



QUARTERLY PROJECT REPORT [Q2, 2007]

United Nations Development Programme Afghanistan Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT) 01-10-2006 – 01-10-2008



Eye Scanning during the Civil Voter Registration Pilot Project, 10th Police District Kabul City, 15 July 2007

Project ID: 00050324
Duration: 2 years (01/10/06 – 01/10/08)
Component (MYFF): Goal 2 / Service line 2.1
Total Budget: 4,907,593 US\$
Unfunded: 1,829,713 US\$
Implementing Partners/Responsible parties:
Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan

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I. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

UPDATED PROJECT RISKS AND ACTIONS

New IEC Chairman and Revision of the Election Law:

With the change in the Chairmanship of the Commission have come inevitable delays in Commission activities as the new Chair learns about the structure and function of the IEC, how to work with the other Commissioners, and the technical details of electoral process, law and election administration. Given the normal consequences of the arrival of a new Chair, a certain level of delay in the drafting and processing of a draft election law are to be expected. The risk is that delays in the Commission's process will have follow-on delays in the Taqin, the Cabinet and finally in the National Assembly's consideration of the draft. The key issue in the revision of the current law is the system of representation for the Wolesi Jirga in light of the controversy over Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) used in the 2005 elections. These delays could have additional follow-on effects on the IEC Secretariat's ability to plan and execute both voter registration and elections.

Constitutional Provisions Regarding the Schedule and Timing of Elections:

Provisions of the Constitution of Afghanistan call for an ambitious series of elections at the national, provincial and local levels. Given that the various elections are for offices with a variety of lengths of mandates from 3 to 5 years, Afghanistan would have nation-wide elections almost every year. The impact of this situation is imminent since the Constitution calls for Presidential elections in the spring of 2009, Provincial Council elections in the fall of 2009 and National Assembly elections in the spring of 2010. An additional complicating factor is the timing of Presidential and National Assembly elections in the spring when much of the country is inaccessible due to snow. Ultimately, this will pose serious operational challenges for the planning and conduct of the next elections cycle as well as real hardships on the electorate as they try to access their right to vote. Recognition of the problem this poses for Afghanistan is wide-spread however little movement towards a solution has been evident. This poses substantial risks to the upcoming elections and the long-term consolidation of democracy in Afghanistan.

Ministerial Cooperation:

A major component of the ELECT project concerns the implementation of a Civil and Voter Registration Pilot Project (CVR Pilot) which will deliver baseline data and test data collection/capture methodologies to facilitate the design of a National Civil and Voter Registration Project. Inter-organizational cooperation has proven somewhat difficult and continues to pose a risk to the conduct of the CVR Pilot. Moreover, these issues pose an even greater set of questions in relation to a potential national project. Over the last 6 months, the IEC, Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) entered into an agreement to collaborate on the conduct of the CVR Pilot.

Additionally, a CVR Pilot working group was established with representatives of the MOF, the MOI, the IEC, UNDP and IFES. The working group meets weekly at the deputy ministerial level to discuss different issues which then will be given for decision to a joint coordination committee comprised of MOI, MOF, IEC, UNDP and IFES management. The agreement between the various key stakeholders was signed in May 2007 and the coordination group held 2 meetings during the reporting period. All meetings are covered by minutes that are distributed to the different organizations.

UPDATED PROJECT ISSUES AND ACTIONS

Project Content:

Due to the 6-month period in which project implementation was put on hold between the initial design and signing of the project document in November, and additional delays between the the signing of the project document and the actual start of the project in early March 2007 (please refer to the first quarterly report outlining these personnel and funding issues for more information) some of the activities described in the project document no longer accurately reflect the needs of the IEC and need to be adjusted to the current situation.

Actions:

The new Chief Electoral Advisor is currently reviewing the project activities of the project in cooperation with the IEC to streamline and adjust them to the evolving situation. A Project Board meeting is to be held in mid-August to seek approval of the changes in the project by the Board.

Cooperation with other organizations working with the IEC:

When the ELECT project was designed and later revised in July-September 2006, organizations such as the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and The Asia Foundation (TAF) worked with UNDP to coordinate the assistance each was providing to the IEC. This meant that to avoid duplication of effort, each organization took on specific areas of capacity building within the IEC with their separate donor funding streams.

The design of the ELECT Project was therefore, a cooperative approach to providing technical and other assistance to the IEC. The responsibilities of each organization were delineated by the provision of technical advisors to the various departments of the IEC and thus the related IEC activities each group would support.

With direct funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), IFES engaged with the IEC to provide capacity building support to the legal department, information technology, administrative and finance functions and to the Civil and Voter Registration Pilot Project. It provided technical services in these areas as well as financial support to specific departmental capacity building activities.

TAF, with funding from the Government of Australia and USAID, provided assistance to the Public Outreach and Training and Capacity Building Departments of the IEC. The basis of TAF's activities during the reporting period was related to the conduct of BRIDGE Training on the principles of democracy and elections. Participant's included IEC staff and representatives from various civil society organizations. However, TAF was also slated to provide assistance to the Planning and Procedures and Field Operations departments. This assistance did not materialize.

Development of a mechanism for coordination among the involved organizations was requested by the IEC to avoid conflicts and to facilitate synergies between and among the IEC and its assistance providers. The absence of a UNDP-funded Chief Electoral Officer from the signing of the project document until mid May 2007 was cited by the IEC and others as one reason for delays in implementing such a mechanism.

Actions:

The Chief Electoral Advisor (CEA) initiated talks with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of the IEC to regarding the development of a coordination mechanism which would involve regular meetings between the IEC leadership and the heads of IFES, TAF, the CEO and DCEO of the IEC. Further action on this issue is expected during the next quarter.

II. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

OUTPUT 1: IEC'S INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FURTHER BUILT TO CARRY OUT ITS MANDATE AS AN INDEPENDENT CONSTITUTIONAL BODY

1.1. Lessons Learned Exercise:

A three-day seminar covering lessons learned from the 2003-2005 electoral cycle took place in Kabul on May 27-29, 2007. Participants included members of the National Assembly, political parties, the IEC staff and Commissioners, Afghan NGOs and representatives from interested embassies and aid agencies. The discussions generated new insights and ideas as the IEC plans for the next elections. A report is being translated and will be published in August 2007.

1.2.1 Development of a Transitional Knowledge-Based Retention Policy programme.

The IEC, TAF and UNDP have worked on a retention policy paper which focused on the training needs and other incentives for IEC staff. An ambitious training programme has been implemented by the IEC with substantial support from TAF. Other issues related to this activity have been, to a large degree, overtaken by events as the IEC works with the civil service commission to recruit and hire staff in accordance with overall Government of Afghanistan policies and procedures.

1.2.2 Extensive assessment of the organizational structure.

IEC Commissioners have had several discussions regarding the Terms of Reference for Election Management Body capacity assessment expert to be hired. However, while it is recognized by the IEC that their current management structure and work processes need refinement, the discussions have not yielded much action in this regard.

1.2.5 Developing a policy on gender aimed at enhancing women's participation in the election process

No action has yet been taken on this activity as the Commissioner who had been appointed to lead this process left the commission in late 2006. The IEC Secretariat is in the process of recruiting a Gender Focal Point. Once this is done, work on this activity will be resumed.

1.3.1. Conduct an assessment and identify economical printing facilities in-country.

In January 2007, the Ministry of Finance was given the responsibility to establish a "secure documents printing facility." The issue 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 item is planned during the next reporting period.

1.3.3 Conduct an assessment and identify a ballot box design for use in future elections

This is on hold.

1.3.4 Identify the sources for procurement of ballot boxes.

See 1.3.3

1.3.5 Develop a coherent operational plan for the upcoming elections

This activity is temporarily on hold as the IEC deals with the CVR Pilot Project and planning for a national CVR activity. Much of the planning for a national CVR project can be transferred for use in the planning for the conduct of the polls. In addition, some aspects of election planning will

depend on the approval of a revised election law. Various provisions in the revision could contain additional activities (such as constituency delimitation) which could have substantial impact on operational planning and budgeting. Transportation and logistical issues related to election operations have been discussed including the possibility of the IEC entering into agreements with various Government of Afghanistan line ministries so that the IEC can utilize transportation resources from the ministries.

1.3.6 Develop a data base for election personal needed in upcoming elections

The training department of the IEC started on this activity in January 2007 by collecting names and CVs of potential civic educators. Further action will require discussions with a variety of Ministries and a coordinated approach to facilitate inter ministerial cooperation to identify registration and later election staff from various line ministries.

1.3.7 Support the IEC in assessing the physical conditions and possibilities in the provinces.

The assessment of physical conditions at the IEC began in the last week of March with a road mission to Jalalabad to assess office space and rearrange the storage space for electoral material. The department of operations at the IEC is tasked to establish a matrix of the physical conditions which will be presented to donors for potential funding in the 4th quarter of 2007

1.3.8 Support the IEC in assessing the communication and IT possibilities and needs in the Provinces

See 1.3.7

1.3.9 Support the IEC in establishing a basic office infrastructure to enable headquarters to communicate with the provinces.

Currently under discussion is the provision by the ELECT Project of communications facilities for the seven regional offices of the IEC.

OUTPUT 2: EFFECTIVE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN PLACE TO ENABLE THE IEC TO EXECUTE ITS RESPONSIBILITIES.

No activities during the 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

The CVR Pilot project is being implemented by the IEC with support from the ELECT Project, IFES and the Ministry of Interior. An initial lack of project funding, coordination issues, and a initially lukewarm approach to the pilot by the MOI, resulted in a 3 month delay. However, once funding was received, implementation of pilot project activities progressed rapidly and are scheduled for completion at the end of August.

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

All personnel in place per the original project document.

3.1.2 Extensive assessments of logistical necessities

In process.

3.1.3 Intensive training to field formations of IEC on procedures;

The training of trainers took place at IEC Headquarters between the 23-29 of June. Training of registration staff took place in the field from 3-10 of July.

3.1.4 Public Outreach Campaign

Radio spots will start in mid-May and run thru the conclusion of field data collection activities. Civic educators began their work in all three districts on the 18 of May. They will continue their work thru 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.

3.1.5 Joint Civil and Voter Registration Pilot project team established

In May 2007, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Finance, the IEC, IFES and UNDP signed an agreement after nearly six months of preparation and discussion. This agreement established a coordination committee to oversee the pilot project implementation as well as the preparation of the national project.

3.1.6 Launch the pilot project in three selected districts

After participating in a training-of-trainers program at IEC headquarters in Kabul, trainers traveled to the target districts on 2 July to train registration staff on general CVR procedures and the use of the technical equipment for the "automated" system pilot (laptop computer, iris scanning and facial camera, printer, electrical generator, etc.). This training concluded on 14 July and registration started simultaneously in all three districts on 15 July.

3.1.7 Lessons Learned Exercise (from CVR pilot)

This will be held in August according to the new project implementation time table.

III. FINANCIAL STATUS AND UTILISATION

FINANCIAL STATUS

Table 1: Contribution Overview [01.10.2006 – 01.10.2008]¹ Status 30.06.2007

Resources			
DONOR NAME	CONTRIBUTIONS		CONTRIBUTION BALANCE
	Committed	Received	
UNDP	530,000	530,000	-
Italy	681,376	681,376	-
Canada/CIDA	862,067	862,067	
UNDEF	336,567	336,567	-
Denmark	667,870		667,870
TOTAL	3,077,880	2,410,010	667,870

The total budget of the project currently stands at US\$ 4,907,593. The project has funding committed from its donor partners totaling US\$ 3,077,880. The project is fully funded for the first phase until December 2007.

FINANCIAL UTILIZATION

Note: All expenditure figures below reflect 7% GMS with the exception of Expenditures against UNDP core funds, which are charged 0% GMS.

Table 2: Quarterly Expenditure by Activity [1 January – 30 June]

Activity	BUDGET [2007]	QUARTERLY EXPENDITURE 1.Quarter	QUARTERLY EXPENDITURE 2.Quarter	BALANCE	DELIVERY (%)
Activity 1 Capacity building	417,180	0	23,664	393,516	9,7%
Activity 2 Legal Support	260,800	0	0	260,800	0 %
Activity 3 CVR Pilot Project	544,739	0	325,070	219,669	60%
Activity 4 Project Running costs	1,062,424	97,479 (only core funds)	66,606	898,339	19%
UNDP GMS (based on donor agreements 7%)	124,867	0	64,524	60,343	52%
TOTAL	2,410,010	97,479	479,864	1,832,667	24%

Table 3: Quarterly Expenditure by Donor [01.01.2007 – 30.06.2007]

DONORS	ACTIVITY (as per approved budget)	2007 Budget	Q1 Expenditures 01/01/07-31/03/07	Q2 EXPENDITURES 31/03/07- 30/06/07	BALANCE as of 30/06/07	DELIVERY RATE %
UNDP	Activity 1: Capacity Building	88,000	-	21,083	66,917	
	Activity 2: LegalSupport	-	-	-	-	
	Activity 3: CVR Pilot	-	-	-	-	
	Activity 4: Project running Costs	442,00	97,479	61,904	282,617	
GMS 7% (see agreement)		-	-	-	-	34%
Subtotal DONOR I		530,000	97,479	82,987	349,534	
UNDEF	Activity 1: Capacity Building	-	-	-	-	
	Activity 2: LegalSupport	-	-	-	-	
	Activity 3: CVR Pilot	319,739	-	136,995	182,744	
	Activity 4: Project running Costs	-	-	-	-	
GMS 7% (see agreement)		16,828	-	16,828	-	46%
Subtotal DONOR II		336,567	-	153,823	182,744	
Canada	Activity 1: Capacity Building	228,500	-	-	228,500	
	Activity 2: LegalSupport	260,800	-	-	260,800	
	Activity 3: CVR Pilot	-	-	-	-	
	Activity 4: Project running Costs	312,424	-	-	312,424	
GMS 7% (see agreement)		60,343	-	-	60,343	0%
Subtotal Donor III		862,067	-	-	862,067	
Italy	Activity 1: Capacity Building	100,680	-	2,581	98,099	
	Activity 2: LegalSupport	-	-	-	-	
	Activity 3: CVR Pilot	225,000	-	188,075	36,925	
	Activity 4: Project running Costs	308,000	-	4,702	303,298	
GMS 7% (see agreement)		47,696	-	47,696	-	36%
Subtotal DONOR IV		681,376	-	243,054	438,322	
Total		2,410,010	97,479	479,864	1,832,667	24%

All figures are from ATLAS.

ANNEXES

Annual Work Plan (external)