# *Electoral Cycle Support*
## to the Election Commission of Pakistan



Annual Progress Report
January – December 2012

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Award ID:                          00062980

Project No:                        81893

Description:                       The Electoral Cycle Support
                                   Project to the Election Commission
                                   of Pakistan

Implementing Partners:             UN Women

Period Covered:                    January 2012 – December 2012

Project Start and End Date:        January 2012 – December 2014

# Contents

# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| AWPs | Annual Work Plan |
| BRIDGE | Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections |
| CVE | Civic and Voter Education |
| ECP | Election Commission of Pakistan |
| FEA | Federal Election Academy |
| NADRA | National Database and Registration Authority |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |

# 1.  INTRODUCTION

The Project was established following a request by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to the United Nations for electoral assistance in July 2011.  A Needs Assessment Mission visited Pakistan later that month followed by a Project Formulation Mission in October 2011 and the Project Document was signed in January 2012 by the ECP, Economic Affairs Division and UNDP. The first Project Review Board meeting was held in March 2012 at which the Project's annual work plan was approved.

The purpose of the Project is to support the ECP in implementing its Five Year Strategic Plan (2010-2014) and takes an electoral cycle approach providing assistance before, during and after the elections.  Phase I of the Project covers the pre-elections and elections period and the Project's three output areas are:

**Output 1:**     Increased capacity of the Election Commission to deliver its Strategic Plan
**Output 2:**     Electoral laws and procedures strengthened for increased administrative effectiveness
**Output 3:**     Improved engagement of citizens, particularly women, in electoral processes

UNDP is partnering with UN Women in implementing this Project drawing on UN Women's expertise to ensure gender mainstreaming across all output areas and in mobilizing women to participate in the elections.

The Project's core team was recruited in March-April 2012 and activities commenced soon after. In less than a year the Project has made considerable progress and achievements have been made in the areas of Polling Staff Training; Elections Results Management; and Voter Education. The Project has focused on supporting the General Elections expected to be held by mid-2013 and the full impact of activities will not be known till then. However there are already indicators of positive impacts such as the improved competence of polling staff during bye-elections; enhanced accuracy and transparency of elections results management; and strengthened ECP leadership in voter education.

The Project's contributing partners are Australia ($3.2 M), the European Union ($3.06 M), Norway ($1.48 M) and UNDP ($0.5 M).

# 2.   SITUATION ANALYSIS

There was considerable speculation during much of 2012 that either early general elections or local government elections would be held this year. The Project thus brought forward several activities and ramped up its preparations rapidly to be in a position to support early elections.

In the first half of 2012 the ECP underwent significant leadership change – temporary appointments were made to the key positions of Chief Election Commissioner and ECP Secretary and the post of ECP Additional Secretary was left vacant before permanent appointments were made. The Chief Election Commissioner, selected jointly by the Government and Opposition, is widely regarded for his integrity, honesty and non-partisanship. This has improved the standing of the ECP in the eyes of many and there are higher expectations that elections under his leadership will be more credible than before.

Through the year the Supreme Court has delivered several judgments concerning the conduct and administration of elections. It directed the ECP to take specific actions on a number of

fronts including setting up many more polling stations nationwide than the ECP had intended as well as the door to door re-verification of voters and re-delimiting of constituencies in Karachi. These new measures will have time and cost implications.

Given the country's current financial situation the ECP is not likely to receive sufficient funds from the Government of Pakistan to undertake all the measures necessary to safeguard a credible and peaceful election. The ECP will be increasing the number of polling stations for the General Elections requiring more staff and materials. It would like to install CCTV cameras in sensitive polling stations to deter rigging and intimidation. The increase in the number of voters, especially of first time voters, will also require more extensive voter education outreach.

Aside from contributions from Australia, the European Union and Norway the Project has been unable to mobilize additional resources and is currently not in a position to support ECP requests for further assistance. The success of any election depends on several factors and there is a risk that the credibility of the elections will suffer if the necessary measures to safeguard the elections are not taken due to funding constraints. The UNDP Regional Centre for Asia-Pacific assisted the Project by carrying out a risk assessment for the General Elections. The assessment outlines possible risks to the credibility of the elections, including the risk of electoral violence, and recommends mitigation measures to be taken such as training of police in their electoral related duties; stricter law enforcement; training of journalists and reporters in elections reporting; and more civic and voter education to promote positive messages of inclusive and peaceful elections. The assessment has been shared with the Electoral Support Group that comprises donors and their implementing partners.

# 3. Project Performance

### 3.1    Key Results Achieved During the Year (Summary)

The Project's activities this year were geared towards supporting the General Elections which are now expected to take place by mid-2013 when the impact and the results of these activities will be known. However, there have been notable achievements this year, in the three main project areas of Polling Staff Training; Elections Results Management; and Voter Education.

· **Improved Competence of Polling Staff**

One of the Project's main activities is to support the ECP to train  polling staff for the General Elections (over 600,000 polling staff are estimated to be needed for over 70,000 polling stations throughout the country). The Project improved the previous training methods adopted by the ECP by making the training more practical by emphasizing role-play, simulation, and practice in completing polling station results forms. It also revised the training materials making them easier to understand and introduced pre-printed flipcharts to aid the training. UN Women contributed its expertise in the development of training materials to ensure they were gender sensitive and held sessions with lead trainers to provide guidance on addressing women's concerns during training. Training methods and materials were tested and refined during the bye-elections held in 2012. Over 11,700 polling staff were trained during these bye-elections. Of those, over 8,000 were trained for bye-elections held on 4 December using the revised training materials. The responses by polling staff from their evaluation forms demonstrate that overwhelmingly they found the training very useful, and even those who had been trained in

previous elections  also noted that this method of training was much better and that they had learned much more this time.

*Feedback during the training in the Narowal bye-elections:*

*The polling staff shared that they had come to the training for the sake of marking their attendance as in the past attendance was important rather than the training so they "came with the same mindset". However at the end of the training, the same participants said that without such wonderful training we cannot perform our duties so now we will convey this message to all other polling staff not to miss the training.*

*Feedback from the training in the Multan bye-elections:*

*"I have never even voted before and had no idea what to do as a Presiding Officer. This training has helped clarify my duties and moreover it provided an opportunity to meet the Assistant Presiding Officer and Polling Officer assigned at my polling station."*

*"I enjoyed the practical part of the training very much, especially the part on how to seal the ballot box. I had never seen that before."*

In two constituencies during the bye-elections on 4 December the polling station elections results forms were examined for errors and only one minor error was noted out of 111 polling station forms in one constituency, and in the second constituency only four errors were noted out of 281 forms. The ECP has consistently complained that errors made by polling staff in completing polling station results forms have been a common occurrence frustrating their efforts to compile accurate elections results. By ensuring that the training imparted to polling staff puts a practical emphasis on how to fill in a polling station results form these errors have been minimized enabling much more accurate elections results to be compiled.

### · Improved Elections Results Management

The Project is supporting the ECP to develop and implement an elections results management system for accurate, transparent and quick compilation and publication of constituency-level elections results for the next General Elections and beyond. Three field tests have been conducted this year with a new elections results management system tested during the bye-elections on 4 December in two constituencies. These tests were conducted in parallel with the ECP's existing results management process and significant improvements over the existing process were demonstrated. The ECP benefited from having, for the first time: a database of polling station level results; scanned polling station results forms; improved accuracy of results compilation; quick transmission of elections results to ECP HQ; as well as voter turnout data for each polling station including gender-disaggregated turnout. These improvements will have a significant impact in deterring fraud at polling stations. The accurate and quick publication of elections results will also increase public confidence in the elections.

- **Gender-disaggregated Voter Turnout**

  Voter turnout was gender-disaggregated for the first time in Pakistan during bye-elections this year where the Project field-tested the elections results management system. ECP's existing procedures and practices do not allow for statistics to be collected on the number of men and women who have cast their votes. Through field-tests in five bye-elections the Project, with ECP permission, collected these gender-disaggregated statistics and analyzed them. Polling stations with very low and even zero women turnout were identified in these field-tests. They demonstrated that collecting gender-disaggregated statistics requires a minor modification to an existing ECP form and that the benefits of doing so are quickly apparent, assisting the ECP and stakeholders to identify areas where women face obstacles in voting and to take the necessary steps to encourage their participation.

- **ECP-led Voter Education**

  In previous elections the ECP focused on conducting voter education through the media leaving district-level voter education efforts to civil society organizations. With support from The Project this year the ECP launched its first ever Voter Education Plan with an emphasis on district-level outreach; initiated and celebrated Pakistan's first National Voter's Day; and will be embarking on nationwide voter education training for its district officers in January 2013. The ECP has set itself an ambitious target of achieving 84% voter turnout in the General Elections, compared to only 44% in the last General Elections in 2008. This time the ECP is determined to be at the forefront of voter education leading and coordinating support provided by various government departments and civil society organizations. This has been a significant development for the ECP demonstrating its increased confidence and capacity and determination to reach out to and motivate citizens in order to increase voter turnout in the General Elections.

## 3.2    Progress Towards Prodoc Outputs and Annual Work Plans (AWPs)

**Output 1:  Increased capacity of the ECP to deliver its Strategic Plan**

**Results achieved in 2012:**

- **Improved competence of polling staff through better training methods and training materials**

  The Project improved the previous training methods adopted by the ECP by making the training more practical by emphasizing role-play, simulation, and practice in completing polling station results forms. It also revised the training materials making them easier to understand and introduced pre-printed flipcharts to aid the training. Training methods and materials were tested and refined during the bye-elections held in 2012. Over 11,000 polling staff were trained during these bye-elections. Of those, over 8,000 were trained for bye-elections held on 4 December using the revised training materials.

Means of Verification:

The responses by polling staff from their evaluation forms demonstrate that overwhelmingly they found the training very useful, and those who had experienced previous training by ECP also noted that this method of training was much better and that they had learned more this time. In two constituencies during the bye-elections on 4 December the polling station elections results forms were examined for errors and only one minor error was noted out of 111 polling station forms in one constituency, and in the second constituency only four errors were noted out of 281 forms. The ECP has consistently complained that errors made by polling staff in completing polling station results forms have been a common occurrence frustrating their efforts to compile accurate elections results. By ensuring that the training imparted to polling staff puts a practical emphasis on how to fill in a polling station results form these errors have been minimized enabling much more accurate elections results to be compiled.

- **More ballot boxes procured for ECP enabling more polling stations to be opened**

  The Project procured 65,000 ballot boxes so that the ECP could establish more polling stations to cater for an increased number of registered voters.

- Other activities in 2012 for which results and impacts will not be evident till 2013 include support to ECP to increase the number of its women staff; and support to ECP for internal and external consultations with stakeholders.

**Output 2: Electoral laws and procedures strengthened for increased administrative effectiveness**

**Results achieved in 2012:**

- **Improved Elections Results Management**

  The Project is supporting the ECP to develop and implement an elections results management system for accurate, transparent and quick compilation and publication of constituency-level elections results for the next General Elections and beyond. Three field tests have been conducted this year with a new elections results management system tested during the bye-elections on 4 December in two constituencies. These tests were conducted in parallel with the ECP's existing results management process and significant improvements over the existing process were demonstrated. The ECP benefited from having, for the first time: a database of polling station level results; scanned polling station results forms; improved accuracy of results compilation; quick transmission of elections results to ECP HQ; as well as voter turnout data for each polling station including gender-disaggregated turnout. These improvements will have a significant impact in deterring fraud at polling stations. The accurate and quick publication of elections results will also increase public confidence in the elections.

Means of Verification:

More detailed information about elections results made available to the public on the ECP website in a shorter amount of time compared to the last General Elections in 2008.

- **Gender-disaggregated Voter Turnout**

  Voter turnout was gender-disaggregated for the first time in Pakistan during bye-elections this year where the Project field-tested the elections results management system. ECP's existing procedures and practices do not allow for statistics to be collected on the number of men and women who have cast their votes. Through field-tests in five bye-elections the Project, with ECP permission, collected these gender-disaggregated statistics and analyzed them. Polling stations with very low and even zero women turnout were identified in these field-tests. They demonstrated that collecting gender-disaggregated statistics requires a minor modification to an existing ECP form and that the benefits of doing so are quickly apparent, assisting the ECP and stakeholders to identify areas where women face obstacles in voting and to take the necessary steps to encourage their participation.

  Means of Verification:

  Information on gender disaggregated voter turnout made available to the public on the ECP website in the 2013 General Elections.

- Other activities in 2012 for which results and impacts will not be evident till 2013 include technical assistance to the ECP on the Supreme Court judgment on a range of electoral matters and the Codes of Conduct.

**Output 3: Improved engagement of citizens, particularly women and youth in electoral processes**

**Results achieved in 2012:**

- **ECP-led Voter Education**

  In previous elections the ECP focused on conducting voter education through the media leaving district-level voter education efforts to civil society organizations. With support from The Project this year the ECP launched its first ever Voter Education Plan with an emphasis on district-level outreach; initiated and celebrated Pakistan's first National Voter's Day; and will be embarking on nationwide voter education training for its district officers in January 2013. The ECP has set itself an ambitious target of achieving 84% voter turnout in the General Elections, compared to only 44% in the last General Elections in 2008. This time the ECP is determined to be at the forefront of voter education leading and coordinating support provided by various government departments and civil society organizations. This has been a significant development for the ECP demonstrating its increased confidence and capacity and determination to reach out to and motivate citizens in order to increase voter turnout in the General Elections.

Means of Verification:

One of the key messages for National Voter's Day was for voters to check their enrolment details by sending an SMS with their CNIC number to a special 8300 number. The Project supported the ECP to design and disseminate brochures, banners and stickers advertising the 8300 number. According to NADRA statistics the number of SMS to that number registered a threefold increase on National Voter's Day (17 October 2012).

- Other activities in 2012 for which results and impacts will not be evident till 2013 include voter education campaigns through media, social media and print; and voter education, including mobilization of women and youth volunteers through face to face activities and street theatre, carried out by civil society organizations supported through The Project. A baseline survey will be carried out in December 2012-January 2013 followed by another survey to be carried out post-elections to determine the impact of the Project's voter education activities in selected districts.

# 4. Project Risks and Issues

| Project Risks | Mitigation Strategy | Status |
|---|---|---|
| The Project currently has insufficient funding to cover training for all polling staff and no funding to support ECP in key areas such as expanded voter education.<br><br>Without firm donor commitment for Phase II of the Project post-elections the Project also faces the possibility of losing essential staff just prior to the elections at a time when it can ill-afford to. | Continuation of efforts to mobilize resources. | On-going |

# 5. Lessons Learnt

Several lessons have been learned this year. The first and most important lesson is that securing sufficient project funding at an early stage is essential. It is extremely challenging to be in a position a few months before the elections without sufficient funding and with the added risk of losing essential Project team members. Another lesson learnt was that UNDP fast track approval for procurement and recruitment was essential in order for the Project to be prepared in time for possible early elections. The integrated UNDP-UN Women Project team worked very well combining the skills, expertise and networks of both organizations to achieve the Project's targets and similar integration should be considered for all elections support projects.

# 6.   The Way Forward and Strategic Priorities for 2013

The main priority in the next few months will be to support the ECP for the upcoming General Elections expected to be held by mid-2013. Resource mobilization for the General Elections and Phase II of the Project will continue to be a very high priority. Development of Phase II priorities and annual work plan will also take place in 2013 in consultation with ECP, other assistance organizations, and donors.

**UNDP-Electoral Cycle Support to ECP Project Provisional Annual Expenses Report for the year Ended 31 Dec 2012**

## Activity 1: Increased capacity of the Election Commission to deliver its Strategic Plan

| Sub Activity | Description of Sub Activity | Budget (US $) | | | | Expenditure (US $) | | | | % Delivery |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | TRAC | Gov | Donor / Cost Sharing | Total | Trac | Gov | Donor / Cost Sharing | Total | |
| 1.1 | Technical Assistance to ECP | 149,341 | - | 66,000 | 215,341 | 149,341 | - | 68,340 | 217,682 | 101% |
| 1.2 | BRIDGE Trainings | - | - | 10,500 | 10,500 | - | - | 10,500 | 10,500 | 100% |
| 1.3 | Institutional development of FEA | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0% |
| 1.4 | Support for Operational Trainings | 9,261 | - | 210,000 | 219,261 | 9,261 | - | 205,519 | 214,780 | 98% |
| 1.5 | Public Outreach Program | - | - | 9,000 | 9,000 | - | - | 8,823 | 8,823 | 98% |
| 1.7 | Provision of Ballot Boxes | 713 | - | 980,000 | 980,713 | 713 | - | 980,478 | 981,190 | 100% |
| | | 159,315 | - | 1,275,500 | 1,434,815 | 159,315 | - | 1,273,660 | 1,432,975 | |

## Activity 2: Electoral laws and procedures strengthened for increased administrative effectiveness

| Sub Activity | Description of Sub Activity | TRAC | Gov | Donor / Cost Sharing | Total | Trac | Gov | Donor / Cost Sharing | Total | % Delivery |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | Legal Expert to assist ECP | 66,805 | - | - | 66,805 | 66,805 | - | - | 66,805 | 100% |
| 2.4 | Development of Results Management System | - | - | 110,000 | 110,000 | - | - | 101,210 | 101,210 | 92% |
| 2.5 | Results Management Equipment | 85,642 | - | 1,155,000 | 1,240,642 | 85,642 | - | 963,318 | 1,048,960 | 85% |
| | | 152,447 | - | 1,265,000 | 1,417,447 | 152,447 | - | 1,064,528 | 1,216,975 | |

## Activity 3 : Improved engagement of citizens, particularly women and youth in electoral processes

| Sub Activity | Description of Sub Activity | TRAC | Gov | Donor / Cost Sharing | Total | Trac | Gov | Donor / Cost Sharing | Total | % Delivery |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.2 | Women and Democracy Program/ UNW | - | - | 250,000 | 250,000 | - | - | 164,550 | 164,550 | 66% |
| 3.4 | Strengthening ECP district staff in CVE | - | - | 36,500 | 36,500 | - | - | 30,534 | 30,534 | 84% |
| 3.5 | Civic and Voter education through electronic and social media and SMS | - | - | 120,000 | 120,000 | - | - | 119,485 | 119,485 | 100% |
| 3.6 | Baseline Study | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5,897 | 5,897 | 0% |
| | | - | - | 406,500 | 406,500 | - | - | 320,466 | 320,466 | |

## Activity 4 : Project Management Unit

| Sub Activity | Description of Sub Activity | TRAC | Gov | Donor / Cost Sharing | Total | Trac | Gov | Donor / Cost Sharing | Total | % Delivery |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.1 | Staff Cost | 20,281 | - | 140,000 | 160,281 | 20,281 | - | 134,037 | 154,317 | 96% |
| 4.2 | M&E | 36,029 | - | 13,971 | 50,000 | 36,029 | - | 13,279 | 49,308 | 99% |
| 4.3 | Operation of Project | 27,288 | - | 152,000 | 179,288 | 27,288 | - | 279,634 | 306,922 | 171% |
| | GMS | - | - | 103,000 | 103,000 | - | - | 102,953 | 102,953 | 100% |
| | | 83,598 | - | 408,971 | 492,569 | 83,598 | - | 529,903 | 613,501 | 96% |
| | | 395,360 | - | 3,355,971 | 3,751,331 | 395,360 | - | 3,188,557 | 3,583,917 | 96% |