

GPECS II

Global Project for Electoral Cycle Support II 2015 – 2017

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Global Project for Electoral Cycle Support: Questions & Answers

Why does UNDP need a global project on electoral assistance?

Assisting national partners such as electoral management bodies, civil society organizations delivering civic education and women's groups in the development of their capacity is at the centre of UNDP's electoral assistance. Most UNDP electoral assistance is delivered through projects implemented by UNDP country offices in the field. It is important, however, for UNDP to have a global project that develops and combines the lessons learned in these national level projects, and feeds them back into both the global policy dialogue and the development of new projects. The Global Project on Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS), in support of the UNDP regional bureaux and under the parameters set by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs in his capacity of UN electoral Focal Point, supports country offices in the development of new projects that reflect the latest best practices in both electoral assistance and electoral administration. It also supports global capacity development (such as via the Building Resources in Democratic Governance and Elections project – BRIDGE) and knowledge tools such as the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network. It facilitates regional and South-South cooperation (via support to groups such as the Organisation of Arab Electoral Management Bodies). Furthermore, the Global Project steers UNDP's strategic partnerships with other UN entities, such as

the Department of Political Affairs (whose Electoral Assistance Division supports the Focal Point), UN Women, and international non-profit organizations (e.g. IFES, International IDEA).

How does the Global Project on Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS II) work?

GPECS has four components: global, regional, country, and gender, which are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Staff are located in Addis Ababa, Amman, Bangkok, Brussels, New York and Panama. The New York-based policy advisory team in the Governance and Peacebuilding cluster in the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support coordinates the Project. The team leads UNDP's work in the field of UN electoral policy development (under the leadership of DPA), best practice and lessons learned development, and supports the UNDP regional bureaux in the oversight and quality assurance of country-level projects. GPECS Regional Electoral Advisors based in Africa, Arab States, Asia and Latin America are the first line of policy and programming support to UNDP country offices and their electoral assistance projects. The Regional Advisors participate in DPA-led electoral Needs Assessment Missions, formulate projects in support of the regional bureaux and the country offices, provide ongoing and troubleshooting support, and support regional knowledge-sharing, regional bodies, and South-South cooperation. The Brussels-based EC-UNDP Joint-

Task Force on Electoral Assistance (JTF) closely collaborates with the European Union services with regards to facilitating EU-UNDP partnership in the implementation of UNDP projects financially supported by the EU. The JTF also works with EU colleagues in the codifying of lessons learned from the implementation of country-level projects, and hosts global community of practice events. Gender staff located in New York ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout the other components.

What are the regional electoral activities?

GPECS' regional work, designed specifically for each of UNDP's five regions (Africa, Arab States, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and CIS), focuses on building regional networks, as well as supporting the capacity development of different regional stakeholders. In the Arab States, for example, GPECS facilitated the establishment of the Organization of Arab Electoral Management Bodies, consisting of 9 national EMBs. Within GPECS II, the Amman-based secretariat will be supported in its organizational development. In Africa, support is provided to relevant units of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities, often with a focus on building the capacities of domestic observers, gender mainstreaming and youth.

Why is policy and capacity development still so important?

Elections are a highly dynamic area, evolving rapidly with, for example, the increased use of new technology, which requires electoral assistance to adopt new approaches, new policies and new methods to develop capacity. Furthermore, UNDP provides electoral assistance to approximately 70 countries per year. Countries that request electoral assistance range from member states with high Human Development Indexes, such as Georgia, Lebanon and Mexico, to the bottom of the ranking, which includes countries like Afghanistan, Chad and Niger. Hence, UNDP electoral assistance covers not only a high number, but a heterogeneous spectrum of countries, and capacity development tools and measures, as well as UN electoral policies, need to take this diversity into account and reflect emerging needs and trends.

How can development partners contribute to GPECS II?

GPECS II allows for earmarked and un-earmarked contributions, and features a mechanism that allows donor contributions to be channeled to specific countries. The 'fast-track' mechanism ensures that these electoral processes can be supported in very short timeframes. Development partners can make general contributions to GPECS II, or channel their

contributions to a certain GPECS II component (Global – Regional – Country – Gender). While GPECS is a multi-year project, financial contributions can be made on an annual basis or for multiple years. A Steering Committee, which includes development partners contributing to the project, governs the strategic direction of GPECS II and the allocation of country funds.

What is the additional benefit of supporting the global project compared to electoral assistance projects on national level?

GPECS II does not compete with national electoral assistance projects for funding, nor seeks to replace such initiatives. GPECS II rather aims at providing an additional, holistic and comprehensive layer of UNDP electoral support. These efforts are complementary to UNDP's projects and create an enabling environment for electoral assistance at the country level, by providing support to regional networks and structures, providing ad-hoc support on the ground, developing knowledge tools and capacity development measures, and support the Department of Political Affairs in the drafting of UN electoral policy. GPECS II advises and guides UNDP electoral assistance projects and functions as an ad-hoc and on-demand service provider, as well as a coordination hub of UNDP electoral assistance. Global projects such as GPECS II ensure that UNDP activities in member states are coherent, in-line with the latest global developments, innovative, sustainable and that lessons learned are well documented and integrated into future programming. Most importantly, GPECS II can be used as a rapid response mechanism to kick start electoral assistance interventions. This is particularly relevant for transitional, post-conflict, and fragile countries where the UN is often requested to provide support at short-notice.

How has UNDP's restructuring affected electoral assistance?

Within UNDP's new Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, electoral assistance is part of the "Inclusive Political Processes" team in the Governance and Peacebuilding cluster, which promotes increased integration of electoral assistance with support to elected bodies (particularly national parliaments), constitutional support, support to civic engagement and women's empowerment. UNDP's support in the area of Inclusive Political Processes is delivered through two Global Projects; GPECS II and the Global Project for Inclusive Political Processes in Peace and Development. GPIPPD and GPECS are complementary and mutually reinforcing. GPIPP facilitates advocacy, knowledge sharing and advisory services efforts to key political institutions for contributing to the implementation of national SDG agendas, while GPECS provides global leadership, advocacy and capacity development in the field of electoral cycle support.