



ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT 2007

**United Nations Development Programme
Afghanistan**

**Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT)
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Executive summary

2007 has seen considerable progress in two areas: building of the IEC's institutional capacity – both physical and human -- and the completion of the civil and voter registration pilot project.

The improvement of the basic physical infrastructure included the acquisition of various vehicles purchased from UNAMA, UNDP/Afghan New Beginnings Project (ANBP) and UNOPS. Other donations comprised of used equipment included vehicles and office electronics.

Furthermore the project was able to establish contracts to improve the electrical supply of the IEC Headquarters, the internal roads, security communications, guard services and physical security. The breakdown of the IECs 220 KVA electrical generator resulted and budgetary problems within the IEC, led ELECT to agree to provide generator fuel to the Commission. This resulted in discussions regarding the sustainability of the IECs electrical supply and a decision to investigate options for getting the Commission Compound wired into the national power grid. As a result, the design of an electrical power transformer sub-station was completed in October. Procurement of services was completed in November and work was started in December.

In addition, in December 2007, ELECT contracted to build a paved road with sidewalks and curbs inside the IEC compound. Work was nearly completed by the end of the year and should be finished early in 2008. This road and sidewalks reduces difficulties moving around the compound during the fall, winter, and spring months when rain and snow combined with high-volume vehicle traffic results in massive mud, ice and tire ruts. Finally planning commenced for several enhancements to the security of the IEC compound. These will include structural improvements to the main entrance and guard towers; hiring of an unarmed, uniformed guard and an increase in the number of armed Afghan National Police Guards outside the compound; installation of a VHF radio network and finally the provision of a variety of fire safety equipment and first aid training.

In terms of developing the IEC human resources, the project was able to provide various formal trainings and facilitated the participation of various election observation activities for the Commissions personnel.

The second major area of progress towards ANDS benchmark is the completion of the Civil and Voter Registration (CVR) Pilot Project. The CVR Pilot was designed to test two separate methods for collecting data in the field. The first involved an automated method using a technocolgoy packing which included a laptop computer, a digital camera and an iris scanning camera along with a portable generator and printer. The second involved the collection of the same data on paper, and the use of a digital camera to take a facial photo. The data to be collected was based on the information needed for both the Afghan "tazkera" (national ID) system and voter registration based on a variety of meetings between the MOI and the IEC.

Field operations using the "automated" system began in early July and ran through early September. Over 21,000 Afghans were registered. The "paper-based" system test started in late August and ran through mid-September and some 3,200 Afghans were registered during this trial.

An extensive internal assessment of the CVR Pilot was conducted jointly by IEC, IFES and ELECT Project personnel in the fall and early winter of 2007. One of the key findings of the internal assessment of the process, a finding agreed by both IEC and MOI (tazkera office) is that the timeframes required for delivery of a credible, viable register prior to elections which are constitutionally mandated for 2009, means that a completely joint CVR process will be extremely difficult to implement. Given this mandate, the IEC decided in late 2008 that they should proceed with planning for a national voter registration programme which could link to a future civil registry/national ID card program. Additional discussions with the MOI on this possibility were ongoing at years end.

With the CVR pilot completed successfully, the project in 2008 will concentrate its efforts on using the pilot as a baseline on how to strategically plan for voter registration which is due to take place in the latter half of 2008. Consultants will be brought in country in order to assess the best way forward and to develop an operational plan and a successful campaign for the much needed public outreach exercise. Despite these actions, a forward thinking operational plan and overall planning for the exercise will be cumbersome due to the lack of political decisions regarding the timeframe in which voter registration will be held and furthermore the uncertainty as to whether the draft electoral law will be passed within one year of the fixed date of elections.

Finally the ensuing security situation may impact on the implementation of the project at all levels, especially when the voter registration and the upcoming elections will be carried out across the country and not just restricted to the capital. In order to mitigate the risks, close coordination has been established with the relevant security actors and the IEC and the Project is taking direct advice on how best to carry out its activities in the light of a precarious security situation.

The project will constantly evaluate the situation and endeavour to plan for voter registration for 2008 despite the ambiguity surrounding the timeline for a date to be set. In order to predict possible scenarios, the project will do all it can to consider various scenarios depending on the timeframe available and the funding allocated.

I. Context

Subsequent to the Bonn process, UNDP was given a pivotal role in helping establish viable governance structures. Among these efforts was support to the 2004 Presidential and 2005 Parliamentary and Provincial Council elections. Both of these elections were a success with large voter turnout and nationally accepted results. UNAMA was tasked with the political oversight of the election process, with UNDP holding responsibility for the execution of the 2004 Presidential elections and managing all resource mobilization and donor relations for the 2005 Parliamentary and Provincial Council elections. UNOPS was the implementing agent for all electoral activities in 2005. Following the successful completion of these elections in 2004 the JEMB (Joint Election Monitoring Body¹) was dissolved 30 days after the inaugural session of the National Assembly in December 2005.

Following the successful completion of the Wolesi Jirga and Provincial Council elections, it was envisaged that the Voter Registration and Elections Project (VREP) 2004-2005 would be closed, and, a three month “transitional phase” was planned. This transitional phase was intended to provide support to ensure the continuation of the Independent Election Commission (IEC). However, for a variety of reasons, the transitional period was extended for an additional six months (until 21st September 2006) to provide critical support to the IEC in order to ensure its sustainability. During this period of time UNDP took over the responsibility to secure the salaries for the staff of the Independent Electoral Commission Secretariat as well as the operational costs to keep the headquarters and the provincial offices functional.

Focusing on capacity building and the need to conduct a new nation-wide voter registration and the hope that this activity could be combined with a national civil registration programme, The ELECT “Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow” project was initiated and began its activities in October 2006. A comprehensive project document was developed on the basis of recommendations and in close consultation with the IEC and other stakeholders. The project was launched on 14 November 2006. Preparations and fundraising for the Civil and Voter registry pilot project, a sub-activity of ELECT was concluded with the receipt of 336,000 USD\$ from the UN Democracy Fund. Other funds were raised from Canada, Italy, Denmark and UNDP totaling a budget of UD\$ 4.9 million.

The main achievements for 2007 can be outlined as follows:-

- The Civil and Voter Registration Pilot (CVR) Project was successfully carried out in the Provinces of Kabul, Bamyán and Nangarhar. Approximately 26,000 people were registered using either a computerized or manual registration system.
- Training of trainers for the CVR Pilot Project took place
- A successful public outreach campaign on the Civil and Voter Registry was launched.
- A gender focal point was employed in order to ensure gender mainstreaming within the IEC and the Electoral process.
- A national seminar on Lessons Learned from the 2003-2005 electoral cycle took place in Kabul.

Nevertheless, the project has faced some challenges in the implementation of its activities. The three main challenges can be summarized as follows: 1) The uncertainty as to when the Election Law will be finalized. Failure to finalise it before the end of March 2008 will signify that elections will not be able to take place in the spring of 2009 as envisaged by the Constitution. (There is a constitutional requirement that no changes can be implemented in the election law 12 months prior to an election); 2) the lack of clarity of an election date and whether the elections will take place simultaneously or on separate dates. This lack of clarity poses a substantial challenge for the

¹ The Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) resulted from the temporary merger of the IAEC (Interim Afghanistan Election Commission) and the UNAMA Electoral Component (UEC), established by Presidential decree in July 2003 with a mandate to administer all elections during the transitional period as defined by the Bonn Agreement.

planning and preparations for voter registration and elections; and 3) the ongoing budgetary and staffing problems at the IEC.

Priorities for the future are the provision of technical assistance and support for the national voter registration process; the enhancement of capacity of the Commissioners and Secretariat and preparation and planning for the upcoming electoral cycle.

II. Performance review

Progress review

"The Afghanistan Independent Electoral Commission will have the high integrity, capacity and resources to undertake elections in an increasingly fiscally sustainable manner by end -2008, with the Government of Afghanistan contributing to the extent possible to the cost of future elections from its own resources. A permanent civil and voter registry with a single national identity document will be established by end-2009."

2007 has seen considerable progress in two areas: building of the IEC's institutional capacity – both physical and human -- and the completion of the civil and voter registration pilot project.

In regards to enhancing the basic physical infrastructure of the IEC, considerable progress was made to establish a fully functional platform for the IEC to implement its Constitutional mandate to *"administer and supervise every kind of elections as well as refer to the general public opinion of the people in accordance with the provisions of the law."*² Over the summer, ELECT was able to support the acquisition of various vehicles and equipment for the Commission and in the fall, contracts to improve the electrical supply of the IEC Headquarters, the internal roads, security communications, guard services and physical security were all either in place or being designed.

The IEC's ability to operate effectively was improved through the acquisition through either purchase or donation of several refurbished used vehicles from UNAMA, UNDP/Afghan New Beginnings Project (ANBP) and UNOPS. ELECT was also able to acquire donations of other used equipment including vehicles and office electronics.

Moving the IEC from reliance on generator power to city mains power in order to save money and provide for more cost effective and efficient electrical power for the Headquarters compound on Jalalabad Road, began in September 2007. The break-down of the IEC's 220 KVA electrical generator resulted and budgetary problems within the IEC, led ELECT to agree to provide generator fuel to the Commission. This resulted in discussions regarding the sustainability of the IEC's electrical supply and a decision to investigate options for getting the Commission Compound wired into the national power grid. After engaging an Afghan electrical engineer to support the IEC, the design of an electrical power transformer sub-station was completed in October. The procurement of services was completed in November and work was started in December. At the end of the year, this work was on schedule to be finished during the first quarter of 2008.

This should provide lower-cost, more reliable electrical power for expanding IEC operations. It will also allow the Commission to extend its operating hours as it approaches voter registration and elections in the next two years.

In December 2007, ELECT contracted with an Afghan vendor to build a paved road with sidewalks and curbs inside the IEC compound. Work was nearly completed by the end of the year and should be finished in early 2008. This road and sidewalks reduces difficulties moving around the compound during the fall, winter and spring months when rain and snow combined with high-volume vehicle traffic results in massive mud, ice and tire ruts. This road will be extended through the compound and to the various warehouses early in 2008.

Also in December, planning began for several enhancements to the security of the IEC compound. First will be structural improvements to the main entrance and guard towers. Second, will be the hiring of an unarmed, uniformed guard service to take over management of the interior security of the compound and an increase in the number of armed Afghan National Police guards outside the compound. Third, a VHF radio network (repeater, base station, repeater with licenses and

² The Constitution of Afghanistan, Chapter 11, Article 156.

handheld radios) will be installed at the IEC to facilitate security as its vehicles move around Kabul. And finally, a variety of fire safety equipment and first aid training for IEC and ELECT Project staff will be provided during the first quarter of 2008.

In terms of developing the IEC human resources, the ELECT Project provided a range of formal training and election observation activities for Commission personnel. These opportunities included: logistics training in Dubai, participation in UNDP-funded leadership training in Kabul, sponsorship of an IEC election observation delegation to parliamentary elections in the Ukraine, supportive funding for election observation mission sponsored by The Asia Foundation to Australia, participation in a UN-sponsored logistics management training in Vienna. Along with these structured training and capacity-building activities, ELECT provided resident international advisors working in the Commission in the areas of Voter Registration, Election Administration, Logistics, and Records and Assets Management.

The second major area of progress towards ANDS benchmarks is the completion of the Civil and Voter Registration (CVR) Pilot Project. Design of the CVR Pilot was completed in 2006 along with the development of the ELECT Project document and discussions with the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), the Afghan government body responsible for civil registration and national ID cards, were started. In early 2007, specifications for goods and services were written and a tender sent out for bids. In April, bids were unsealed and a vendor selected. Final planning continued through May, procedural manuals completed and in June, shortly after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the IEC, the MOI and the Ministry of Finance (MOF), training was conducted for participating IEC and MOI personnel.

The CVR Pilot was designed to test two separate methods for collecting data in the field. The data to be collected was based on the information needed for both the Afghan "tazkera" (national ID) system and voter registration based on a variety of meetings between the MOI and the IEC. The first method involved the use of a technology packing which included a laptop computer, a digital camera and an iris scanning camera along with a portable generator and printer. This test ran for 6 weeks and had a target number of 30,000 registrations. The second trial, involved the collection of the same data on paper and the use of a digital camera to take a facial photo. This second test ran for two weeks and had a target of 1,000 registrations. In both tests, the facial photos were run through facial recognition software to detect duplicate registrations.

Field operations using the "automated" system began in early July and ran through early September. Over 21,000 Afghans were registered. The "paper-based" system test started in late August and ran through mid-September and some 3,200 Afghans were registered during this trial. An extensive internal assessment of the CVR Pilot was conducted jointly by IEC, IFES and ELECT Project personnel in the fall and early winter of 2007. In addition, an IFES consultant also performed an external review of the technology used in the automated trial. An external review of the Pilot was planned for the fall of 2007, however due to the availability of the consultant; this was postponed to early 2008.

1. Overall progress towards the CPAP outcome

"By 2008, communities and individuals, especially women and marginalized groups participate effectively in the development and political processes."

As described above, the ELECT project has made significant progress toward this goal through the significant overall development of the human and physical capacity of the IEC.

On the specific issue of the participation of women, there has been modest progress. During the first part of the year, the IEC was in the process of hiring a Gender Focal point. The implementation of the CVR Pilot took center stage during the summer and fall months and discussions began in the fall regarding the design and implementation of a gender mainstreaming strategy. With the

support of the UNDP Country Office it is expected that such a strategy will be in place during the first half of 2008.

Gender mainstreaming was a key topic of discussion during the three-day lessons learned workshop in late May 2007. This workshop looked at the previous electoral cycle and the importance of the gender consideration in the planning and conduct of elections was discussed. This lessons learned exercise identified the following as the main challenges:

- A large number of women are unaware of the electoral process
- Security problems have special impacts on women's participation as election workers and voters
- Insufficient number of female staff
- Limited time for public awareness programmes
- Need for improved cooperation from religious scholars and influential citizens
- Better coordination with NGOs in Public Awareness Programmes is needed

The following issues were also highlighted as hindrances to female participation in the election process:

- Low level of literacy
- Economic Problems
- Domestic or household responsibilities
- Less attention of political parties regarding women's participation in the political scene of the country
- Fear from cultural and social conditions

The gender focal point in the IEC and the gender mainstreaming specialist will work closely together to assess and address these issues in 2008 and integrate the findings within the project.

(i) [Overall progress towards the CPAP output\(s\).](#)

ELECT Output 1: Operations of the IEC sustained and budgetary independence ensured through the national budget as of new fiscal year. Indicator: National Staff of IEC become employees of the state of Afghanistan and enjoys security of services, ensuring further independence of the IEC.

While the IEC became an independent commission of the Afghan state in 2006, it still suffers from a range of issues which became apparent during its separation from the United Nations. In terms of staffing, the IEC has come under the provisions of the Civil Service Commission for the purpose of human resource management and the Ministry of Finance in regards to its budgeting. During this process, the Commission's permanent staffing was pegged at 218 and it's annual operating budget at 35 million Afghanis (around \$700,000). Long delays and low salaries have left the IEC with a small but talented nucleus cadre of election professionals. However the loss of large numbers of experienced Afghan staff has left a considerable void. The shift to the Civil Service salary scale has also meant that experienced staff who had remained with the Commission have eventually decided to leave for better paying positions outside of government service.

Over the past year, the IEC engaged in a series of meetings with the Ministry of Finance regarding both their staffing and overall budget levels. In the last quarter of the year, these discussions lead to agreement with the MOF for an increase in both staffing and funding levels effective with the start of the new Afghan fiscal year in March 2008.

Although there is donor assistance available, these increases in support from the Government are essential to the IEC's ongoing development and sustainability.

ELECT Output 2: IEC strengthened through training and reviewing of voter registration and electoral activities conducted in 2004 and 2005. Indicator: IEC equipped with basic knowledge and skills to carry out its responsibilities mandated under the Constitution.

As previously mentioned, a Lessons Learned workshop was conducted in June. Participating in this three-day session were IEC staff, Commissioners, members of the National Assembly, representatives from political parties, civil society and academia. International donor representatives also attended. ELECT brought the two international consultants who conducted an assessment of UN election assistance activities during the 2003 – 2005 period back to Kabul to facilitate the discussion.

The session provided a lively discussion of previous operations and the requirements of the upcoming electoral cycle.

ELECT Output 3: Civil and Voter Registry Pilot Project planned and designed. Indicator: Preparations completed for all citizens in the districts selected for the pilot project for the IEC to establish a voter's list and for the Ministry of Interior to obtain civil registry details and issue national identification documents.

Implementation of the CVR Pilot dominated the first part of the year. Ongoing negotiations with the MOI to resolve conceptual and operational issues and the Ministry of Finance regarding budgetary questions resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding signed in June. An accompanying Letter of Agreement between the IEC, IFES and ELECT spelled-out the support and responsibilities of each organization.

During the CVR Pilot, it became apparent that the absence of a voter registration department within the IEC meant that there was no IEC staff dedicated full time to the project. While IEC management consistently demonstrated a high degree of support to the pilot, the lack of dedicated staff reduced operational ownership of the activity. In addition, differences in corporate culture and institutional mandates and access to resources meant that the MOI was less invested in the pilot.

A decision by the Cabinet in late June which separated civil registration (and the national ID card process) from voter registration, added confusion to the implementation process. Attempts to gain clarification of the decision was not forthcoming, however the pilot was successfully completed in the fall.

The key finding of the internal assessment of the process, a finding agreed by both IEC and MOI (tazkera office), is that the timeframes required for delivery of a credible, viable voter register prior to elections which are constitutionally mandated for early 2009, means that a completely joint CVR process is not viable. Given this mandate, the IEC decided in late 2008 that they should proceed with planning for a national voter registration programme which could link to a future civil registry/national ID card program. Additional discussions with the MOI on this possibility were ongoing at year's end.

2. Capacity development.

In terms of human resource capacity development, the major activity of both the IEC and the ELECT Project during 2007 was the implementation and review of the CVR Pilot project. Along with the data collected on the performance of each of the trials, IEC staff gained valuable experience through their participation in both the design and implementation of the pilot. Of particular note were public outreach, training, field operations and logistical support of the trials. This on-the-job capacity building demonstrated the strengths of the Commission and, at the same time, the weaknesses. By the time the project concluded in the fall, it was clear that considerable additional effort towards capacity building was needed and that substantial international technical support

for the IEC will be needed in order to successfully deliver a voter register in time for elections in 2009.

In addition, as noted elsewhere, there numerous formal and informal capacity building opportunities were provided for IEC staff.

3. Impact on direct and indirect beneficiaries.

The project has the IEC as its main direct beneficiary. The impact on the quality of the IEC's capacity has improved, but due to the late start of the Chief Electoral Advisor and late introduction of other advisors to directly build the capacity of individuals and the IEC as an institution, capacity still needs to be improved. During the CVR pilot, members of MOI were also trained to carry out the registration exercise – although they were adequately trained. – it is believed that in order to carry out such a task more capacity building would need to be done before reaching the required standard. Indirect beneficiaries are the Afghan people and voters. Through the CVR pilot project awareness of the registration process was successfully conveyed to the public and the project and its outreach was deemed a success.

Implementation strategy review

1. Participatory/consultative processes

ELECT's implementation strategy depends on close collaboration with the key stakeholders, the IEC both in relation to the Commission and it's implementing Secretariat. Collaborative decision-making, joint definition of needs and integrated actions to implement decisions and determine timing were the foundations of this collaboration. Frequent meetings, one-on-one work sessions, formation of ad hoc working groups all facilitated collaboration.

This strategy was particularly effective in relation to providing support to the Secretariat through the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) and the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer (DCEO). ELECT International Advisors served in the Logistics and Field Operations Departments of the Secretariat and the Chief Electoral Advisor provided support to the CEO and DCEO.

Less successful were interactions with the Commissioners which related directly to inter-Commission disputes which began in the spring and persisted to the end of the year.

2. Quality of partnerships

The partnership strategy described in the project document proved difficult to implement due to a variety of factors. The primary reason was an apparent lack of enthusiasm for the close coordination at both the operational and strategic levels required by the project document by one NGO implementing partner and faltering capacity for technical assistance by another. While this was disappointing, it was not surprising given the general lack of institutional focus during this "down-time" in the IEC's calendar.

With the rapid approach of voter registration operations and polling operations the following year, there is a great need to work on partnerships, inter-organizational communications and the establishment of a standardized methodology for collaboration at the technical level within the IEC. Given that both of ELECT's co-implementers, The Asia Foundation and IFES are at or near the end of their funding agreements and in search for new sources of funding at the end of 2007, this may be particularly challenging.

On the donor front, collaboration progressed from ad hoc informal meetings to a regular monthly meeting at the working level. It is anticipated that these meetings will become more frequent as voter registration approaches. In addition, UNAMA held several Head-of-Mission level "tea clubs" to address specific questions/issues in the electoral process. It is hoped that such high-level meetings will continue on a regular basis.

3. National ownership

The setting of project priorities has been a joint endeavor involving IEC senior staff and ELECT Project advisors. With the completion of the CVR Pilot Project, the direction of ELECT moved towards planning for voter registration operations and away from “interim” capacity building and consolidation.

ELECT Project activities provide a high-degree of joint decision-making between Project and IEC staff. Issues and approaches are discussed and typically, activities are planned according to IEC requests. Alternatively, ELECT Project advisors may provide suggestions which are then given a through review/revision with the IEC prior to adoption.

One area which requires improvement is in relation to the allocation of national resources and in-kind contributions. With the ongoing financial problems and personnel shortages of the IEC, these issues are not surprising. It is hoped that expected increases in IEC funding and staffing levels and the move into registration and polling operations will mitigate this situation in 2008.

4. Sustainability

ELECT’s impact during 2007 has focused on working with the IEC to develop sustainability in terms of its ongoing operations as an independent entity of the Afghan state. This has worked on two levels, first, relates to one of the IEC’s core capacities as an election management body: it’s ability to conduct a sustainable voter registration process. The conduct of the CVR Pilot and the ongoing voter registration planning process were the key activities in this area. The second level involves the IEC’s operational capacity. The main activities here involved improvements to the IEC’s operational infrastructure including the construction of the city power transformer sub-station, building a road inside the IEC compound, the provision of various donated vehicles and other equipment. Continuing activities in this area include the addition of a VHF radio network for Kabul, physical security and safety enhancements to the Headquarters Compound and a project to review warehouse inventories and rehabilitate Rubhall warehouse space.

Management effectiveness review

1. Quality of monitoring

Early monitoring activities were related to the implementation of the CVR Pilot. ELECT Project staff took initial trips to Bamyán and Nagahar to see the early stages of pilot implementation accompanied by IEC staff. While monitoring was ongoing in Kabul, a planned joint program of field monitoring by the IEC and MOI, supported financially by ELECT was not implemented due in large part to confusion over organizational mandates and priorities. Ongoing field monitoring by ELECT staff was curtailed due to the changing security situation. Monitoring of the CVR Pilot by interested donors was similarly impacted by the security environment. A domestic monitoring effort implemented by FEFA and funded by The Asia Foundation did provide important insights into CVR Pilot Project implementation.

In regards to infrastructure improvements, mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of project activities were not impacted by the security environment. The design of the city power transformer sub-station included the engagement of an Afghan electrical engineer to assist and advise the IEC starting with the conceptualization and design of the project. The engineer assisted with the review of bids and, during construction, has provided ongoing monitoring of progress and quality.

2. Timely delivery of outputs

Although there were delays in the start-up of the project (resulting from difficulties in recruiting project staff and consultants to carry out project activities), satisfactory progress has been made towards achieving most of the project outputs indicated in the project’s annual workplan and the

project document. Particular mention should be made to the CVR Pilot Project which suffered some delays in its commencement, but was successfully carried out and achieved the outputs envisaged.

3. Resources allocation

The proportion of project costs vs development costs is approximately 50% vs 50%. The reason why the project costs are higher than the average 40% is due to the fact that difficulty was experienced in setting up the legal support activity due to a lack of human resources. Furthermore due to the fact that it was the first full year of the project - the setting up of the offices and other initial items was more costly than it would be in a secondary year of the project.

4. Cost-effective use of inputs

Maximum efforts were made to identify and acquire donations of material and equipment for IEC use. Furthermore, as the project progresses, a higher number of national staff will be employed and in cases where internationals need to be used, steps will be taken to ensure that national counterparts are capacity built in the shortest time available in order to ensure a smooth and eventual transition of skills onto the national staff.

III. Project results summary

Output 1: IEC's institutional capacity further built to carry out its mandate as an independent constitutional body.

Voter Registration and electoral activities conducted in 2004 and 2005 reviewed with special focus on gender and human rights aspects.

Due to the lack of financial resources and a long response period on the side of the IEC regarding comments on the concept paper the Lessons Learned Exercise was postponed until the second quarter of the year.

On 27th – 29th May a three day seminar covering lessons learned from the 2003-2005 electoral cycle took place in Kabul. Three issues were earmarked for particular attention:

- The electoral calendar and constitutional issues
- Sustainability of the electoral processes
- Impact of gender on election preparation

Internal administration and working capacities of the IEC improved

Working with the IEC's Administration Department (by an IFES Advisor) and the Logistics Department (ELECT Advisor), significant improvements in the internal administration of the IEC was achieved. However, the proposed Transitional Knowledge-Based Retention Policy Programme proved to be beyond the ability of ELECT as this issue has been overtaken by the working with the Civil Service Commission to recruit and hire staff in accordance with overall Government of Afghanistan policies and procedures.

An assessment of the organizational structure has also been relayed to the back burner in order to conduct the much needed activities of the CVR Pilot Project. During this exercise it became apparent that a specialized office or department will be needed for voter registration irrespective if this is conducted as part of a joint civil and voter registration or as a separate voter registration activity. The development of an overall structure for the IEC is on hold until the draft legislation on the new structure is passed through the various steps of the legislative process.

Capacity of the IEC developed to locally produce adequate and cost-effective electoral materials for conducting future elections

In the reporting period, the project was able to work on various issues under this particular subheading. Nevertheless due to renewed priorities with regards to the CVR Pilot and the delay in passing the draft election law, many of these issues have been put on hold.

In the first quarter of the year, the Ministry of Finance decided that it will take on the responsibility to establish "a secure documents printing facility." The issues of ballots and other secure documents used in the electoral process (voter registration forms and cards) have been discussed as generally falling under the mandate of such a facility.

However, given the less-than-settled issues involved in the electoral process, the amount of time it will take to develop this facility and the numerous other "unsecured" printing needs of the IEC, this task remains critical. Renewed action on this issue is planned for the first quarter of 2008.

Activities with regards to assessing and identifying a ballot box design; source for procurement of ballot boxes and the development of a coherent operational plan for the forthcoming elections have all been put on hold until the draft electoral law has been approved. Operationally, voter registration will be the priority in 2008 and efforts to identify local suppliers to support voter registration are scheduled to begin in early 2008.

An effective civic education campaign developed to familiarize the population, especially women, the disabled and traditionally marginalized groups, with the function and duties of the elected bodies.

Activities supported out by TAF.

1.1. An Electoral Complaints Mechanism established

This issue was not given priority in the reporting period as Voter Registration and other aspects of the IEC were being reviewed and worked upon. Nevertheless, provision has been made to establish an Electoral Complaints Mechanism in the draft electoral Law. Furthermore, the IEC has requested support from ELECT in regards to the planning for a proposed Election Complaints Commission (ECC).

Output 2: Effective legal and institutional environment in place to enable the IEC to execute its responsibilities.

The IEC draft of the revised Election Law was finalized and forwarded to the Ministry of Justice and the Cabinet during the third quarter of the reporting period. A number of discussions were held with the Chief Electoral Advisor regarding various provisions of the draft. The draft must still pass through the Cabinet of Ministers before being considered by the National Assembly. It is hoped that these actions will be completed during the next reporting period.

Output 3: Joint voter and civil registration pilot project designed and implemented leading to the design of a national project to establish a permanent civil and voter registry with a single national identity document.

3.1. Joint voter and civil registration pilot project designed, agreed upon and implemented.

Pilot projects for a joint program were conducted during the reporting period. Recent assessments of these pilots indicate that the joint model would be challenging to implement. The MOI is not currently prepared to fulfil its obligations in a joint program. Deadlines for civil and voter registration differ. In addition, there is not adequate infrastructure or human capacity for running the computers required for iris scanning technology in registration centres. To this end, the possibility of conducting CVR would need to be examined and the most simplified and efficient method of use should be sought.

However, the information gathered during the voter registration exercise will still present a strong base from which to build a civil registry. The voter registration database will be made available to the Ministry of Interior for the purposes of civil registration. The photograph taken of each voter can also be used for issuing national ID cards, or Tazkera. IEC advisors will provide a draft operational concept and procedures for the Ministry of Interior to complete the civil registration process in district administrative offices over 2009.

During the pilot, nearly 25,000 Afghans participated in the tests of two different registration methods. The first test, which took place over 6 weeks, involved computerized data entry along with a digital photo and an iris scan of each person registered. The second test, which took place over two weeks, provided for manual or paper-based data collection paired with a digital photo.

Output Targets and Actual Results

1. Twenty one thousand eight hundred and eighty three (21,833) applicants were successfully registered against a target of 30,000 in the computerized system.
2. Three thousand and two hundred (3,200) applicants were successfully registered in the manual registration system against a target of three thousand (3,000).
3. The registration was completed within the specified period of six weeks for the computerized system and ten days for the manual system.
4. The average number of registered applicants per day per team was fifty one (51) for the computerized system and one hundred and six (106) for the manual registration system.
5. The highest number of registrants was in Nangahar with eight thousand six hundred and twenty six (8626) (39.4%); Bamyan registered a total of six thousand eight hundred and fifty four (6854) (31.3%) and Kabul six thousand four hundred and three (6403) (29.3%)
6. The highest number of registrants for a single registration team on a particular day was eighty eight (88) for the computerized system and one hundred and twenty (120) for the manual system.
7. The number of female registrants almost equaled that of men (10,764 – 49% Females) and (11,119 – 51% males)
8. Children below seven years old were five thousand and sixty eight (5,768) and they constituted 35.8% of the registered population.
9. There were ninety three (93) registrations without Iris and seventeen (17) without photographs.
10. Five (5) per cent of registrants were not verified implying that they neither had any of the specified documents nor anybody to vouch for them as Afghan Citizens.
11. The percentage of persons aged seven (7) and above without “face” for the manual registration was five point five 5.5. per cent compared to zero point eleven 0.11 per cent for the computerized system. One of the reasons was due to failure or mistakes in copying images from camera to CDs.
12. The average number of forms entered into the database of the manual registration system per day at the central data capture facility in Kabul was forty eight (48).
13. The data entry operator with the highest speed entered a maximum of seventy four (74) forms on a particular day and the operator with the slowest speed entered four (4) forms on a particular day.

Analysis of the technical, operational, and logistical processes, and the performance of the IEC, Ministries of the Interior and Finance, IFES and ELECT will be the subject of both internal and external reviews. A detailed internal review was finally completed in late 2007 after delays do to the need to recuperate equipment from the field and the translation of documentation prior to review. Due to difficulties in arranging the travel of consultants to conduct the external review, this was combined with voter registration planning and shifted to early 2008.

3.1.1. Identification and recruitment of International experts to assist and monitor the implementation of the pilot project.

Personnel were in place per the project document.

3.1.2. Extensive assessments of logistical necessities

All logistical requirements were completed prior to start of the CVR pilot and were reviewed throughout field operations. Evaluation of the logistical needs of the CVR project was evaluated as part of the internal and external reviews.

3.1.3. Intensive training to field formations of IEC on procedures.

Training of trainers took place at the IEC headquarters between the 23-29 June and the training of registration staff took place in the field from 3-10 July. An appropriate working framework will be analyzed as part of the abovementioned internal and external review. This is particularly pertinent given the fact that during the implementation of the project it became apparent that a specialized office or department will be needed to be set up to carry out the support of the voter registration process.

Also See Section II (iv) on capacity building.

3.1.4. Public Outreach Campaign

Radio spots began in the second quarter of the reporting period. Civic educators began their work in all three districts on the 18th May. They continued their work through mid-august in order to provide support to both the "automated" system trial and the "paper based" system test. Monitoring visits were conducted in Bamyan, Jalalabad and Kabul. All trainers adjusted well to the communities and conducted a comprehensive and accessible training in the districts. The efficacy and impact will be analyzed as part of the overall CVR pilot internal and external review process.

3.1.5. Joint Civil and Voter Registration Pilot project team established.

This was established and the pilot project was carried out and completed during the reporting period.

3.1.6. Launch the pilot project in three selected districts.

Pilot was launched and completed.

3.1.7. Lessons Learned Exercise

A lessons learned exercise was carried out and the following were evaluated:

- i). The limited time frame to carry out voter registration along side the civil registry.
- ii) The cost implications
- iii) Organizational and Managerial Issues
- iv) Inter-agency Coordination
- v) Using an Automated system vs a manual one
- vi) Duplicate analysis software

Upon evaluation of these issues, it was decided that if elections are to take place in 2009, voter registration will take place during June and July 2008. Registration teams will take a digital photograph of every voter and a cold laminated registration certificate with a photograph and a unique registration number. This registration card will be presented by voters at polling stations for upcoming elections. Men and women will register in the same stations, although the photograph of women will be taken by a female registration staff member behind a screen.

The information collected from each registrant will be data-entered in Kabul. Facial recognition will be used to remove multiple registrants. The voter registry database will be used to produce voter lists for every polling station in Afghanistan.

IV. Implementation Challenges

The main challenges encountered during the course of 2007 related to the financial problems of the IEC. To the degree that the lack of government-provided finances threatened to prevent the IEC from being able to continue its development, ELECT was able to provide support. For example, when funding constraints in relation to fuel costs threatened to close or curtail IEC operations, ELECT at the request of the IEC was able to provide funding for monthly generator fuel costs.

The ongoing debate among the government, National Assembly and political class regarding the schedule and timing of the upcoming elections, discussions on the draft election law, and the Cabinet decision in the summer separating the national ID card process from voter registration all combined to provide a substantial level of uncertainty for IEC planning and operations. This lack of clarity and consensus on the way forward for such a broad range of issues combined with the ongoing difficulties related to the Board of Commissioners meant that the focus moved to improving the IEC's internal operational platform.

During the second half of 2007, USAID agreed to provide additional funding to ELECT to support voter registration operations in 2008. Given the press of project activities and the political environment, moves to amend the ELECT Project document are planned for early 2008.

Project risks and actions

The above mentioned challenges to the project can also be deemed as posing potential risks to the implementation of the project. The lack of specificity with regards to an election date means that it is very difficult to plan for the forthcoming registration process. As a consequence, recruitment and procurement for goods and services cannot take place until a definitive date is set and a definitive plan for the carrying out of registration can be agreed upon by the IEC. Furthermore, the security situation could hinder the implementation of the project. The security situation is very precarious; however plans for voter registration in all provinces and districts are being planned for. In those areas where the security situation hinders possible registration, an individual analysis will be made on how best to mitigate possible problems in those particular areas.

Finally, due to the foreseen expansion of the project in 2008, it is essential that resource mobilisation for the forthcoming voter registration process and the election cycle in the coming years is done as soon as possible. In order to avoid the problems of previous elections, UNDP will ensure that all money is deposited in the bank before expenditure takes place. This will ensure that the project will not encounter any deficit with regards to funds but could nevertheless slow down the implementation of the project if funds are not made available in time.

Project issues and actions

The original scope of ELECT was to build capacity within the IEC and to carry out a pilot for the CVR process. With capacity building of the IEC on-going and the successful completion of the CVR pilot project, it has become apparent that technical assistance provided to the voter registration process and the Electoral Cycle will more than likely fall under the remit under ELECT. To this end, in the first half of 2008 the project document will have to be revised to reflect this.

V. Lessons learnt and next steps

Lessons learnt

Due to the ever changing political and security situation – it is essential to plan for various scenarios and in some cases to go ahead with resource mobilisation and planning for recruitment

and procurement in a timely manner. Many of the delays in the implementation of the project and on-going training of IEC staff was affected due to late decisions and a lack of clarity by the Afghan Government. Therefore in the future, and even in the face of non clarity, important decisions to carry on with training and to implement the project as best as possible is pivotal in order to ensure continuity and not to cause delays in a process which is dependent on timelines.

Recommendations

Focus of project and IEC activities will shift to voter registration and upcoming polling operations and away from consolidation in 2008. This will mean a rapid and dramatic increase in activities at headquarters and in each of the IEC's 34 Provincial Offices. Both human and material infrastructures of the IEC will be severely tested as will the ability of ELECT and UNDP Afghanistan to provide timely, appropriate support. The need to combine financial and programmatic accountability with timely response in terms of procurement, recruitment and the overall delivery of support will provide major challenges to the international community during 2008 and 2009. The need to forge closer partnerships at all levels – from the donor to implementation – in order to provide appropriate, cost-effective and accountable assistance will be key.

VI. Financial status and utilization

Financial status

Table 1: Contribution overview

DONOR NAME	CONTRIBUTIONS		CONTRIBUTIO N BALANCE
	Committed	Received	
UNDP	949,820	949,820	-
Denmark	671,505	671,505	-
Italy	681,376	681,376	-
CIDA	862,069	862,069	-
UNDEF	336,567	336,567	-
TOTAL	3,501,337	3,501,337	-

Table 2: Funding status (as of the end of 2007)

Financial Status

DONOR NAME	RECEIVED*	EXPENDITURES			PROJECT BALANCE	EARMARKED**	AVAILABLE FUNDING (as of 1 Jan of the next year)	REMARKS
		Period Prior to the Reporting Year	Reporting Year Only	TOTAL				
UNDP	949,820		949,819.76	949,820	-			
Denmark	671,505		12,061.63	12,062	659,443			
Italy	681,376		151,909.14	151,909	529,467			
CIDA	862,069		314,841.95	314,842	547,227		-	
UNDEF	336,567		252,810.34	252,810	83,757		-	
TOTAL	3,501,337	-	1,681,443	1,681,443	1,819,894	-		

*The *Received* column in this table should match the figures in the column (of the same title) in the Resource Overview table.

**The *Earmarked* column should specify if any donors have earmarked their funding to a specific activity or other requirement.

Financial utilization

Table 3: Annual expenditure by activity [1 January – 31 December]

Activity	Budget 2007	Expenditures 2007 (Jan-Dec)	Balance	Delivery
Activity 1 Capacity building	349,394.54	236,981.71	112,412.83	68%
Activity 2 Legal Support	207,634.34	-	207,634.34	0%
Activity 3 CVR Pilot Project	919,804.93	497,578.50	422,226.43	54%
Activity 4 Project Running costs	1,367,865.92	895,669.00	472,196.92	65%
UNDP GMS 7%	156,824.82	51,213.61	105,611.21	33%
Grand Total	3,001,524.55	1,681,442.82	1,320,081.73	56%

Table 4: Annual expenditure by donor [1 January – 31 December]

Donor	Activity	2007 Budget	2007 Expenditure	Balance	Delivery
UNDP	ACTIVITY01 Capacity Building	25,212.06	25,419.71	(207.65)	101%
	ACTIVITY03 Joint Civil & Voter Regist Pilot Project	-	87,060.00	(87,060.00)	0%
	ACTIVITY04 :Project Mng & Technical Support	735,957.94	837,340.05	(101,382.11)	114%
	UNDP Total	761,170.00	949,819.76	(188,649.76)	125%
Denmark	ACTIVITY03 Joint Civil & Voter Regist Pilot Project	326,350.36	-	326,350.36	0%
	ACTIVITY04 Project Mng & Technical Support	11,217.32	12,061.63	(844.31)	108%
	GMS (7%)	25,408.32	907.86	24,500.46	4%
	Denmark Total	362,976.00	12,969.49	350,006.51	4%
Italy	ACTIVITY01 Capacity Building	100,680.00	3,512.69	97,167.31	3%
	ACTIVITY03 Joint Civil & Voter Regist Pilot Project	225,000.00	138,070.68	86,929.32	61%
	ACTIVITY04 Project Mng & Technical Support	308,000.00	10,031.49	297,968.51	3%
	GMS (7%)	47,696.34	11,411.87	36,284.47	24%
	Italy Total	681,376.34	163,026.73	518,349.61	24%

Donor	Activity	2007 Budget	2007 Expenditure	Balance	Delivery
CIDA	ACTIVITY01 Capacity Building	223,502.48	230,927.93	(7,425.45)	103%
	ACTIVITY02 Legal Support	207,634.34	-	207,634.34	0%
	ACTIVITY03 Joint Civil & Voter Regist Pilot Project	49,850.96	49,850.97	(0.01)	100%
	ACTIVITY04 Project Mng & Technical Support	312,424.00	41,324.27	271,099.73	13%
	GMS (7%)	59,719.17	24,244.32	35,474.84	41%
	CIDA Total	853,130.95	346,347.49	506,783.45	41%
UNDEF	ACTIVITY03 Joint Civil & Voter Regist Pilot Project	318,603.61	252,543.68	66,059.93	79%
	ACTIVITY04 Project Mng & Technical Support	266.66	266.67	(0.01)	100%
	GMS (7%)	24,000.99	19,028.74	4,972.25	79%
	UNDEF Total	342,871.26	271,839.09	71,032.17	79%