

Project Title: Enhancing Electoral System and Processes in Turkmenistan

Project Number: 00076432

Grant No. AID-176-G-10-00004

Project Outcome: Government authorities establish and implement mechanisms to protect and promote rights and freedoms in Turkmenistan.

Project Outputs:

Partner Agency: Central Commission for Elections and Referenda in Turkmenistan (CEC)

Implementing Agency: UNDP Turkmenistan

Reporting Period: September 2010 – May 2012

The project has two objectives: (i) improving the system of election administration by providing technical assistance, training, capacity building, round tables and seminars; (ii) development of a democratic culture through the support of all participants in the electoral process - voters, candidates and their representatives, representatives of the media and national observers.

Identifier (Activity ID)

- (i) Support the electoral administration efforts to improve management of the elections through capacity-building trainings, roundtables and seminars;
- (ii) Nurture a democratic culture to emerge through direct support to the targeted actors of the electoral process, such as candidates, voters, the media and domestic observers;
- (iii) Review and amend the legislative electoral framework with the ultimate goal of adopting a single, comprehensive electoral code by the end of 2011.

Deliverable Descriptions

Throughout the project lifetime, the "Enhancing Electoral System and Processes in Turkmenistan" project was actively involved in providing immediate support in enhancing national capacities of electoral observers, preparation to parliamentary elections in December 2010, Preparations to presidential elections in 2012, building the operational capacity of regional election commissions, exposing the CEC officials to international experience through study visits, as well as introducing ICT processes to daily operations of the CEC. Review of Turkmenistan's legislation was also performed and recommendations provided to harmonize the national legislation.

National Capacity Building and Training

In October-November 2010, around 270 representatives of national, regional and local electoral administrations, mass media and national observers raised their awareness in international standards in electoral administration, increased knowledge of national legislation and its application during the electoral process. More than 50 representatives of national and local mass media attended trainings, which focused on specifics of coverage of the election campaigns, as well reporting on the day of elections.

100 participants attended the Training for National Observers, and learned of the rights and responsibilities of national observers and their relationship with electoral administration in the electoral process as stipulated in the

120 representatives of Electoral Administrations received trainer skills during the TOT on electoral guidelines. Each of the trainers, in turn, conducted 2 trainings in their respective electoral districts.

CEC enhanced capacities of some 129 national electoral observers, including 49 women, representing the Democratic Party, Youth Union, Women's Union and Trade Unions during five training workshops on 1-10 November 2010 covering all the provinces of Turkmenistan and focusing on the principles of electoral observation, roles of observers, their responsibilities and rights. The participants were exposed to international norms of electoral observation and studied the guidelines for local and international observers along with the provisions of the new Electoral law of Turkmenistan.

Some 130 staff of district election commissions, including 33 women, strengthened capacities in the standard election administration procedures, including the composition and functions of the election commissions; the

importance of voter list updates and obtaining election materials from the upper election commissions; election commissions set up; various types of voting and voting procedures; counting of votes and polling station closing procedures; transportation of the election materials after polls, as well as complaints procedures during the election administration training workshops held in all five provinces 1 to 9 November 2010. The workshop participants got a valuable insight into the national electoral legislation from a procedural manual developed on the basis of the current electoral legislation. The manual was translated into Turkmen for further distribution among all precinct election commissions of Turkmenistan. The training was built upon the BRIDGE methodology (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections), which combines participatory adult education techniques with a distinctive Values-based approach.

164 officials of district level electoral commissions, among which 44 were women, increased their knowledge of electoral administration and Turkmenistan's electoral standards during a series of training workshops organized in Ashgabat and 5 provinces of the country on 18-29 November 2011.

CEC officials developed trainer skills during the ToT led by certified BRIDGE trainers and combining practical exercises and mock sessions held in May 2012. The participants reviewed the Code of Conduct of election administration, various training methodologies, compilation of lists of voters, polling station arrangement and polling procedures, rights of observers and candidate proxies, counting procedures, compilation of protocols and adjudicating the complaints. Prior to elections to local self-governing bodies scheduled for August 2012, the core group of staff of the CEC will train local electoral officials in technical aspects of electoral administration, using an illustrated manual for polling station workers and a training guide for CEC instructors developed together with the CEC.

Study Visits

Nine (9) representatives from CEC, Regional election commissions, National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights and Parliament learned the election administration experience of Turkey during the 5-day study visit to Turkey, on 8-13 August 2011. During the visit, the Turkmen delegation met with the Chairperson of High Elections Board of Turkey, Secretary-General of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey as well as Turkish election administration officials, representatives of civil society, academia and election law experts. The study-visit was organized by UNDP Country Office in Turkmenistan in cooperation with the Turkish High Elections Board and UNDP Country Office in Turkey. Participants of the study-visit were provided with detailed briefings and analysis of the mandate of High Election Board of Turkey, strategic planning and electoral cycle, voter registration principles, civic education campaigns, electoral legal framework, functioning of the polling stations as well as the role of the civil society in elections processes. Delegation members have engaged in an open dialogue by raising questions and sharing their own experiences in election administration issues. The study-visit also provided a good opportunity to facilitate further contacts between election administration officials of Turkmenistan and Turkey.

Production of public awareness raising materials

Short video messages were developed in December 2011 by the project in cooperation with the Central Election Commission highlighting the importance of public participation in elections, featuring the work of polling stations and explaining voting rules and procedures, as well as procedures for advance voting and other relevant issues. In addition, the 2012 calendars with similar content were developed and printed in December 2011.

Voter Registration and ICT

The project also succeeded in reviewing the current voter registration practices and providing recommendations to CEC with regard to improvement of the voter registration in Turkmenistan. Towards this end, seminar titled "Development of Electronic Register of Voters: International Experience and National Practice" was conducted for CEC and regional election commissions' members and staff in April 2012. Two international consultants presented their recommendations for a phased development and introduction of an electronic register of voters in the CEC activities, following the assessment of needs and existing information-technical resources in Turkmenistan.

The seminar participants discussed advantages and disadvantages of various types of voters' list, the importance of developing accurate voters' lists and role of election commissions in the process of voter registration. Issues relating to application of information and communication technologies, use of biometric data and GIS-technologies in the voter registration process were also reviewed. The participants also looked at the experience of other countries in using Internet resources and introducing electronic document management systems in electoral activities.

As part of their mission, the international consultants held meetings and consultations at CEC, the Mejlis, the State Statistics Committee, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan, discussing the

Deliverable Description

major directions for effective use of modern information technologies and communications for development of a unified electronic register of voters in the country. It was stressed that the introduction of modern information technologies in the activities of election commissions at all levels in an integrated manner is an important step in improving quality and effectiveness of election campaigns. It will create necessary conditions for increasing awareness of the population and strengthening the capacity of all electoral stakeholders in Turkmenistan.

Building Institutional Capacity of local election administrations

The regional election commissions received equipment in order to deliver regular trainings for district level electoral commissions using the distributed equipment.

Lessons learned:

While the Central Election Commission of Turkmenistan has emerged as a more professional election management body during the project lifetime – as opposed to previous years – there is still a long way to go in order to ensure that there is a critical mass of professional electoral officials who could serve as resource persons and facilitators.

Despite the fact that the project conducted a number of capacity building events, members of regional and district electoral commissions have limited knowledge about election procedures and rules due to lack of regular refresher trainings.

Also, it is observed that knowledge of Russian language (in which the trainings are conducted) becomes more and more limited. Therefore, in future, translation into Turkmen language will be required.

Implementation of project activities was also challenged by delayed decisions and lengthy approval processes. Certain activities (organization of the mission of voter registration experts) were delayed several times by the senior management of CEC. Stronger commitment will be required from the CEC in the future in order to follow the agreed work-plans.

Personnel

The project personnel consisted of Project Manager and Project Assistant. The Project Manager's service timeline covered the period from April 2011 - May 2012. The Project Assistant served from January to May 2012. In 2011, another Project Manager was employed to lead the project work. For some period of time, the project was functioning without project staff due to difficulties in finding qualified applicants for this position and project was managed by UNDP CO. The relevant TORs are attached for your reference. See Annex 6.

Accountabilities (USD):

Budget:	Expenditures:
2010 – US\$92,000.00	US\$56,623.06
2011 – US\$158,495.97	US\$139,038.61
2012- US\$64,338.33	US\$64, 338.33

TOTAL BUDGET: 260,000

TOTAL EXPENDITURES: 260,000

Hajimurad Pirmuhamedov
Project Manager

