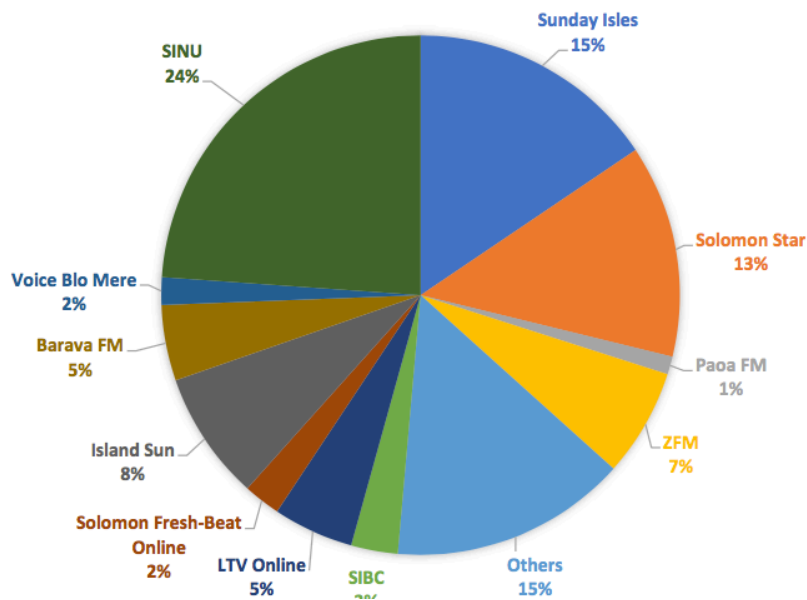
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It is estimated that the training was participated by 76%⁸ of all working journalists (see charts 1 and 2) out of a total of 53 working journalists deemed to be serving in media organizations throughout the Solomon Islands during the relevant period.

The trainings addressed topics such as the political parties in the Solomon Islands, media covering on Parliament, and the electoral legal reform (for a full detailed table of contents see annex I on page 24).

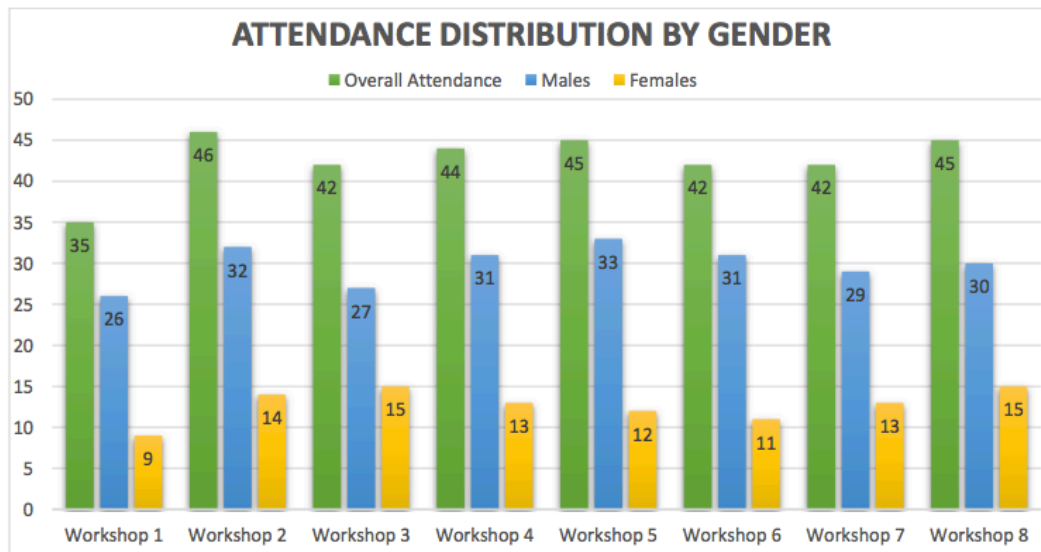
As a follow up action, Ednal Palmer submitted a proposal to conduct during the second semester of the year a one week training workshop in Auki, Malaita Province, and Gizo in the Western Province.

Chart 1. *Attendance by media groups, including the Solomon Islands National University (SINU)*



⁸ Percentage obtained from an initial baseline information-gathering exercise by facilitator, Ednal Palmer, in preparation for the Media and Elections training. The consultant compiled a census of journalists and free-lancers by contacting all the media organisations in the country, including newspapers, radio stations and television.

Chart 2. Attendance distribution by gender.



2017 Media and Election training participants at Mendana Hotel, Honiara

3.2 Increased Voter Education Activities in Partnership with Civil Society

Activities by SECSIP's partners

During the first quarter of 2017 a number of voter awareness activities were implemented by SECSIP civil society partner organisations through the small-grants initiative, including the following:

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- Tefila Marketing and Enterprises Development conducted a two day workshop in wards 7, 8, and 9 of North Malaita constituency on the 29th and 30th of March 2017. The topics addressed included democracy and governance, voters' registration, the election process, election penalties, polling day, the role of Parliament and of Members of Parliament and the formation of the Government. Participation in this workshop totaled 11 women and 15 men including church and community leaders, community chiefs, youths, school teachers and local business representatives. Seven additional public voters' awareness programs and three school civic education sessions were conducted in April 2017 at Foondo, Kwainakui, Kwaiana, Musukui, Foloji, Silolo, and Taba'a/Loina communities in Malaita. The Schools visited included Bitaama CHS, Anuke & Arnon Atomea, and CHS.
- From the 9th to the 27th of January 2017, Hearts of Hope conducted an activity to raise voter awareness of community members in Arabala, Afetafa, Onea, Namorako and California communities (Malaita Province). The focus of this activity was the citizens' right to contribute and participate in the electoral process as voters. A second awareness activity was conducted at 5 additional communities, namely Faua'ala, Akoako, AKwaimela, Faugwari and Maoro, from the 6th to the 24th of February 2017 on the same topic. Hearts of Hope reported that a total of 400 community members in Malaita, including female and male adults and youths, benefitted from this activity.
- In May, SIACLC conducted 2 trainings at Tarekumbo CLC, one of which was a Training of Trainers (ToT) activity to strengthen voter awareness at the community level. Participants of the ToT included 8 teachers (5 female and 3 male); participants of the awareness training on the voting process and the role of MPs totaled 52 students and 4 teachers from Pirakamae High School in Choiseul Province.
- Destiny Glocal conducted two voter awareness activities (March and May) on the electoral process, the importance of voting, and the role of Parliament and its members. The first one was conducted at two schools in Savo Island (Pokilo and Monago communities) with a total of 87 participants (teachers and students, including 33 women), and the second activity happened in Honiara (Destiny, Veraboli, and Navola) with a total of 110 participants (including 46 women).

Monitoring exercise with partner CSOs

As part of the small grants initiative put forward in 2016, SECSIP organised and conducted a monitoring exercise with partner Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) leading civic and voter education activities. The monitoring exercise intended to monitor whether the implementation of activities had been conducted in accordance with the approved plans and to assess the impact of these activities at grass-root level.

In April, a monitoring exercise, involving Destiny Glocal and Hearts of Hope, was conducted by SIEC Senior Media Officer and SECSIP Voter Awareness Consultant. Five communities, namely Afetata, Namorako, California, Onea, Arabala, on Malaita Province

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were visited during this monitoring exercise involving Hearts of Hope. A total of 15 community members, including chiefs, church leaders, and youths were identified from each community and participated in individual interviews. These interviews sought feedback on appropriateness of awareness activities and materials, including combined use of graphic illustrations and audio to facilitate message conveyance. Feedback gathered highlighted that the information was clear, and the use of visual material facilitated the understanding of the message in particular in the cases of illiterate people and people living with disabilities.

During a second monitoring exercise involving Destiny Global, 2 communities, namely Pokilo and Monago on Savo Island were visited. A similar methodology was utilized, with 15 community members participating in individual interviews.

One of the activities conducted by Destiny Global was a ToT targeting previously identified individuals; as such, the interviews for the monitoring exercise were addressed specifically to ToT participants. Interviewees highlighted that the content of the training and awareness session by Destiny Global was useful to the community and is expected to enable newly trained community members to increase voter awareness in their respective communities.

New grants

Two grant agreements have been established with the Media Association of the Solomon Islands (MASI) and Transparency Solomon Islands (TSI). These new partnerships are considered strategic alliances for the development and enhancement of civic and voter awareness in line with SECSIP new project document for phase II.

Progress made

- Institutional communication improved through the redeveloped website
- Establishment of key alliances with media professionals through the partnership SIEC/MASI
- Enhanced knowledge and skills of media professionals to cover electoral related topics
- Assessment on the impact of civil society partners through an M&E exercise
- Expansion of SIEC outreach through the establishment of two additional key alliances (MASI & TSI)

Follow-up actions

- Training of SIEC staff on website basic features and functions.
- Expansion of media trainings to the provinces building on the success of initial round of media trainings

OUTPUT 4: Electoral and legal reform supported to contribute to a stronger electoral commission and representative democracy

Political Parties Foundation Training

Completion of a foundation skills programme by international governance consultancy firm, Deveaux. Nine (9) out of the thirteen (13) registered political parties (See annex 2 in page 25) benefited from the final module on provincial branch capacity issues, Training of Trainers & bi-lateral tailored discussions on mobilisation of resources,

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membership development, sustainability, party identity and outreach. Participants included limited female representation during trainings.

Provincial Consultations. On 13 February, The Electoral Reform Task Force (ERTF) resumed its plan of provincial consultations conducting six (6) provincial consultations (see table 2) to gather feedback from the citizenship on issues included in the proposed amendments of the electoral act and political parties legislation including presenting options for a new election system.

The final consultation with Honiara City Council had a turnout of 80 participants, with an average female participation between 10% and 20%. Some of the areas discussed during the provincial consultations included issues in connection the operational capacity of the electoral authorities, the updating the electoral rolls, the access to electoral rolls for candidates and political parties, the campaign period, the electoral expenses and the review of election offences.

On the second day of each workshop, a mock election was conducted introducing the Limited Preferential Voting (LPV) system. The mock election was intended to increase participants' understanding of the LPV system, particularly with respect to the counting process to elect Members of Parliament.

Feedback from the consultation tour was gathered across all 9 provinces of the Solomon Islands and was utilized by the Electoral Reform Task Force to develop the 2nd White Paper on the electoral reform debated in Parliament in May 2017.

Table 2. *Provincial consultations carried out from February to May 2017*

Province	Date
Central	13 and 14 February
Isabel	23 and 24 March
Makira	11 and 12 April
Temotu	26 and 27 April
Renbel (Rennell and Bellona)	4 to 6 May
Guadalcanal	17 and 18 May

Progress made

- Enhanced skills of 9 political parties out of the 13 registered
- Feedback on proposed amendments of the electoral bill and political parties legislation gathered across all the provinces of Solomon Islands

Follow-up actions

- Review of the proposed legislation in light of the feedback obtained through the provincial tour and contribution to the drafting of Reform Bills

OUTPUT 5: Capacity of the SIEC to promote gender mainstreaming

Workshop on ‘Empowering Women and Strengthening Political Parties’

As part of UNDP’s Pacific Parliamentary Effectiveness Initiative (PPEI) and with a view to contribute to the ongoing support for women’s political participation in the Pacific, UNDP Pacific Office held a three-day conference from the 28th to the 30th of March 2017. Panelists included Dr. Lesley Clark, UNDP Fiji Parliamentary Development Consultant Ms. Lotte Geunis, delegate of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs Ms. Vaela Devesi, PNG Registrar of Political Parties Dr. Alphonse Gelu. UNDP SECSIP made a specific contribution on the subject of women and elections. For this purpose UNDP SECSIP Senior Elections Expert Mr. Carlos Valenzuela facilitated a module on ‘Women & Elections in the Solomon Islands, options to enhance their role’ providing an analysis and recommendations in view of the envisaged legislative reform to enhance women’s leadership and political participation.

The programme introduced Solomon Islands’ gender policies and explored effective strategies for the empowerment of women and political parties. This involved consultations with political party executives of the registered parties as well as with the Political Parties Commission.

Essay Competition on Women’s Leadership and Political Participation

A workshop focused on the lessons-learned of the inaugural competition held in 2016 was conducted in March 2017 to gather feedback and enhance implementation of the Essay Competition initiative. In particular to expand its outreach and inclusiveness of participants from rural areas in provinces other than Guadalcanal. The attendees provided recommendations on topics, timeline and resources needed and the inclusion of a new poster category to widen participation for those who wish to express ideas through art-work.

29 Participants (7 female) attended the workshop including Education Officers, School Principals, Head of School departments and teachers.

Booklets

As a follow up mechanism to continue building awareness on women’s political participation 2000 booklets containing the winning essays from the 2016 Essay competition, the speech of His Excellency Prime Minister Sogavare and UNDP Country Office Manager were distributed to schools, NGOs/CSOs & other stakeholders (EU, Australian High Commission, Parliament house, National Library, MEHRD, MOHA, MWYCFA, UNICEF, SIACLC, SINU, Oxfam, World Vision, and Live and Learn). .

Monitoring exercise with partner CSOs on women’s leadership activities

Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands (SECSIP)

Gender and Elections Officer Deborah Kole reported on the monitoring exercise conducted to assess the impact of the partnership actions implemented by VTT, Voice Blo Mere, Guadalcanal Council of Women, and National Council of Women gathered during the months of April and May. This included following up on the interviews held by VTT and the broadcasting of VBM radio programmes namely a drama and radio dialogue.

She also participated in the forum on *Why do we need Political Leadership and Participation from women? Organized by the Guadalcanal Council of Women*, providing recommendations to extend outreach to remote Guadalcanal communities.

These initial monitoring actions serve to re-state the need to set a budget to devise and conduct a formal M&E exercise with partner CSOs, and to identify the impact of the small grants at the organizational and community level.

Progress made

- Awareness raised amongst political parties' representatives on aspects in relation to women and elections
- Identification of weaknesses and provision of recommendations to enhance participation in the school competition.
- Distribution of the 2016 winning essay Booklets to continue raise awareness on female political participation
- Assessment on impact made by CSO activities

Follow-up actions

- Review of essay competition in light of the obtained feedback
- Design and Implement a formal M&E plan for partner CSOs

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Annex 1. Table of contents Media training.

Workshop 1 Topic: Media and Democracy	April 8 (9-12noon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand why election coverage is important - Increase awareness of audience needs - Help participants understand the role of journalists in an election
Workshop 2 Topic: Elections - Voter Registration	April 15 (9-12noon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the voter registration phase - Know requirements for voter registration - Understand the Biometric Voter Registration System - Journalists able to accurately report upon sensitive issues such as out of constituency registration and card buying
Workshop 3 Topic: Elections – Candidates and campaigning	April 22 (9-12noon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the campaigning rules and relevant election offences - Ethical considerations in covering candidate campaigns
Workshop 4 Topic: Election Day	April 29 (9-12noon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand what will happen on Election Day - Participants understand the procedure and responsibilities of journalists attending SIEC sites - Review Code of Conduct
Workshop 5 Topic: The Political Parties Integrity Act	May 6 (9-12noon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand how the Political Parties Integrity Act effects candidates, political parties and journalists covering elections - Discuss some opportunities for journalists to get information about political parties
Workshop 6 Topic: Political Parties in SI	May 13 (9-12noon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the role of the Political Parties Commission - Build links between the media and the Political Parties Commission office
Workshop 7 Topic: Covering Parliament	May 20 (9-12noon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the importance of covering Parliament - Understand the importance of accuracy and balance in covering parliamentary debates - Understand Parliamentary Processes, - Feel more confident in covering Parliamentary processes
Workshop 8 Topic: Electoral Reform	May 27 (9-12noon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the role of the electoral Reform Taskforce - Are able to report accurately on the Electoral Reform Process - Understand the key issues being considered as part of the reform process
REPORT WRITING	June 1-30	<i>All aspects of the training captured and implemented successfully</i>

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Annex 2. Table summarizing PP attendance to activities by Deveaux.

Registered party (2014)	October 2016 Party Fundamentals training	February 2017 Training of Trainers
Democratic Alliance Party (DAP)	✓	✓ (no bilateral consult)
Direct Development Party (DDP)	✗	✗
National Transformation Party (NTPSI)	✓	✓
Kadere (“Country”) Party of Solomon Islands (KPSI)	✓	✗
New National Party (NNP)	✓	✓
Pan-Melanesian Congress Party (SI-PMCP)	✗	✗
Solomon Islands People First Party (PFP)	✓	✓
People’s Alliance Party (PAP)	✓	✓
People’s Progressive Party (PPP)	✓	✗ (bilateral consult only)
Solomon Islands Party for Rural Advancement (SIPRA)	✓	✗ (bilateral consult only)
Youth Owned Rural and Urban Party (YOUR Party)	✓	✗
Solomon Islands Democratic Party (SIDP)	✓	✓
United Democratic Party (UDP)	✓	✓