Strengthening Electoral and Legislative Processes

The Strengthening Electoral and Legislative Processes (SELP) Project seeks to develop more inclusive, and accountable democratic institutions, systems and processes. It improves the supply side of governance by enhancing the capacity of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the Senate and Provincial Assemblies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan. Moreover, it supports the demand side by developing the capacity of civil society in advocacy and civic engagement. Increasing the representation of women, youth, and minorities, the project informs all aspects of programming.

The Project is structured around three key strands: providing Electoral Cycle Support to the Election Commission of Pakistan, strengthening Legislative Institutions and expanding democratic space.

QUICK FACTS

Duration: 2013-2020
Implementing partners: Election Commission of Pakistan, the Senate, the Provincial Assemblies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), United Nations Volunteers (UNVs), United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Service (PIPS).
Funding Partners: USAID, UK Aid, Government of Japan
Location: Nationwide
2019 Annual Budget: $ 7,101,475
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UNDP’s project support is based on the concept of electoral cycle which addresses both one-off and resource-intensive election support and capacity development for democratic institutions based on a longer-term development agenda within the broader context of democratic governance. This approach therefore emphasizes institutional capacity building for the ECP, and other governance institutions; encourages sustainable electoral policies and the participation of traditionally disadvantaged groups. Of particular importance in the post-election period, the electoral cycle approach promotes stability and accounts for the critical post-electoral phase which sets the stage for the next election thereby strengthening the democratic process. These include developing the ECP’s capacity in accordance with its (5) Five Year Strategic Plan; advocacy and implementation of electoral reforms; and civic and voter education campaigns, particularly for women and youth.

Apart from its support to ECP, the project seeks to strengthen the core functions of the Senate of Pakistan and the two Provincial Assemblies of KP and Balochistan by providing support to selected Parliamentary committees, developing the capacity of the Members and Secretariat staff, improving linkages with the public. The project also technically assists the legislative houses to effectively and proactively oversee the country’s progress on development goals closely working through Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Taskforces and Women’s Parliamentary Caucuses (WPCs).

The democratic space strand focuses on generating a popular understanding of concepts such as ‘the meaning of democracy’, ‘good governance’, ‘citizen activism’, ‘civic engagement’, ‘democratic principles and procedures’, and ‘individual roles and responsibilities in a democratic society’, through volunteers and Community Based Organizations as a prerequisite for establishing a sustainable democratic culture.

**Expected results**
- Institutional capacity of the ECP strengthened to increase public’s trust in electoral processes
- Institutional and democratic performance of the federal Parliament and the provincial assemblies strengthened to ensure responsive and inclusive legislatures.
- Enhanced participation of women in parliamentary and electoral processes.
- Improved legislative engagement with the development policy agendas.
- Enhanced civic engagement, particularly by women and youth.
- Stronger electoral processes and frameworks.
- Platforms and opportunities created to improve citizen engagement with legislatures.
- Improved capacity of the ECP to train its staff.
- ECP district staff able to conduct effective civic and voter education campaigns.

**Main achievements**
- Supported ECP in conducting Post-Election Review of General Elections 2018 aimed at highlighting challenges and addressing institutional weaknesses.
- Supported implementation of ECP’s second Five Years Strategic Plan (2014-2018), with a strategic goal to strengthen the role of women in electoral processes.
- Following General Elections 2018, SELP is providing technical support to ECP to develop its third Five-year Strategic Plan (2019-2023) with a strategic goal to strengthen the role of women in electoral processes.
- In efforts to institutionalize computerized results management in General Elections 2018, SELP developed, and implemented, the Results Management System (RMS) in 2018 Elections to help improve accuracy and transparency in compiling election results. Procured 1,150 computers, 900 multifunctional printers and 849 internet connections for ECP to support RMS.
- Designed and established a Geographic Information System (GIS) polling scheme by GIS-mapping of over 90,000 polling stations nationwide.
- Developed the training curriculum and training video. Printed and distributed over 500,000 handbooks for the training of polling staff nationwide.
- Over 493,000 polling staff belonging to all tiers trained in Punjab, Islamabad and Balochistan for General Elections 2018.
- Developed Information Education and Communication (IEC) Material for voter education. Printed and distributed 595,000 polling process brochures and posters to be displayed at polling stations, over 1.4 million brochures highlighting the polling process for general public and 50,000 RMS brochures and posters for ECP, media, political parties and candidates.
- Developed TV and Radio Adverts to air on major TV Channels and Radio Stations for voter education nationwide.
- Supported IEC campaign for Newly Merged Districts. Produced radio messages, IEC material and sent out robo-calls to over 1,000,000 mobile phone users in the tribal districts as well as utilized social media to boost messages to participate in electoral process.
- Supported ECP in developing its ‘Women’s National Identity Card (NIC) and Voter Registration Campaign’ Strategy for 2018 General Elections.
- Working in partnership with civil society organization, TDEA to implement ECP’s ‘Women’s NIC and Voter Registration Campaign’, SELP facilitated over 450,000 women NIC registrations.
- Successfully deployed 11 United Nations Civic and Voter Education Youth Volunteers (UNVs) under four six-month batches to conduct civic and voter education activities in schools, colleges, university campuses and communities, directly engaging over 68,000 individuals
all over Pakistan with the aim to promote a more inclusive democratic culture.

- In partnership with UNESCO, trained 387 journalists and editors and 75 under-graduate students on electoral process and electoral reporting nationwide.
- Trained over 800 legislators on rules of procedure, budget analysis, legislative drafting committee system etc.
- Supported Senate in developing a new Library and Research Services Facility.
- With the formation of the new Assemblies after the General Elections 2018 and Senators, UNDP/SELP organized orientations sessions for 88 newly-elected members of the Senate and KP and Balochistan Assemblies.
- Supported Provincial Assembly of Balochistan to bring 51 amendments to the Assembly’s Rules of Procedures and Conduct of Business.
- On-going support to Women Parliamentary Caucuses, SDG Task Forces and Parliamentary Committees.

**What's next?**

- Provide support to the ECP in developing its 3rd Five-Year Strategic Plan for Year (2019-2023)
- Support ECP in strengthening its institutional capacity through supporting development initiatives for ECP IT, Training and Gender Wings.
- Take steps to narrow the gap between registered male and female voters and improve voter turnout in the next general elections.
- Support the Balochistan and KP Provincial Assemblies strengthen their committee systems and build effective oversight mechanisms.
- Develop strategic plan for the Senate and create mechanisms to strengthen its engagement with Provincial Governments.
- Recruit fifth batch of UNVs to engage communities on subjects including civic and voter education and local governance.
- Formation, orientation and capacity-building of SDGs Task Forces, Minority Caucuses and WPCs at Balochistan and KP Provincial Assemblies.
- Help legislative houses engage with citizens through their parliamentary outreach mechanisms.