

Project Report

Quarterly Progress Report Number 4 1 January to 31 March 2012

Summary Table

Executing Agency:	United Nations Development Programme		
Country:	Tunisia		
Project:	Support to Electoral Process in Tunisia Project		
Project Duration:	April 2011-December 2013		
Project Budget:	[REDACTED]		
Reporting Period:	1 January to 31 March 2012		
Funds Allocated(US\$):	Sweden:	[REDACTED]	
	Spain:	[REDACTED]	
	AUSAID:	[REDACTED]	
	UNDP:	[REDACTED]	
	SDC:	[REDACTED]	
	FCO:	[REDACTED]	
	Contributions received March 2012:	[REDACTED]	
	Pledges:	[REDACTED]	
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General Overview of the Electoral Process

The beginning of 2012 was marked by the uncertainties surrounding the future of the electoral management body (ISIE) for the national constituent assembly elections. The situation remained unchanged during the first quarter with discussions around maintaining or not, and if yes in what shape, ISIE to bridge the transition to the establishment of a permanent independent electoral management body, which is required by article 25 of the law on the transitional organization of public powers.

Following the adoption of its internal regulation, the National Constituent Assembly appointed the members of its commissions on 3 February. The NCA established six constituent commissions, including one on constitutional bodies, nine legislative commissions and three special commissions. The NCA members and their parties also formed seven parliamentary groups.

In February, the government formed a technical committee for drafting the electoral legislation to set up the next electoral management body within the ministry in charge of the relations between the government and the NCA.

During the course of the first quarter of 2012, the project continued to provide support to the different Tunisian authorities involved in electoral matters, mostly through knowledge exchange activities. These included the organizing a conference on “Key principles for Tunisia’s next election management body” organized with the technical assistance teams of IFES and the EU, facilitating the participation of Tunisian delegations in workshops on electoral issues in Mexico and Mombasa and holding a series of round table discussions of specific issues for the future EMB law with the government’s technical committee and representatives of other institutions.

On 2 March, the project held its fourth Basket Fund Steering Committee meeting. In the meeting, the extension of the project to 31 December 2013 as well as the Annual Work Plan for 2012 and its budget were approved. In order to implement the work plan in full, the project will need to mobilize an additional USD 1 million of funding.

Project Performance

The project team broadened its support to national institutions with a role in the electoral process, facilitated discussions among these and exposed them to international experience, particularly on the most critical electoral issue of the moment: the setting up of the permanent electoral management body.

On the project management side, the 2012 annual work plan was approved and recruitment processes for restructuration of the team are underway. The mobilization of the additional resource required also started and AUSAID made an additional pledge.

Output 1: The capacity of successive election management bodies to administer elections independently and effectively and mainstream gender equality is built

The team activities focused on events to promote discussions and knowledge exchange with and among Tunisian stakeholders on the priority issues for the drafting of the new electoral framework: the review of the existing electoral legislative framework, electoral management bodies and information technology for elections.

The team continued its support to ISIE and started working with a number of other local actors, such as members of the NCA legislative commission and the members of the committee in charge of the drafting of the EMB law, by providing opportunities for sharing comparative perspectives on different electoral matters and responding to specific requests for support.

The project organized a round table on the analysis of the existing electoral framework on 6 January, bringing together for the first time representatives from committee of experts who drafted the law, ISIE, the Administrative Tribunal and from the NCA. Following the demand expressed at this event, the project organized a second roundtable, on out-of-country voting, on 4 February.

Based on a request received by the government's committee drafting the law on the permanent electoral management body to the UNDP Resident Representative, the project organized two working sessions with the members of the committee and provided a comparative perspective on each of the points for discussion. It involved IFES and the EU technical assistance teams in this activity. The debates were very constructive and showed the determination within the committee to meet internationally recognized good practices while drafting the law.

The project led the organization in Tunis of the first international conference on "Building key principles into the design of the future Electoral Management Body: Tunisian and International perspectives". This event was held on 27 February in partnership with IFES and the EU technical assistance team. The team also supported the organization of the conference "Which future legal framework for elections in Tunisia - National and International perspectives" of 12 and 13 March, whose organization was led by IFES.

The team also facilitated the participation of Tunisian representatives in international workshops on electoral issues: At the beginning of March, four representatives from ISIE, the national information technology center (CNI) and the national statistics center (CNS) participated in a five-day workshop organized by the EU-UNDP Joint Task Force in Mombasa, Kenya, where elections and information technology were discussed. In addition to this, it facilitated the participation of an eight-member delegation representing ISIE, the ANC, the government and civil society in an "Exchange on Independent and Permanent Electoral Management Bodies: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Mexico", which was organized by the Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE) in Mexico from 22 to 24 March.

The participation of Tunisian stakeholders in these types of events proved to be a useful tool for building awareness as well as deepening the understanding of specific electoral matters and the implications of certain strategic choices. Not only did the project receive positive feedback on the relevance of the subjects and the added value

brought to the debates by these activities, the activities also generated additional request for support by the NCA, the drafting committee as well as the CNI.

Another positive effect of these initiatives is the increase in contacts and exchanges between electoral administrators within the Arab world and among Egypt, Libya and Tunisia in particular.

OUTPUT 2.1: The capacity of Civil Society networks and other actors to dialogue meaningfully with the EMBs in the development of voter and civic and education campaigns is enhanced

The team is focusing on two main activities, the preparation for BRIDGE training with civil society with focus on public outreach and a series of seminars within universities to create awareness and provide a comparative perspective on electoral issues in the transition to democracy.

During this transitional period in Tunisia, the civil society universe is both dynamic and difficult to engage with. Many new organizations are being established, often with little capacity to implement activities. In this context, the project has reinforced and/or established contacts with civil society groups to identify credible partners for the implementation of BRIDGE trainings.

This series of seminars at universities on the democratic transition is organized in coordination with the UNDP Governance unit and is meant to bring the discussion on elections in democratic transition across the country. The objective is to involve students and university lecturers in the discussions of the key issues of the democratic transition and to expose them to the international experience in these areas. The series started with the first seminar held at the Faculty of Law and Political Science, in Tunis, on Electoral Management Bodies on 29 February.

OUTPUT 2.2: Innovative and effective tools for communicating electoral information are produced with special attention to targeting youth, women and vulnerable groups

The draft of the Arabic-French glossary of election-related terminology was completed during the second half of March. The Tunisian experts involved in the project generated a high-level debate on electoral terminology which has also enriched the national expertise. The publication of the glossary is scheduled for the beginning of June.

OUTPUT3: The capacity of women to participate successfully in electoral processes as candidates is built

The documentary that follows the campaign trail of five women candidates was launched on 8 March for international women's day. About 250 participants attended the launch event.

The target group, the content and the methodology for the training tool aimed at journalists on how to ensure a fair electoral coverage of women and men's electoral campaign were determined.

PMU

The 2012 The Basket Fund Steering Committee Meeting approved the 2012 Annual Work Plan during its meeting held on 2 March 2012. The extensions of the Cost sharing agreements have been signed further to the project extension until 31 December 2013. The Basket Fund statutory documents are being signed by all the parties except for the Spain representative.

The FTA posts that were advertised early January are being recruited; Three out of five have already passed the interviews (Technical Advisor (Elections), Operations Advisor and Legal Advisor) and the national Information Management Specialist has been recruited. The posts of Capacity Building Advisor and Programme Specialist will soon be advertised for conversion into FTA.

AUSAID pledged an additional [REDACTED]

Finance Update

UNDP Tunisia presents its interim Final report for the period from 1 January to 31 March 2012 which accounts for the expenditures of the Support to Electoral Process funded by the Elections Basket Fund and governed by its steering committee.

Throughout the following financial report, every effort has been made to present realistic expenditure against the related budget in accordance with UNDP financial rules and regulations. The report is presented according to the UNDP Corporate Financial Management systems requirements and project's budgeting policies. UNDP Tunisia Country Office proposes a report for project performance beginning 1st January to 31st March 2012, corresponding to the delivery of [REDACTED]

For the entire period of project performance starting 15 April 2011 until 31 March 2012, the total delivery is [REDACTED]5. The expenditure to date corresponds to 42% of the funds received from the Donors.

A total amount of [REDACTED]1 has been availed by the donors and UNDP for the project's implementation throughout the entire period; hence a balance of [REDACTED] is available as of 31 March 2012.

The figures enclosed in this interim Progress Report are also subject to increase pending application of GMS pertaining to the period (1st quarter).

Below is the consolidated project Budget against expenditure.

CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF 31 MARCH 2011 (US DOLLARS)			
DONOR	CONTRIBUTION	EXPENDITURE	BALANCE
SIDA			
GPECS			
AUSAID			
UNDP			
SDC (Switzerland)			
FCO (UK)			
TOTAL	\$		

The FCO contribution was applied to the project on 30 March 2012 and the decrease on UNDP contribution in the amount of \$4,733 further to the closure of 2011 related expenditure report cannot be reported to the opening balance of 2012.

The remaining balance of the GPECS contribution will be claimed and applied to the project.

Challenges

The main challenge the project faced during the reporting period is related to the uncertainties of the transitional phase Tunisia is going through. The first quarter of 2012 coincided with the commencement of the work of the National Constituent Assembly and with changes in both the political and the NGO landscape while the status of ISIE, the main counterpart of the project during the earlier phases, was not resolved. These uncertainties made the identification of counterparts as well as the timing of activities challenging at times.

The analysis of possible scenarios and careful engagement with a broader range of counterparts, both with extensive support from the UNDP Country Office, as well as flexible planning and maintaining the capacity to respond to emerging demands allowed the project to continue working towards the project objectives in this new context.

Lessons learnt

The experience of the past few months working with different actors primarily on the development of the electoral framework reconfirmed that a providing assistance in a discreet manner, by maintaining a low profile and focusing on sharing comparative experience is the most effective of providing electoral assistance in the Tunisian context.

The recent experience has also shown that electoral assistance in the post-electoral phase within a democratic transition can play an important role in facilitating the dialogue between different political and non-political actors and institutions involved in electoral matters. The mutual understanding and trust thus built is a contribution to the electoral process that goes beyond the technical aspects of elections.

Annexes

1. Conference report “Building key principles into the design of the future Electoral Management Body: Tunisian and International perspectives”