



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Malawi Electoral Cycle Support 2017-19

Project Annual Progress Report

September - December 2017

Supported by



European Union

Document Name	Project Annual Progress Report - 2017
Production Date and Reference	20 th March, 2018
Donors	European Union, UNDP
Project Title	Malawi Electoral Cycle Support, 2017-2019
Reporting Period	September – December 2017
Attachments	Financial Report; and Summary M&E Report
Contact Information	<p>Claire Medina, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative - Programmes Email: claire.medina@undp.org</p> <p>Richard Cox, Chief Technical Advisor Email: richard.cox@undp.org;</p>

I. PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The Project contributes directly to the SDG 16 goal of ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. The primary goal of the Project is to assist in Malawi's consensual development of procedural certainty among key electoral stakeholders. This goal arises against the backdrop of a unique opportunity for transformation that has arisen from electoral and political reform processes. The Project is structured around four outputs:

- (1) The MEC is trusted by the public and political parties as an impartial entity possessing the capacity to administer and manage elections in accordance with regional and international obligations;
- (2) Women's political empowerment throughout the electoral cycle is strengthened;
- (3) Enhanced ability of key stakeholders, including political parties, to contribute to orderly and inclusive elections; and
- (4) Effective and efficient management, partnership formation and monitoring and evaluation of the Project.

In contrast to past efforts, the scope of the Project's outputs emphasizes a broader conceptual approach toward engaging key actors in fostering democratic development in Malawi. This methodological shift reflects an appreciation for the anticipated challenges likely to arise for the elections in 2019 and draws from the experience of past processes and, among others, is aimed at strengthening the capacity of MEC to address the multi-dimensional challenges of election administration. As such, in addition to the support to the MEC, the Project will support identified key stakeholders whose work directly impacts on the conditions conducive for

credible and genuine elections. In substance, this multifaceted approach will seek to enhance the engagement of the MEC in managing the electoral process by engendering higher levels of capacity, engagement and ownership among influential stakeholders in the electoral process, and thereby, furthering the acceptance of outcomes. Equally, the coordination of these efforts through a single Project will ensure strengthened horizontal dialogue among stakeholders and commensurately improve the coherency, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of national and international efforts to support Malawi's electoral process and democratic development.

Activities contributed towards the achieving the following five key outcomes areas identified in the AWP as agreed between the Malawi Electoral Commission, the Ministry of Finance, UNDP, UNWOMEN and the Centre for Multi-Party Democracy.

II. POLITICAL and ELECTORAL ENVIRONMENT AROUND THE PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES

By the time the project was signed into existence on 12th September, a couple of issues were dominating the political landscape. The country was gearing up for by-elections on 17th October and there was the preparation of six Bills relating to electoral legal reforms. The by-elections were seen as a test for the new electoral Commission.

The October 17 by-elections took place in three constituencies and three wards. The Parliamentary by-elections were held in Lilongwe Msosi North, Lilongwe City South East, and, Nsanje Lalanje; the Council by-elections were held in Mayani North (Dedza), Mtsiliza (Lilongwe City), and Ndirande Makata (Blantyre). The result of the by-elections led to MCP taking 5 of the vacant seats and the ruling DPP winning the Dedza Council seat.

UNDP had supported the Special Law Commission to come up with the Review of the Electoral Laws in 2016-2017, which is covered in the annual and final report of the MECS 2013-2017 project. The Bills were due to be debated in the November-December Parliamentary seating. However, only the Referendum Bill was approved.

III. 2017 Project FOCUS AND ACTIVITIES

The project was signed off by the Ministry of Finance, MEC, UNDP, UNWOMEN and CMD by the 12th September. That means that this annual report only covers the first quarter of the project's operational existence, which was the last quarter of the year.

In this light, the first quarter of the project's existence focused on establishing the administrative modalities of the project, especially from a Direct Implementation (DIM) perspective, where UNDP retains the responsibility and authority on the disbursement of the Basket Fund. In particular, Agreements had to be drafted with UNWOMEN and CMD, the two main partners of the project, setting out the reporting and disbursement schedule. Thereafter, the EU Financing Agreement was finalised and signed on 10th October.

The project then set about drafting the TORs for the various positions required by the project, mainly the Capacity Development Specialist working with political parties; the Gender Specialist who would work on all



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

the gender aspects of the project and the various short-term expertise required by the project, mainly under Output 1; and, the Procurement Analyst who would support the procurement processes required by the project, also mainly under Output 1.

The project was also required to close the previous MECS 2013-17 project which it started to do by studying the previous Annual reports and compiling the main project outcomes and results into a cohesive Final Report, due by the end of the year. In the meantime, the project sought as much clarity as possible on the development partner financial intentions towards the basket fund (aside from the EU) as well as urge MEC to garner a clear understanding of the Government's intentions towards the projects in order to clarify the resources that the project could be expected to work with, up to and possibly beyond the budgeted amount of the Project Document (7,598,880 USD, without Activity Result 1.8 "Critical Procurement Support" having been budgeted for.

IV. ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

The project supported and undertook the following key activities within the reporting period:

- ✓ MEC functional review initiated up to Inception report stage;
- ✓ The SAGE 300 accounting system implementation and training company 'Binary Systems' was contracted;
- ✓ Consultants to support the drafting of the new MEC 5-year strategic plan contracted;
- ✓ First NECOF held under the project on 15th December, focusing on the use of new biometric ID Cards for Voter Registration;
- ✓ Media Code of Conduct review undertaken and revised version signed by 120 media houses;
- ✓ Study tours undertaken for IT, Legal and senior staff to India, Zambia and Ghana respectively;
- ✓ Selection of 237 Master Trainers achieved for the later cascade training of all elections field staff;
- ✓ Support of MEC staff detachment to NRB to support the interoperability of civil register and voter register systems;
- ✓ MPLC Guidelines reviewed and training curriculum updated;
- ✓ Project supported the accreditation of 110 CSOs for Voter Education purposes;
- ✓ Collection of sex disaggregate data on electoral processes underway;
- ✓ Gender manual for engaging local leaders finalised and launched;
- ✓ Two dialogue sessions with district structures of eight political parties' gate keepers were held. 71 participants from key political parties have been reached;
- ✓ Media training for 20 print and electronic media journalists to heighten their understanding on women political participation in local communities;
- ✓ National consultation with 45 stakeholders (CSOs; NGOGCN, Secretary Generals of political parties, MHRC, MoGCSW) on how to prevent political violence against women aspirants and voters;
- ✓ Support was provided to CMD, allowing it to convene, brief and galvanise momentum with the political parties to ensure the passing of the Political Parties Bill in the November Parliamentary session.

Supported by



European Union



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

V. RESULTS ACHIEVED

PLANNED OUTPUTS	ACTUAL OUPUTS and ACTIVITIES AS PER THE 2017 AWP
<p>Activity Result 1.1 MEC successfully introduces administrative and management reforms, and implements feasible electoral reforms prior to the 2019 elections</p>	<p>The project ended the year having largely prepared for the activities that would take place in the first quarter of 2018.</p> <p>-The Functional Review that was initiated in the first week of September and the Inception Report presentation took place in the third week of September. The assignment was carried out by the Department of Human Resources and Development of the Office of the President, with support costs covered by the project. This Functional Review examines all the posts and the incumbents at Malawi Electoral Commission HQ and District levels and ensures the suitability/viability of each post and also how that post matches up with the experience and expertise of the incumbent. This review will be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2018 and may lead to some restructuring or staff movement depending on the findings of the assignment.</p> <p>After the presentation of the Inception Report a delay was incurred due to scheduling issues within the DHRD, hence the termination of the assignment in the first quarter of next year.</p> <p>-The implementation of the Sage 300 Resource Management and Accounting system was prepared by the definition of the technical specifications with MEC, the open tendering process and the evaluation. The contracting of the company took place in the first week of December with the inception meeting with the entire senior management of MEC taking place on 13th December. At that session, the service provider – Binary Systems - presented its detailed implementation methodology to MEC and expectations were agreed upon, including timelines.</p> <p>The installation of Sage 300 into the MEC IT platforms is due to be done by the beginning of February next year and the training of relevant staff to take place in the following three weeks thereafter. The implementation of this system is expected to digitize all financial processes and key workflows of MEC and respond to the main concerns the emerged from the 2015-16 investigative audit that MEC underwent by increasing the accountability and transparency of the organisation.</p> <p>-Support to establishing the new five-year Strategic Plan for MEC. MEC's previous 5-year Strategic Plan expired in December 2017, hence the need to establish a new one based on an evaluation of what had been achieved under the previous one and how to integrate emerging issues in the current electoral environment. Terms of Reference were drafted, advertised and the recruitment process to find a Team Leader and support expert (an international and a local) was finalised by the second week of December. The deployment is expected in the first week of January 2018 with the Strategic Plan being validated and finalised by the end of February.</p> <p>The only area of work under this AR which was not initiated under the 2017 AWP was the "Support drafting of Operational plan for introducing electoral reforms". This was</p>





Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

	<p>due to the fact that no electoral reforms were passed in 2017, aside from one on the holding of Referenda, the new Referendum Bill.</p> <p><u>Results and Impact for AR1.1:</u></p> <p>It is too early in the project implementation to gage the impact of the work achieved. It has been largely the case of providing a solid platform from which to finalise the processes in question, therefore the impact is likely to emerge during the course of 2018.</p>
<p>Activity Result 1.2: Public perceptions of the MEC are transformed through more effective communications and stakeholder outreach</p>	<p>The project provided funding support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The project supported a <u>National Elections Consultation Forum (NECOF)</u> on 15th December, which largely focused on demonstrating the use of the new biometric ID Card for voter registration, using the ID cards of those in attendance. In attendance were political party Heads, CSO representatives, development partners and the media. <p>It was also an opportunity for MEC to sketch out its electoral calendar for next year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The project supported the <u>Media Code of Conduct</u> review on 14th December. This event brought 120 media houses from print, TV and radio together for a day in order to review the current Media Code of Conduct and suggest some improvements to the text in the light of past experiences and lessons learned. <p>Each section of the document was considered and only minor modifications were brought to bear. This updated version was then signed off by all the participants and it is hoped that the MCC will be a tool for controlling the quality of media when reporting on electoral events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The project initiated the <u>Revised strategic communication plan and policy guidelines</u> work by drafting the required Terms of Reference and advertising the position. The expertise will be contracted out at the beginning of next year. <p>The only area of work not initiated or completed concerns the support to MEC on press statement drafting. This was a no cost activity and no support was requested.</p> <p><u>Results and Impact for AR1.2:</u></p> <p>It is too early in the project implementation to gage the impact of the work achieved. However, the meetings that were held in the framework of the NECOF or the Media Code of Conduct seemed to build on a new-found positive outlook of the elections stakeholders towards MEC,.</p>

Supported by



European Union



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

<p>Activity Result 1.3: the professional knowledge and technical skills of the Commissioners and Secretariat Staff at all levels enhanced, and 'in house' training capacity built in</p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <p>-The project supported the deployment of certain MEC staff to some key, strategic course and/or EMBS, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Malawi Electoral Commission was invited by the Indian International Institute of Democracy and Elections Management (IIDEM) to participate in the 5-day Capacity Building Workshop on Electoral Technology from 8th – 13th October, 2017 in India. In an effort to build the capacity of its staff, Messrs Fletcher Chimwaza –Systems Analyst and Dave Kadzuwa – Network Administrator were nominated to represent MEC at the function. The key objective of the workshop was to foster electoral capacity building among the African EMBS in the extensive and efficient use of technology for better management of elections, and for increasing transparency and reducing scope for manipulation in electoral processes while strengthening electoral democratic institutions and developments through sharing of expertise and experiences among the participating EMBS. A detailed report was submitted to UNDP on 23rd November.• With the creation of MEC's new Legal Department at the beginning of October and the subsequent nomination of a new Director, it was deemed important to send the Director and the Regional Elections Officer to the Zambia Electoral Commission to experience at first hand the mandate, work process and structure of a Legal Department in a similar Electoral Management Body. The mission took place from 3-7 October and a detailed mission report was sent to UNDP on 24th October. 12 clear recommendations were made in the mission report to MEC senior management as a result of the trip.• The Parliamentary sitting of November-December 2017 was to debate 6 Bills containing legal reforms (see Annex) affecting the electoral environment. Amongst them was a key Constitutional amendment to potentially change Malawi's electoral environment from a First Past The Post system to a 50+1. In that light, MEC senior managers went to a study tour to the Ghana EMB (12-18 November) to examine how it prepared for the 50+1. From the detailed report from the trip, received on 12th December, it is clear that many aspects of electoral organisation were brought to light, from Biometric Voter Registration, Stakeholder engagements, results transmission systems, functions of the district office, etc. Therefore, the fact that the 50+1 reform was not past did not lessen the usefulness of this study tour.• 237 Master Trainers identified last year have gone through rigorous training in Lilongwe and Blantyre on all manner of topics linked to election field operations from voter registration to the running of a polling centre. All Master Trainers had to pass a certification exam and 129 males and 62 females passed the test. The project supported all the logistical aspects of
---	--

Supported by



European Union



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

	<p>this activity from the identification of the Master Trainers to the training and the certification aspects.</p> <p><u>Results and Impact for AR1.3:</u></p> <p>The respective study tours have clearly been beneficial to MEC as amply reported in the reports received:the new Legal Department has a much firmer idea on what it will require in order to effectively undertake such matters as disputes handling and the coordination of the MPLCs. The Ghana trip had a direct influence on the operational planning and calendar of events that MEC is currently working to. Meanwhile, the Master Trainers aspect responds directly to some of the operational shortfalls of the 2014 elections by introducing more and better trained staff to the field.</p>
<p>Activity Result 1.4: the efficiency, transparency and integrity of electoral processes for the 2019 Tripartite Elections enhanced</p>	<p>The project provided funding support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project provided funding for the detachment of two MEC staff to NRB to ensure that there would be a full understanding of how the mass registration process would link to the voter registration process and that there would be a comprehensive understanding of all technical issues. • The project was able to advise MEC on the use of the mass registration BRKs and how they could be modified to be used for voter registration, thus significantly reducing the cost of voter registration and for the overall electoral budget requirement <p><u>Results and Impact for AR1.4:</u></p> <p>MEC and the National Registration Bureau are coordinating closely on establishing links between the National ID as a source of identification for voter registration, as evidenced by the number of meetings between the two institutions on this topic, and the detachment of staff.</p>
<p>Activity Result 1.5: Strengthen electoral dispute resolution processes and mechanisms</p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project continued to deploy a Legal Analyst to MEC in order to support the institution's legal work whilst the new Legal Department was being established and a first Director of the department put in place. The Legal analyst has now become an integral part of the Legal Department and operates as a de facto key staff member. • The Multi-Party Liaison Committee (MPLC) Guidelines were reviewed in December in an effort to address many of the issues that the consultancy -

Supported by



European Union



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

	<p>hired in the previous project – had underscored in his ‘Review and Assessment’. The review workshop responded to a number of issues which allowed for the subsequent modification and improvement of the document. Key issues addressed included the structure of the MPLCs, the manner in which an early warning system can be instigated, the manner in which the training is done and an agreement on reporting modalities and the standardised reporting format. These changes also had to be reflected in the MPLC Training Manual. The final versions of both documents are expected early in 2018 and the training is expected to start in the second quarter of 2018.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project supported the drafting of Terms of Reference and advertising for expertise that will support the capacity of the newly created Legal Department to develop rules, guidelines, and procedures for the handling of complaints. This expertise is expected to be mobilised early next year. <p><u>Results and Impact for AR1.5:</u></p> <p>The MPLCs were diagnosed as having several structural and operational shortcomings. The new Guidelines should render them more effective on the ground and the new reporting modalities will allow for better coordination and early warning systems.</p> <p>Supporting the capacities of the new Legal Department will allow for more effective disputes handling which should reduce tensions around polling day. It will also allow for the effective interpretation of any electoral reforms that may come to pass in 2018 and even influence the content of those reforms before they are presented by Cabinet.</p>
<p>Activity Result 1.6: Strengthen the capacity of the MEC to coordinate and conduct effective, nationwide, voter education campaigns prior to the 2019 Tripartite Elections</p>	<p>The project provided technical support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <p>Due to the uncertainty of the outcome regarding the legal reforms presented to Parliament in the November – December 2017 session, work was not initiated on reviewing the voter education strategy and the materials. However, the project did advertise some expertise in order to be ready early in 2018 with a mission deployment. Due to poor candidates, the process had to be relaunched in December 2018.</p> <p>The project supported the accreditation ceremony of the 105 CSOs that were selected by MEC as being credible CVE entities. This will make it easier for donors to contract out some of these CSOs for CVE activities.</p> <p><u>Results and Impact for AR1.6:</u></p> <p>It is too early in the project implementation to gauge the impact of the work achieved. A key issue which is likely to negatively affect this activity is the lack of resources</p>

Supported by



European Union



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

	<p>available for the CSO partners to actually undertake CVE activities. This issue came through very strongly at the accreditation ceremony and UNDP and MEC had to make clear that there would be nothing forthcoming from MEC or the UNDP basket fund and that one would have to wait and see what activities the bilateral donors might have in mind in this area.</p>
<p>Activity Result 1.7: Ensure gender mainstreaming and gender equality is enhanced within the MEC and MEC's internal processes and practices are gender sensitive</p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <p>This is an activity area which did not begin in earnest in 2017, mainly due to a lack of a gender specialist in the MECS project (expected by middle of first quarter 2018) and the lack of a gender focal point inside MEC, to be nominated by the end of the first quarter 2018.</p> <p>A gender audit had been undertaken under the previous MECS project (2013-17) by UNWOMEN but the action points are yet to be acted upon. That said, MEC assures the MECS team that the sex-disaggregated data collection and recording systems are already in place but the project is yet to see that in tangible terms.</p> <p>This Activity Result is therefore lagging behind others in this Output and will be prioritised in 2018.</p> <p><u>Results and Impact for AR1.7:</u></p> <p>None to report</p>
<p>Activity Result 1.8: Critical procurement support</p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <p>In the project document, this Activity Result (AR) was left with a budget line as 'To Be Determined'. Therefore, critical procurement support will only be forthcoming if the project is able to raise funds above and beyond the currently required USD 7,598,880. No procurement was undertaken in 2017.</p> <p><u>Results and Impact for AR1.8:</u></p> <p>None to report</p>
<p>Activity Result 2.1: Increased community and civic understanding of gender equality and</p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 community dialogue sessions were held with local leaders to enhance collaboration and support to CSOs conducting civic education initiatives on

Supported by



European Union



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

<p>women's right to political participation</p>	<p>gender equality. Eighty-seven (87) local leaders (46 males, 41 females) participated in these dialogues to enhance their capacities as change agents for women's leadership and political participation. These dialogue sessions resulted in generating views on women participation in political leadership from a traditional cultural perspective, which in turn formed part of the Transformative Community Engagement Manual that was finally produced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 18 sensitization campaigns were conducted in ten (10) targeted districts to promote women's leadership in politics. 13,760 people were reached through these campaigns. The sensitization campaigns raised awareness on and garnered support for women leadership and political participation.• A Political Economy Analysis on women political participation in Malawi has been completed focusing on opportunities and gaps for women's political participation. This will also strengthen interventions to promote women's leadership and political participation interventions. <p><u>Results and Impact for AR2.1:</u></p> <p>As a result of the above interventions, it is expected that these dialogues will deepen local leaders' and their communities' understanding of gender equality and women's right to political participation. It is also expected that these interventions have boosted positive community perceptions on women's capacities to run meaningful political campaigns.</p>
<p>Activity Result 2.2: Women's capacity to conduct competitive, well-resourced and innovative campaigns is enhanced</p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two (2) dialogue sessions were held with district structures of eight (8) major political parties. A total of seventy 77 district level political party decision makers were reached to promote gender equality and women's meaningful share of their leadership set ups• Radio programmes were aired on Zodiak and Timveni radio stations to popularize key factors that justify supporting women's participation in politics at leadership and decision-making positions. 18 episodes of the programme were aired on both radio stations. It is estimated that 25,000 people were reached through these programmes.• 20 (11 females, 9 Males) Journalists from community radios and local press trained in Gender equality and women leadership in political parties. This has enhanced their capacities to report facilitate debate on issues around women's leadership and political empowerment <p><u>Results and Impact for AR2.2:</u></p>

Supported by



European Union



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

	<p>As a result of the above interventions, it is expected that more women will be encouraged (either by themselves or through their communities) to stand for office, especially at the community level.</p>
<p>Activity Result 2.3: Establish measures to monitor and mitigate incidents of political harassment and violence against women in politics and electoral processes</p>	<p>The project provided technical support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plan for the establishment of a common monitoring framework has been developed carving a clear road map for mitigating political harassment and violence against women. • A concept note for the 'Elections engagement room' has been developed following the national dialogue on Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWiE). • Action plan for the establishment of a CSO elections engagement 'room with a gender lens has been developed • Transformative Community Engagement manual for the promotion of Women Political Participation has been developed. • Training of Trainers (TOT) in Political Empowerment of Women (PEW) for Gender and Community Development Officers was conducted. 15 TOTs have been trained. The officers have been equipped to leading trainings and other capacity building activities to promote political empowerment of women in their domains <p><u>Results and Impact for AR2.3:</u></p> <p>As a result of the above interventions, a basis has been established for how violence against women in politics will be monitored, recorded and the information disseminated in order for appropriate measures to be taken.</p>
<p>Activity Result 3.1: The capacity of the CMD as the primary forum for inter- and intra-party dialogue is strengthened and its long-term sustainability is fostered</p>	<p>The project provided technical support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy and agenda setting session was held in November with the political parties. The parties recommended the inclusion of two strategic objectives namely a) the issue of expectations and what political parties through CMD can do. B) CMD to improve the capacity of political parties as accountability actors. The political parties also agreed to include under strategic objective of inclusivity, the issue of minority rights. • Facilitating the Interparty Dialogue platform: CMD continued to hold quarterly meeting of political parties. A positive outcome of these meetings was the agreement of political parties to generate issues that were to be shared with the Electoral Commission for discussion at the CMD/MEC round table meetings and NECOF in 2018.

Supported by



European Union



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMD successfully engaged and supported the passage of the Political Parties Bill. Radio programs were produced to popularise the bill. CMD further worked with the legal affairs committee to produce a Schedule on handouts that MPs requested. CMD further engaged party leadership in the national assembly to explain the amendments to the bill as desired. The bill was finally passed; • CMD engaged and sensitised PPs and their MPs on issues around the Election Reform Bills as there was widespread lack of knowledge on the content of the six Bills outside the 50+1 • CMD ended the year by discussing with the Minister of justice to ascertain the readiness of political parties to comply with the Political Parties Act. <p><u>Results and Impact for AR3.1:</u></p> <p>As a result of the above interventions, the Political Parties Bill was passed with a strong understanding from the respective Parliamentarians on its content. This should encourage more transparent behaviour from the Parties during the campaign period, although more work will be required in 2018 to ensure the implementation of the measures. That aside, the parties were encouraged to formulate genuine issues to be discussed with MEC in the months leading up to polling day,</p>
<p>Activity Result 3.2: Strengthen existing political party development initiatives to promote the evolution of issue-based platforms</p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMD supported the Nsanje MPLC during the October 17 by-elections through facilitating a meeting with the Electoral Commission. The following issues were discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Formal report on the by-elections by MEC ○ Report on the Political violence (especially in Nsanje Lalanje Constituency) ○ Conflicts regarding venues for political rallies (for example in Ndirande) ○ Update on complaints handling mechanisms and procedures ○ Update on preparedness on CVE ○ Update on prospects of generating a voters' register from the Civil Register ○ Electoral Calendar 2018 – any major milestones for parties to note ○ CMD to update MEC on the passing of the Political Parties Bill <p>As a result of this intervention, the tension was reduced in Nsanje.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A conflict resolution strategy is under development and will be presented to political parties for further validation. <p>Further work in this area was not implemented in 2017 due to the prioritisation of the work behind the Political Parties Bill and the sensitisation work on the package of the Electoral Reforms. Therefore, this activity will be prioritised in 2018.</p>

Supported by



European Union

	<p><u>Results and Impact for AR3.2:</u></p> <p>The by-election in Nsanje ward experienced only limited political violence. The lessons learned from that experience will feed into the conflict resolution strategy which is in the early drafting phases and will hopefully contribute to reducing political violence and making the Tripartite elections more issues based rather than based on personal conflicts.</p>
<p>Activity Result 3.3: Promote political party policies and procedures to improve inclusion of women</p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <p>No activity here in 2017 due to time issues</p>
<p>Activity Result 3.4: Promote political party policies and procedures to improve inclusion of youth</p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <p>. No activity here in 2017 due to time issues</p>
<p>Activity Result 4.1: Strong project governance structures and processes</p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities and outputs during the year (2017):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project document signed on 7th September • One Steering Committee held on 12th September, • 3 Technical Committee meeting held (4th September, 25th October, 20th December) • CTA recruited and in post on 14th August

VI. ASSESSMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT IN RELATION TO PLANNED OBJECTIVES FOR THE PERIOD

The project only had 3 months of active implementation time in 2017 to deliver the activities and attain the results described above. The project document was eventually signed off by the Ministry of Finance on 7th September; the Direct Implementation modality authorisation was received on 27th September (required before any transactions are made) and the UNDP accounts closed on 8th December.

This relatively short window of implementation time affected certain partners more than others. The work with MEC and UNWOMEN under Outputs 1 & 2 were still able to deliver quite well against the 2017 AWP whereas CMD, that has no resources to finance activities up front, struggled to deliver across most of its Activity Results areas. Despite these implementation challenges, the tolerance levels of the project were not broken and it was agreed at the Technical Committee meetings that outstanding activities could easily be rolled forward into the first two quarters of the 2018 AWP. Of the 36 sub-activity results areas of the 2017 AWP, 13 were Achieved, 10 Partially Achieved, 10 Not Achieved and 3 were Not applicable.

Supported by



European Union

Output 3 has 4 activity areas (50%) Not Achieved for the financial reasons set out above; Output 1 has 6 applicable activities Not Achieved out of 20; and Output 2 only has one activity out of 6 Not Achieved.

Under Output 1, where the procurement of services was required, the project prepared the ground by putting together the Terms of References for the expertise and advertising, meaning that the actual contracting and deployment was going to take place first thing in 2018. That was the case for the Strategic Plan, the Communications Strategy, the Disputes Handling Guidelines, the Civic and Voter Education Strategy, the project's Gender Specialist and the full implementation and training for the SAGE 300 software.

Output 2 was able to proceed with its activities quite swiftly as UNWOMEN mainly used its own resources (100,000 USD) in the period, as foreseen in the 2017 Annual Workplan. It therefore did not have to wait for additional funding from the project to progress on its workplan.

CMD received its first tranche of funds from the project on 12th October (once the Project document was signed by the Ministry of Finance, the DIM implementation modality approved and the Agreement signed with CMD) meaning that it had to focus its efforts on a limited number of activities. The passing of the Political Parties Bill was a clear priority and the project asked CMD to undertake sensitisation sessions with MPs around the other Electoral Reform Bills that were about to be debated in Parliament.

The following key milestones and achievements were made in relation to the outlined outputs and activities for the period:

- Media have an understanding of how to undertake its duties in an electoral period;
- Conflict mitigation will be improved through more effective functioning, training and structuring of the MPLCs;
- The basis for digitising MEC's workflow and financial management systems was launched;
- The optimal structuring of MEC at Headquarters and in the Regional and District offices was launched
- MEC provided with the means to undertake biometric voter registration through the interoperability between the civil register and the voter register
- The basis for providing MEC with a clear 5 year vision was launched
- MEC IT, Legal and senior staff capacities and skills were strengthened through select study tours to exemplary EMBs
- The possibility for synergising the work on the civil registration and the voter registration was given a significant boost due to the joint work of both UNDP NRIS and MECS teams
- CVE activities were given added momentum through the accreditation of 110 CSOs

- The grass roots perception of women's role in the political life of the country were given a platform for transformative change through intense dialogues with community, religious and community leaders as well as political party representatives
- The early design of a political violence against women monitoring system was established
- The Political Parties Bill was passed

Aside from these concrete activities and achievements, the project provided continuous advice to MEC leadership on the preparation, content and choreography of key events; on necessary budgetary reductions and the recycling of existing assets (such as the use of the BRKs for Voter Registration). Project staff even acted as facilitators in key workshops. For UNWOMEN, the project provided guidance on activity prioritisation as well as on issues such as activity reporting.

VII. ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT'S CONTRIBUTION TO GENDER, YOUTH AND OTHER CROSSCUTTING THEMES.

Output 2 of the project is entirely about promoting women empowerment and as such the project has already delivered strongly on that front. However, there are strong gender elements in the other two Outputs and these have comparatively lagged behind due to issues of prioritising in the short implementation window the project had in 2017. Therefore, this will be prioritised in the first two quarters of 2018, especially with CMD due to launch its gender strategy early in 2018.

Working with Youth is a priority area under Output 3 which has not been tackled yet, for reasons already given. Working with the disabled is a high priority for MEC which will be ensuring that this element features strongly in all its strategic and policy documents such as in the forthcoming new 5 year strategy.

VIII. ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE PROJECT

The project has been run so far with 2 dedicated staff, the Chief Technical Advisor and the Project Analyst. It has been supported by several Country Office staff, mainly on issues pertaining to procurement. This means that the project has been running with very minimal staff to date and therefore very low management costs, with only the emoluments of the CTA, the Legal Analyst and the part emoluments of the Programme analyst being charged to the project. This will change next year with the planned recruitment of the Capacity Development Specialist and the Gender Specialist coming on board by the end of the 1st quarter of 2018, both internationals.

Compared to the original staff set-up behind the project, savings will be made by not hiring an international ICT Advisor. Only one short term assignment is foreseen with most of the ICT expertise being sourced from UNDP's NRIS project.

IX. DEVIATION FROM WORK PLAN

The project, due to commencing late in the year, saw a number of activities that were either only Partly Achieved or Not Achieved. This has been covered in detail above. Nonetheless, none of the delays are such that the Project Document itself needs revision or the 'tolerance levels' of the project in terms of activity

implementation or budgets needs an overhaul to be decided by the Technical Committee and validated by the Steering Committee. The delays experienced on some of the activities are deemed to be absorbable by all the partners of the project within the first two quarters of 2018.

X. PROJECT CHALLENGES

- The main challenge the project faced within the period relates to the late start of the project. Though the project was originally expected to start almost seamlessly at the end of the previous MECS 2013-2017 project (end of July 2017) the project was only signed off on 7th September and administratively activated on 27th September. At the time of drafting the initial workplan in the 3rd week of August 2017, it was hoped that there would be a longer implementation time
- The uncertainty around the proposed 6 electoral reform laws meant MEC did not know whether the outcomes would affect its Strategic and Operational planning and with CMD being required to take unforeseen time to try and sensitize the Members of Parliament on the content of the proposed legal reforms.
- The time it took to identify and put in place the new Chief Elections Officer (CEO, appointed end of December 2017) meant that certain decision making in MEC was delayed thus impacting on certain key activities such as the Functional Review.

XI. PROJECT COORDINATION AND WORK WITH OTHER KEY PARTNERS

Although there are three distinct implementation partners in this initiative (MEC, UNWOMEN, CMD) the project continuously ensured that stakeholders understood that MECS 2017-2019 is one project. This meant continuous interaction with all three partners to move the implementation of the sub activities at a similar pace across the three Outputs and to ensure synergies between the partners where possible.

Interaction with the development partners has not distinguished between the development partner that paid into the basket fund (EU) and those that had not yet done so for budgetary and administrative reasons. All development partners were treated equally, given the same voice at the Technical Committees and Steering Committee and had access to the project's intelligence gathering and dissemination where relevant.

UNDP and UNWOMEN (with the support of the development partners) were the only international organisations supporting the organisation of elections in 2017, therefore there was no requirement to interact with other international organisations or Foundations in 2017. As regards CSOs, no direct interaction or support to CSOs came around in 2017 as it was not part of the workplan and there are no project resources for contracting with CSOs. Nonetheless, CSO representatives were invited to several consultations.

The coordination of the project with other projects is likely to get more complex in 2018 with several other initiatives planned that will be operating in the same thematic and institutional field as Outputs 2 & 3 of the project document. Norway will be launching its 50:50 campaign; the EU will be funding women empowerment initiatives through Danchurchaid (in 6 Districts) by way of examples. The project will play a pro-active and accommodating role to such complimentary support.

XII. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

- ***Project Governance***

The project has within its governance framework as agreed with partners, organised three Technical Committee (TC) meetings and one Steering Committee (SC) meeting. Detailed minutes of these meetings have been produced and disseminated to the relevant members within 2 weeks of the meeting having taken place. These minutes are then validated at the next meeting. The Steering Committees are planned once every quarter and so the 12th September Steering Committee acted as the SC of that quarter with the UNRC (co-Chair of the SCM) departing on 14th September. The next SCM will take place upon the arrival and presentation of credentials of the new UNRC. This means the next SCM is expected within the first quarter of 2018.

The first Technical Committee meetings held (TCMs are expected once a month) allowed for the approval of the 2017 AWP, the validation of the initial Risk Log and the validation of the M&E framework which were also approved by the Steering Committee. These aside each of the three Technical Committees held allowed for an update from the MEC co-Chair to the members of progress made in the organisation of elections and for the CTA to give updates on project implementation progress. The Risk Logs were reviewed at each meeting.

Aside from the formal Technical Committee meetings, there have been ad hoc meetings convened to discuss a particular matter or urgent interest such as a budgetary presentation on the cost of elections and the cost of the voter registration exercise.

- ***Project Communication and Reporting***

This is the first project report, as the project has only been active in the last quarter of 2017. Other reports will be quarterly and submitted within one month of the end of the relevant quarter.

Aside from any formal reporting, there have been frequent oral and written communications with all project partners on key emerging issues with the project acting as a key source of information on such matters as developments around the legal reforms. At no stage has the project team or UNDP received a formal or informal complaint about irregular or insufficient information dissemination.

- ***Project Visibility***

The EU is the only development partner to have contributed to the Basket Fund in this period. Therefore, all events that were supported by the project promoted the visibility of the EU and UNDP only in this period. The visibility was apparent through the printing of large banners for each event as well as including the logos on all the event programmes. The EU was mentioned by all key note speakers at every public event and the project contributed to the monthly Newsletter produced by the UNDP Brussels office that highlights all the electoral projects that are being financed, or co-financed, by the EU. The project is preparing to

contribute funds and content to the establishment of a website on the project that will be handled by the EU-UNDP Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance.

- **Staffing**

In 2017, the project was staffed by a Chief Technical Advisor, a Project Analyst and a Legal Analyst. However, the Country Office support staff assisted the project on procurement, HR and other administrative issues whilst the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative for Programmes fronted the project to the diplomatic community in the absence of a Resident Coordinator.

S and N	Name of Staff	Position	Nationality
1	Richard Cox	Chief Technical Advisor	British
2	Busekese Kilembe	Project Analyst	Malawian
3	Fatuma Silungwe	Legal Analyst	Malawian

XIII. FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Annex 1

ANNEX 1: Project financial report

ANNEX 2: Summary table of M&E report

ANNEX 3: Legal Reforms summary

Supported by



European Union