

**Malawi Electoral Cycle Support
2017-19**

First Quarter Project Progress Report

January - March 2018

Document Name	Project Progress Report – 2018, Quarter 1
Production Date and Reference	27 th April, 2018
Donors	European Union, UNDP
Project Title	Malawi Electoral Cycle Support, 2017-2019
Reporting Period	January – March 2018
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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.

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

Preparations for two by-elections for Councillors in Mulanje and Mangochi Districts (Milonde and Malindi wards respectively) were ongoing. The elections are scheduled for 10 April. The campaign process for these by-elections brought with it some tensions and isolated cases of violence, especially in Mulanje between the supporters of MCP and DPP. The incidents raised concerns as to what might be expected in 2019 if targeted interventions are not implemented. The project/UNDP is therefore, in discussions with MEC, CMD and other Partners to identify pragmatic conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms that can be implemented to ensure key conflict drivers in the electoral process are addressed.

III. First Quarter Project FOCUS AND ACTIVITIES

2018 represents the project's first full year (calendar year) of implementation. As such, Q1 focused on achieving two main results: firstly, the focus was to complete the recruitment processes for project's technical staff. The recruitment processes for Capacity Building, Gender, and Voter Education experts were all completed and the experts joined the project in March; other experts that had been recruited towards the end of last year (for Communication and Disputes Handling) were deployed; the second focus for the project was to ensure that once the experts were on board, they would assist implementing partners (CMD, MEC and UNWOMEN) to finalise and finetune concept notes and planning for the implementation of activities within their respective output areas.

IV. HIGHLIGHT ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

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

- ✓ Engaged 2 CVE Experts to assist MEC in drafting a new CVE Strategy (inception meetings with MEC and Partners Held);
- ✓ Deployed the Disputes Handling expertise to put together the relevant Guidelines;
- ✓ Deployed the expertise for the MEC Communication Plan;
- ✓ Implementation of SAGE 300 accounting system modules completed and training of core staff undertaken;
- ✓ New MEC 5-year Strategic Plan (SP) validated and finalised;

- ✓ Continued support to MEC for the interoperability protocol (the access and exchange of information required by MEC's Voter Register from the NRB civil register) specifically targeting voter registration process scheduled to be undertaken in June;
- ✓ Media engagement on women empowerment in 5 Districts;
- ✓ Sensitisation meetings of Political Parties on the new Political Parties Bill commenced (Technical/Experts Meeting on the Bill held on 29 March);
- ✓ 4th Technical Committee held.

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 provided funding and technical support for the following activities in Q1:</p> <p>Digitised Administrative processes introduced: the installation of Sage 300 into the MEC IT platforms was completed and the training of core system users is ongoing. So far, those trained in Phase 1 included 12 staff from the Finance Department; 3 from ICT and 3 from Procurement. In a second training, all Commissioners, Directors and Deputy Directors were trained. A third training was for all Payroll and HR staff. Upon MEC's request, further workflow automation modules were installed with the requisite training provided. The implementation of the system is enabling MEC to digitize its financial and workflow processes to enhance efficiency, transparency and accountability of its business processes. Further follow up will be done in the second and third quarters to see what concrete improvements and levels of usage have been achieved in the administrative and financial digitisation of MEC.</p> <p>Support the drafting of the Strategic Plan (SP): the new 5-year SP was validated by stakeholders in February. Two consultants were engaged to support MEC in this process and now that the stakeholder comments have been integrated, where relevant, the SP is now in the final review by MEC Board of Commissioners after which it will be adopted. However, it is important to note that though the new SP is not finalised, MEC's other planning documents and activities, including the drafting of the new CVE Strategic, are already being informed by the new SP.</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 and technical support for the following activities in Q1:</p> <p>Review and update the Communication Strategy: The expert was deployed in March and his Inception report received on 11th March. After background research and stakeholder consultation meetings in March (to be continued in April), the Strategy is due to be presented for validation in May.</p>

<p>Activity Result 1.3: <i>the professional knowledge and technical skills of the Commissioners and Secretariat Staff at all levels enhanced, and 'in house' training capacity built in</i></p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities in Q1:</p> <p>Support to the creation of MEC in-house pool of Master Trainers (MTs): 237 Master Trainers identified last year went 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 this activity from the identification of the Master Trainers to the training and the certification aspects. The first electoral activity the Master Trainers will be called upon to train other field staff is on voter registration and the usage of the Biometric Registration Kits.</p>
<p>Activity Result 1.4: <i>the efficiency, transparency and integrity of electoral processes for the 2019 Tripartite Elections enhanced</i></p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities in Q1:</p> <p>Assist MEC to develop and implement inter-operability protocols and linkages between its systems and the NRB: the project continued to provide technical assistance to MEC in ensuring ongoing engagements between MEC and NRB including the exchange of expertise and advice especially as it relates to the technical and operability issues on the Voter Registration kits and the National ID card. The project is linking up the IT specialist of NRIS to the MEC IT Department. He is providing technical support to MEC IT colleagues on key software and other system needs and support.</p> <p>This aside, the project is undertaking a procurement process to purchase fingerprinting software and extra servers. The fingerprinting software will allow MEC to identify those who are on the civil register but may have lost, damaged or had stolen their National ID Cards or registration receipt. The 5 extra servers will allow MEC to securely download the details of voter registrants onto regional servers before exporting them into the mainframe server in Blantyre. These items are expected to be delivered by the end of April.</p>
<p>Activity Result 1.5: <i>Strengthen electoral dispute resolution processes and mechanisms</i></p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities in Q1:</p> <p>Developing new Electoral Disputes Handling Guidelines: The project deployed this expertise at the beginning of May. The expert has had consultative meetings with a variety of relevant stakeholders including the Malawi Electoral Support Network, the Judiciary, the Malawi Law Society, the National Initiative for Civic Education, NICE, former Commissioner of MEC, CMD, University of Malawi Legal Faculty.</p> <p>The drafting of the Guidelines is expected to end in April and the validation will be done in May.</p>
<p>Activity Result 1.6: <i>Strengthen the capacity of the MEC to coordinate and conduct effective, nationwide, voter</i></p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities in Q1:</p> <p>Develop and implement a comprehensive voter education plan in collaboration with CSOs: the project recruited two Civic and Voter Education (CVE) Experts who have provided technical assistance to MEC towards the development of a results oriented CVE strategic Plan for all the phases of the electoral cycle. One of the experts</p>

<p>education campaigns prior to the 2019 Tripartite Elections</p>	<p>is a data analyst who is assisting MEC to analyse data from previous electoral processes and to identify strategic mechanisms to improve the CVE process from a purely quantitative stand point. The second expert (Team Leader) is providing technical support in terms of the design of the CVE process including identifying appropriate methodologies and tools taking into consideration the outcome and results of the data analysis process. The Experts have had wide consultations with MEC, CSOs and Donor Partners and have supported MEC in the design and development of a new CVE Strategy. The CVE strategy will be launched in the beginning of Q2 and it is expected to streamline MEC communication, message development and public outreach processes on all activities beginning with the voter registration process.</p> <p>Support the review and standardization of voter education materials: The two CVE Experts are also assisting MEC with the design and development of CVE messages and materials from the strategy focusing on the key messages for the coming VR process. Further support will also be provided to MEC to ensure there is synchronisation and standardisation of CVE messages, materials and programmes between MEC and CSOs which will be engaging in CVE activities.</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 in Q1:</p> <p><u>Assist the development of standardised procedures to ensure electoral operations and administrative processes are gender sensitive</u></p> <p>This activity will commence in Quarter 2</p>
<p>Activity Result 1.8: Critical procurement support</p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities in Q1:</p> <p>Procurement of fingerprinting software and servers as per AR 1.4 above.</p>
<p>Activity Result 2.1: Increased community and civic understanding of gender equality and women's right to political participation</p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities in Q1:</p> <p><u>Support media campaign on gender equality and women empowerment:</u> The project organised a media engagement session on women's political participation in the 2019 tripartite elections from 19-23 March in 5 Districts. The objective of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of media houses/journalists on issues gender equality and how the media can play a critical role in promoting gender equality and the political empowerment of women in the electoral process. The exercise covered 5 Districts (Neno, Mulanje, Thyolo, Mangochi and Salima) with a total of 109 participants. These included 8 Journalist (2 Males and 6 Females) from 9 Radio Stations including 7 Community Radio Stations), 4 Councilors (3 female, 1 male), 6 female aspirants, 12 male Traditional leaders and 79 community members (48 female and 31 male).</p> <p>The engagement achieved 3 key outcomes:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An action plan for promoting gender equality and women empowerment was developed for use by Community Radio Stations. The action plan covers areas such as the positive profiling of women candidates; targeted civic education on issues of women active political participation in the 2019 elections. This will be done through existing radio programmes as well as new radio programmes that will be developed; • Generating gender sensitive content for existing programmes and programmes that would be developed in the future. The participation of incumbent Members of Parliament and councilors from the selected districts shared and discussed their challenges, progress made so far and how best can they be profiled in view of the coming elections through the community radios; • The engagement created a good platform for media practitioners, particularly those at the community level to interact with women aspirants, councilors and MPs. And this broadened their understanding and appreciation of the need to contribute towards efforts at advancing women active political participation. It is expected that this interaction with aspirants, councilors and MPs will continue so that media will be able to effectively contextualise issues such as barriers/challenges to women in politics so that this understanding will inform their programme design towards deconstruction of socio cultural barriers that hinder women active political participation. <p>The project will continue to monitor to ensure action plans are implemented. This will be in line with UNWOMEN efforts to ensure civic education aims at mobilizing women to take part in the 2019 election as well as mobilizing voters to vote for women candidates.</p> <p>The identification and engagement of Male champions for the HeForShe initiative is in process and will begin full deployment in the second quarter. This initiative will target political party representatives, CBOs, Youth groups and traditional leaders, media, among others to address negative social norms that hinder women's political participation. It will also establish HeforShe movements that will champion promotion of women's political participation at community level.</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 in Q1:</p> <p>The project will continue to engage and support CMD to use the strategy to assist political parties in the development of policies and programmes to enhance women participation and representation going into 2019.</p> <p>This activity has been delayed by the need to map with precision which development partners are support which aspirants. This should be resolved at the planned Gender Technical Committee towards the end of May with the Gender Ministry.</p>
<p>Activity Result 2.3: Establish measures to monitor and</p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities in Q1:</p>

<p><i>mitigate incidents of political harassment and violence against women in politics and electoral processes</i></p>	<p><u>Support regional stakeholder engagement meetings for buy-in on the establishment of the ‘CSO elections engagement’ for a gender lens on the 2019 general elections:</u> The project prepared a validation workshop to present the findings of the political economy analysis to stakeholders. The objective of the workshop in April will be to popularise and disseminate the findings to wider stakeholders; generate a discussion and debate on the findings of the analysis; and build consensus on what strategies could be developed on the findings of the study to support women’s political empowerment in Malawi, especially as relating to their participation and representation of women in politics/elections.</p>
<p><i>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</i></p>	<p>The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities in Q1:</p> <p><u>Secondment of Technical Expertise:</u> The project deployed a Capacity Development Advisor to support CMD in the implementation of its strategic plan and activities and programmes outlined under output 3 of this project. He joined the project at the beginning of March and works in the CMD offices.</p> <p>CMD initiated discussions and consultations with Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Justice to explore opportunities for budgetary allocation to CMD to support its coordination work with Political Parties. Initial consultative meetings took place with the Budget/Finance Committee on the subject matter. This will be an ongoing dialogue process with government and other partners and will form part of CMD’s sustainability framework which will be developed.</p> <p>CMD, with the assistance of the project’s Gender Specialist, is designing activities and programmes to operationalise its gender strategy to ensure CMD has the capacity to assist Political Parties to develop gender sensitive approaches. The CMD common agenda setting sessions planned for the Q2 would seek to galvanise support for gender issues within political parties</p> <p><u>Facilitating the Interparty Dialogue platform:</u> CMD continued to hold quarterly meeting of political parties. An outcome of the Q1 dialogue session was that the political parties discussed and agreed on key issues that the parties required information and clarification on. These issues have been shared with MEC and would inform discussions in CMD/MEC round table meeting and NECOF scheduled for April. The meeting also discussed the upcoming Voter Registration and the use of the National ID.</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 in Q1:</p> <p><u>Conduct sensitization sessions to Parliamentary, non-Parliamentary parties and primary duty bearers on the Political Parties Act, including the development of implementation modalities:</u> CMD, project support, organised a technical level meeting to review the new Political Parties Bill. The meeting brought together legal experts from the Ministry of Justice, the Law Commission, and the Law Society of Malawi who discussed the new Bill in detail and identified and isolated key provisions of the law and provided legal guidance on what is required of political parties. This was to ensure political parties are provided with an informed understanding and appreciation of the law, especially on issues of compliance. The main question that the technical discussion sought to provide answers to was: should the Minister of Justice appoint a date for the coming into force of the Bill? What provisions will immediately be applicable to political parties in terms of compliance? Which of the political parties will have time within which to comply to the Bill?</p> <p>The outcome of this technical level meeting is that it guided CMD in preparing presentations and radio programmes on the sensitization of political parties scheduled for the Q2. The first sensitization workshop is scheduled for 6 April for parliamentary parties. This will be followed by a session for non-parliamentary parties and a number of radio programmes to enhance the sensitization of the parties and the general public on the Bill.</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 in Q1:</p> <p><u>Launch of CMD Gender strategy:</u> CMD with support from UNWOMEN launched its Gender Strategy on 26 February 2018. The workshop brought together CSOs, Political Parties, Academia, MEC and other UN Agencies to introduce them to the strategic vision and objectives of the CMD strategy in its efforts to support political parties in formulating and developing policies and programmes that promote and strengthen the role of women in political parties. The core objective of the launch was twofold: firstly, to popularize and disseminate the strategy to key stakeholders; and secondly, to get stakeholder buy-in and support for the implementation of the strategy. A total of 55 (25 female, 30 Male) individuals participated in the launch.</p> <p>A key outcome of this activity is the agenda setting session that will be organized for Women Wings of political and particularly efforts at setting up a cross party Gender Action Group to serve as a platform for engagement on issues of women participation and representation within political parties</p> <p><u>Joint agenda setting sessions for Youth and Women:</u> Planning meetings with leadership of political have been held to discuss and agree on the objective and purpose of joint agender setting sessions for youth and women in political parties. Concept notes for both events have been developed and discussed with the political parties. Both the Youth and Women agenda setting sessions are scheduled for the first week of May. These are expected to produce key action points (against time) for enhancing the role of women and youth in politics focusing on increasing participation and peaceful electoral processes.</p>

Activity Result 3.4: Promote political party policies and procedures to improve inclusion of youth	The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities in Q1: No activity planned for Q1 under this AR
Activity Result 4.1: Strong project governance structures and processes	The project provided funding and technical support for the following activities in Q1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th Technical Committee meeting held (20th March) • First Project Annual Report produced

VI. DEVIATION FROM WORK PLAN

No material deviations occurred in Q1

VII. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

- **Project Visibility**

The project continues to acknowledge donors through events and materials production. 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.

- **Staffing**

The project in Q1 was staffed by the following Staff and Experts:

S and N	Name of Staff	Position	Nationality
1	Richard Cox	Chief Technical Advisor	UK
2	Raphael Asuliwonnu	Capacity Development Specialist	Ghana
3	Busekese Kilembe	Project Analyst	Malawi
4	Fatuma Silungwe	Legal Analyst	Malawi

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5	Luta Shaba	Gender Specialist Consultant (long-term)	Zimbabwe
6	Donatella Malfitano	CVE Expert Consultant (short-term)	Italy
7	Fako Likoti	CVE Data Analyst Consultant (short-term)	Lesotho
8	Anderson Fumulani	Communication Consultant (short-term)	Malawi
9	Mosotho Moepya	Dispute Handling Guidelines Consultant (short-term)	South Africa

ANNEX 1: Project financial report