

GPECS II



Global Project for Electoral Cycle Support II



NATIONAL COMPONENT



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Global Project for Electoral Cycle Support: Country Window

Elections are the means through which people voice their preferences and choose their representatives. Elections are a powerful tool: they can confer legitimacy on the institutions or representatives that emerge from them, or call their legitimacy into question. Elections are fundamentally political processes and are a critical element of the UN's mandate and UNDP's democratic governance work. In some countries, they have become sustainable and sophisticated processes managed by well-developed electoral administrations. Yet, many countries, including mature democracies, continue to face challenges related to the integrity and credibility of elections. Key electoral cycle processes, such as civic education, voter registration, boundary delimitation, polling and tabulation of results, as well as electoral law reforms, campaign regulations and the inclusion of marginalized groups such as women, youth, ethnic minorities and people living with disabilities, provide major challenges to Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs).

Ultimately, UNDP assistance aims to ensure that elections are credible and fully nationally owned, that there is awareness of elections being part of a broader democratic governance framework, and that elections provide a vital means to safeguard human rights, exercise choice and express opinions. Therefore, UNDP offers strategic assistance to member states to support long-term planning and to implement the electoral cycle. Within electoral cycle support, UNDP promotes credible and inclusive elections at all levels by supporting

national efforts to promote legal reform; supporting the establishment of independent electoral management bodies; implement systems of planning, monitoring, and budgeting; support voter and civic education for democratic rights and responsibilities; coordinate electoral assistance; promote women's participation as voters and candidates and within EMBs; encourage the political participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups; and prevent electoral conflict and violence and strengthen peaceful electoral dispute resolution mechanisms.

On average, UNDP provides electoral assistance to over 60 countries a year, including support provided to countries in sensitive political transition and post-conflict settings.

GPECS support to country level interventions

In 2009, UNDP launched the first-ever global project in electoral assistance – the Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS). GPECS has focused on capacity development during the electoral cycle and provided direct financial support to the electoral institutions and processes in 18 countries worldwide. It has contributed to significant improvements in the UN's policy and applied practice in electoral assistance in all regions and in promoting gender mainstreaming in electoral processes and institutions. One of the most successful features of GPECS has been its ability to be the 'first on the ground' by using a rapid response, fast-track mechanism to request and approve country-level electoral support.



GPECS Phase II (2015 - 2017) continues the successful approach of GPECS Phase I in order to strengthen the electoral laws, institutions and processes that deepen democracy and accelerate human development. A key component of Phase II is to supporting electoral cycle interventions and lessons learned at the **national** level.

GPECS II allows for earmarked and unearmarked contributions and features a mechanism that allows donor contributions to be channeled to specific countries and features a fast-track mechanism to allow ad-hoc funding to electoral processes.

Channeling funding for national electoral processes through GPECS II will, moreover, provide the added benefit of linking country-level support to global and regional lessons learned and policies and vice versa. This promotes and reinforces the overall coherence and quality control of electoral assistance. A Steering Committee governs the strategic direction of GPECS II and the allocation of country funds.

GPECS II will prioritize countries in post-conflict or transitional contexts (often implementing electoral assistance in an integrated manner with a UN Peacekeeping or Special Political Mission). Donors can indicate their own country priorities as well.

Other considerations will include whether there is the potential for learning and innovation, and whether there is the possibility to programme inclusive political processes activities. Some of the types of activities that may be supported include core project formulation and start-up support, including:

- Supporting EMBs to develop strategic and operational plans, which help EMBs – particularly ‘start-up’ EMBs or EMBs with a new set of electoral commissioners – to focus themselves on achieving a set of objectives based on their legally defined responsibilities.
- Preparing cost assessments and budgets; which are essential for the EMB’s relationship with the treasury, and are often crucial elements at an early stage of UNDP’s support to an EMB.
- Drafting and implementing procurement plans; either in order to support the envisaged UNDP procurement, or to support procurement by the EMB in accordance with national procurement legislation.
- Drafting results management plans. This is often the most scrutinized part of an electoral process. In recent years, a number of electoral processes in member states have suffered from flawed results management, which has raised serious doubts regarding the credibility of the process.
- Engaging with external stakeholders, including political parties, civil society organizations, the media, the government, the justice system, and others in order to support the EMB in conducting inclusive elections.
- Supporting gender mainstreaming, including implementing EMB gender activities, etc. throughout the electoral cycle.
- Supporting the development of UNDP project documents, resources and results frameworks, project budgets, annual work plans and other UNDP programming documents.
- Supporting resource mobilization efforts, including support in finalizing specific programming documents requested by individual donors.