

Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT)

2006 – 2011



UNDP ELECT is a vehicle through which the international community supports Afghan electoral authorities to plan and conduct elections.

ANDS Pillar 2 and Kabul Communiqué Focus Area Governance, Rule of Law, and Human Rights

Proposed Budget
\$380 mil USD

Resources*
\$378 mil USD

Implementing Partners

Independent Election Commission (IEC)
Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC)

Donors

Australia, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, European Union, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway States, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, UNDEF, UNDP and USA



* As of 1 March 2011

Context

Years of conflict have damaged Afghanistan's economic, political, physical, social and institutional structures.

Afghanistan ranks 174 out of 178 countries in the UN Human Development Index. GDP per capita is USD 964. Conflict-related civilian deaths rose by 15 percent between 2009 and 2010; and 75 percent of these were linked to anti-government elements.

While the majority of Afghans express confidence in national army and police forces, only around half are confident in government institutions. More than a third do not express their opinions, due to fear; about a quarter feel threatened by the Taliban and the same proportion feels that it has no influence over the decisions made by government.*

Credible leadership and strong institutions are necessary for stability and a precursor to reconstruction and development.



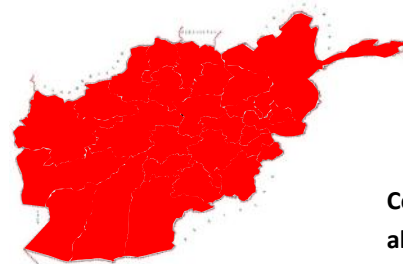
Project Overview

The primary objective of United Nations electoral assistance to Afghanistan is to support the efforts of Afghan electoral authorities to prepare and conduct credible elections in an insecure and socio-politically unstable environment. Since its inception, the project has evolved to accommodate changing circumstances, needs and capacity of Afghan people.

In 2010, ELECT supported 3 main priorities:

- Support to the IEC to conduct a limited voter registration top-up as required for the 2010 election; and capacity-development through the provision of technical and operational assistance for the 2010 election;
- Capacity-development through technical and operational support to the ECC, to manage their responsibilities in the conduct of the 2010 election; and
- Support to long-term electoral reform and capacity-development of the electoral management bodies.

The first two priorities are now complete. The third is in initial stages and will be developed to address needs identified by an assessment mission, as a basis for activities in 2011 and beyond.



Coverage of ELECT:
all 34 provinces



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Key Results 2010

- On 18 September 2010, UNDP supported Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission (IEC) to organize and deliver the **first ever Afghan-led parliamentary elections** across 35 constituencies throughout the country. This marks a significant achievement toward the democratic governance of Afghanistan.
- **Almost 400,000 new voters**; 2,500 candidates; and 380,000 observers and electoral agents were registered.
- An approximate **4 million voters cast their ballots** on Election Day.
- The participation of women – who face greater security and cultural constraints than men – is particularly notable. **More than 40 percent of voters were women.**
- Although women stood to gain only one third of seats in the Parliament and faced greater security risks than in 2005, they accounted for 15.4 percent of candidates. **Moreover, while 25 percent of seats in Parliament were reserved for women, an even greater proportion of seats (27 percent) were won.**
- More than 7,500 women assisted at polling stations as “searchers.” Aside from enabling women to enter polling stations without fear or posing threat, this meant that **women were empowered to be employed and to play active roles in the holding of elections.**
- UNDP ELECT also supported the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC), an independent complaints adjudication mechanism whose decisions are binding. The ECC investigated complaints received on and after polling day, **significantly reducing distortions as results were calculated.**

Afghan Leadership Recognised

A defining element in UNDP's approach to elections is that Afghans should take a lead role. In addition to responsibility for key decisions, Afghan national electoral authorities served as both national and international spokespeople, making statements, briefing the media, and providing stakeholders with regular information updates throughout the 2010 Parliamentary elections.

Explains one international observer:

“Both the IEC and ECC, particularly the IEC, were much more proactive in getting the message out about their activities this year. I had thought it might be difficult to get clear and timely status updates from the responsible electoral bodies – but that was not the case at all. Even when the news wasn't necessarily what stakeholders wanted to hear, Afghan electoral authorities were forthcoming with requested information.”

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