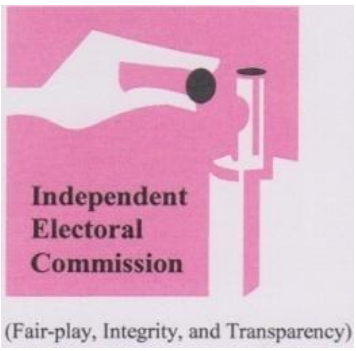






Terminal Evaluation Report

Support Project to the Elections and the Democratic Processes in The Gambia (SPEDG) – 2020-2023

United Nations Development Programme

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August 2025

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APRs	Annual Progress Reports
BJL	Banjul
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESR	Election Situation Room
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IPC	Inter-Party Committee
KII	Key Informant Interview
KM	Kanifing Municipality
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NBR	North Bank Region
NCCE	National Council for Civic Education
NDP	National Development Plan
NYC	National Youth Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PSA	Pressure Swing Adsorption
PWDs	People With Disabilities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TANGO	TANGO: The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms Of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States Dollar
WANEP	West African Network for Peacebuilding
WCR	West Coast Region
WHO	World Health Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction:

This report presents the findings of the terminal evaluation of the "Support to the Electoral Cycle in The Gambia 2021–2023" Project. The initiative was launched in response to a 2019 request by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) for support from the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division to enhance its institutional capacity and oversight role, as part of broader democratic reforms in The Gambia. The project goal was to support The Gambia in strengthening its democratic key institutions and processes through functional and inclusive electoral processes. With a total resource requirements estimated at USD 4, 586,760, UNDP, under its regular TRAC resource, has in 2020 allocated ($ 244,135) and in 2021 allocated $469,900), totalling $ 714,900, which leaves the resource gap at US$ 3,872,6651. UNDP as the lead implementing agency, worked in close collaboration with national actors, including, Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), Police, Media, the Judiciary, and civil society organizations (CSOs).

Following the project's closure in 2023, UNDP commissioned this evaluation to assess the overall project interventions, focusing on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact in line with the UNDP and OECD DAC Evaluation guidelines. The evaluation adopted a mixed-method approach of desk reviews, Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), all geared towards producing an evidence-based evaluation report with actionable recommendations.

Summary Findings

The project's demand-driven design was highly relevant to strengthening electoral processes in The Gambia. Its implementation logic was strategic, focusing effectively on key areas: **strengthening the electoral process, promoting inclusive participation to build electoral credibility, and establishing mechanisms and institutional capacities to enhance accountability.**

The project was effective in contributing to the legitimacy and transparency of the electoral process. Public awareness campaigns played a pivotal role in disseminating voter information, which was a key contributing factor to the increase in registered voters to 962,157 in the 2021 election, a substantial increase from 868,578 in 2016. The project also successfully fostered a more peaceful electoral environment by facilitating inter-party dialogues and public forums and promoting transparency at all stages of the election processes. The practice of on-the-spot vote counting was widely identified as a powerful and trusted accountability measure within The Gambia's elections.

A key achievement was the enhanced role of civil society. The CSO Coalition on Elections, supported by the project, made remarkable contributions to advancing democratic values. The establishment of its Election Situation Room (ESR) served as a vital hub for monitoring,

[1] Final Electoral Report the Electoral Cycle 2021-2023

analysis, and response to election-day incidents, strengthening mechanisms for early warning and violence prevention.

Despite these successes, a significant challenge to electoral integrity persists: the use of paid attestations by community leaders for voter registration. This practice raises serious concerns and requires urgent institutional and legal review to safeguard the credibility of future elections.

Recommendations

The evaluation concludes the following recommendations as mechanisms for improving the performance of future election support projects:

Recommendation 1: UNDP should support capacity-building for WANEP, the Coalition of NGOs, NCCE, NYC, and IPC through technical training, provision of equipment, and institutional support. This includes expanding the Elections Situation Room (ESR) and establishing decentralized civic education structures to promote transparency, reduce election-related violence, and enhance public awareness.

Recommendation 2: The IEC should adopt reliable IT tools for real-time data capture at polling stations and integrate them into a robust Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) system. This will ensure timely dissemination of election information, increase transparency, and reduce electoral disputes.

Recommendation 3: The IEC should review the Electoral Act 1996 and advocate for its passage to institutionalize the joint conduct of elections. Additionally, the IEC and IPC should establish common terms for compensating party agents to prevent potential election-related violence.

Recommendation 4: The IEC, in collaboration with key stakeholders, should implement targeted, gender-responsive interventions that actively promote equitable access to political leadership for women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs). These efforts should be embedded in broader electoral reforms and civic education initiatives to ensure meaningful participation and representation of marginalized groups.

Recommendation 5: UNDP should support training and capacity-building initiatives for Security Agencies to effectively manage post-election security, particularly in contexts where election results are contested.

Recommendation 6: UNDP should explore opportunities to enhance the institutional capacity of the Inter-Party Committee (IPC) at both national and regional levels, recognizing its critical role in reducing election-related violence and fostering political dialogue.

INTRODUCTION

The conduct of regular and transparent elections is prerequisite for maintenance of peace and stability in any modern democratic state. The Gambia is no exception and there has been a non-interruption of election cycles since independence in 1965, except for a brief period during the military overthrow of the democratically elected government in 1994. The Government of The Gambia, recognizing the importance of elections, is keenly aware of the adverse consequences of contested elections and is committed to ensuring that a fair and level playing field is put in place for elections at all levels. This is demonstrated by not only a

marked improvement in freedom of speech but also increased diversity of political party representation at both national and local levels. Additionally, the Government has committed to the implementation of a comprehensive national development agenda through the National Development Plan (NDP) and Transitional Justice Program; all contributing to improved public sentiments towards a more just society.

These reforms have contributed to a relatively stable political environment and consequently restored confidence of development partners and private investors. Of specific reference is the remarkable positive outcomes of all Gambia elections from 2021 to 2023. According to various Electoral Observer Missions, the elections have been free, fair, and transparent characterized with a degree of integrity and geniuses. The results showing the will of the electorates with the highest turnout recorded in the December 2021Presidential Election with 89.34% turnout.

The terminal evaluation of the elections project has a dual purpose of Accountability and Learning. It also aims to obtain an independent assessment of whether the planned inputs have led or contributed to the achievement of the intended results (outputs, outcomes, objective, and impact). Additionally, the evaluation seeks to examine and document project achievements, identify barriers and challenges to implementation and determinants for success or failure, and highlight results any broader results, catalytic effects or impacts generated by the project. The findings are intended to inform and improve the design and implementation of similar future initiatives.

The primary intended users of the evaluation, as elaborated in the table below, include the Government of The Gambia and the Independent Electoral Commission in particular, UNDP and the Project Implementing Partners. Other external stakeholders, including development partners with vested interests in election matters, can also use the findings of the evaluation to effect change in approaches towards supporting the strengthening of The Gambia's electoral processes.

Table 1: Purposes and intended users.

Purpose		Intended user
Accountability. Responding to the information needs of electoral stakeholders for informed decisions on strengthening electoral processes, protocols, and procedures.	Informed decision-making processes with accountability frameworks.	UNDP Government (e.g., IEC)
Improvement. Improving project implementation arrangements and efficiency provides valuable opportunity for impactful and purposeful outcomes.	Improve project performance	Project implementing partners, Steering Committee members, UNDP governance unit,
Enlightenment. Better understanding of the project and its associated benefits and challenges can contribute the efficient development of similar to subsequent interventions.	Contribute to knowledge and experiential sharing	Stakeholder institutions personnel and designers of subsequent projects.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTIONS

The goal of the project was to support The Gambia in strengthening its democratic key institutions and processes through functional and inclusive electoral processes that ensure the peaceful conduct of the 2021 presidential, 2022 national assembly and 2023 local government elections and demonstrate heightened legitimacy and institutionalization of the multiparty system**. The Theory of Change (ToC)** underpinning this project stated that:

IF *electoral processes and institutions are strengthened to be inclusive, transparent, accountable, and capacitated* ***AND*** *elections are conducted peacefully,* ***THEN*** *Gambia's democracy will be strengthened, demonstrating heightened legitimacy and institutionalization of the multiparty system.*

On the other hand, the objectives of the project were to strengthen transparency throughout the electoral process, to promote credible, inclusive and peaceful election in The Gambia. This included enhancing transparency, accountability, stakeholder capacity and early warning mechanisms across the electoral cycle.` The achievement of these objectives was supported through the implementation of mutually reinforcing five outputs as specified below:

- Output 1 - Transparency is enhanced throughout the electoral process
- Output 2 - Inclusive participation is supported to strengthen the elections credibility throughout the political process.
- Output 3 - Accountability is enhanced throughout the electoral process
- Output 4 – The Capacity of electoral stakeholders is strengthened
- Output 5 - Dialogue and coordination mechanisms for early warning and early response to election-related violence are implemented throughout the electoral cycle

With a total resource requirement estimated at USD 4, 586,760, UNDP, under its regular TRAC resource, has in 2020 allocated $ 244,135 and in 2021 allocated $469,900), totalling $ 714,900. The project was implemented from August 2020 – December 2022, targeting the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and key electoral stakeholders. (Police, Judiciary, CSOs, Media, etc.) through both short-term and long-term institutional capacity-building interventions, strengthening multi-stakeholder dialogues and early warning mechanisms in the electoral process/cycles.

UNDP served as the lead implementing agency, working in close collaboration with national actors including, IEC, Police, Media, Judiciary, and CSOs, who were also project beneficiaries. The project was guided by a project management structure comprising of a Steering Committee and a Technical Committee, co-chaired by UNDP and IEC. UNDP oversaw the overall project management through a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU) embedded within the IEC. The PMU was responsible for the day-to-day operations, including procurement, administration, and results reporting. Strategic oversight was provided by the UNDP governance team leader, with accountability to the UNDP Country Office Resident Representative.

EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

In line with the policy, procedure and structure as per UNEG guidelines for evaluations, the review assesses the overall project intervention, including appropriateness of its design along the results-chain (activities, inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts). The evaluation examines the project through the lenses of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and

impact. The evaluation also highlights key achievements that inform the conclusions and recommendations. Specifically, the evaluation assessed the project's performance based on the following criteria: relevance and strategic positioning, implementation processes, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, partnership strategy, human rights, gender equality, and other cross-cutting issues. The specific objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Determine the extent to which the project results were achieved, partnerships established, capacities built.
- Establish the extent to which cross cutting issues such as gender equality were achieved.
- Assess the contribution of the project activities to the realization of project objectives and outcomes
- Identify and provide an analysis of the factors that have either positively or negatively affected/impacted the project beneficiaries.
- Recognize any possible catalytic effects, impact and innovative techniques of the project.
- Assess the project's performance and achievements vis-à-vis the project's overall objectives and its impact on the various sub-national level beneficiaries.
- Assess the project's contribution towards strengthening The Gambia's democracy through a functional and inclusive electoral process
- Assess contributions made in engagements with adolescents, and young people on governance systems to promote and sustain a society based on the active participation of young people, as citizens, in politics and civic life
- Generate lessons learned and recommendation's from the implementation of the project's activities and the outcomes achieved that will be useful for similar projects.
- Assess how the project adapted in the context of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION DESIGN APPROACH

The evaluation adopted a mixed-method approach of desk reviews, Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). At the outset, an evaluation design matrix was formulated from which specific evaluation questions were generated. While secondary data was collected through the review of relevant documents related to the conduct of national elections2, qualitative data was collected through interviews with key election stakeholders. A sequential model was adopted for the evaluation exercise as listed below:

- Reviewing relevant election protocols and related documents
- Development of an evaluation framework and related data collection tools

[2] Project Document Support Project to the Elections and the Democratic Processes in The Gambia (SPEDG), CSO Coalition on Elections, Election Situation Room (ESR) reports, Voter registration final campaign, Report of the Nation-Wide Caravan on Peaceful Campaign and Election, Dialogue and Coordination mechanisms for early warning and early response to election-related violence are implemented throughout the electoral cycle" Implemented by WANEP-The Gambia

- Data analysis and interpretation to formulate the evaluation report.

INSTRUMENTS TO COLLECT DATA

Desk Review –Relevant literature, including the Project Document, Project implementation reports mainly from NYC, WANEP, NCCE and TANGO, were reviewed. National documents such as The Gambia Recovery-Focused National Development Plan (NDP), Election protocols, and election observer mission reports were also reviewed.

Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) - Data was collected through structured discussions with selected project stakeholders, using a pre-defined checklist to obtain relevant information consistently and structurally. Discussions centered on the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and other factors that contributed to/or influenced performance. On the overall, two (2) FGDs and eight (8) Key Informant Interviews were held in addition to the desk reviews. The FGD was held with the IEC as major project stakeholder and the Inter-Party Committee representing various political parties with vested interest in the project.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) - KII tools were also developed to guide the conduct of the key informant interviews at both national and community levels. Through the KIIs, a broad range of stakeholders at the national level, including selected members of institutions and organizations working on election matters, were engaged. In particular, the IEC's officials, National Assembly officials, NCCE Officials, councilors, and other local government authorities.

LIMITATIONS OF THE EVALUATION

Significant delays were experienced in scheduling and confirming meetings with some project stakeholders. Despite UNDP's formal introduction of the consultant through an official letter, several stakeholders remained inaccessible despite multiple follow-up attempts through emails and phone calls. The extended gap between the project closure and the conduct of the terminal evaluation had limited timely access to critical information, which contributed to delays in finalizating the evaluation report.

The departure of key project staff following project closure, along with staff turnover, resulted in a significant loss of institutional memories, further limiting access to relevant insights and documentation..

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

This section presents the evaluation findings substantiated with evidence generated from the various data collection tools such as key informant interviews, desk review of relevant literature including Elections Act and related electoral reform plans of The Gambia. The analysis is structured around the UNEG evaluation guidelines focusing on assessment of project achievements within the context of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability as depicted in the subsequent sub-sections.

RELEVANCE TO THE CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The relevance criterion analyzes the extent to which the Elections Project is suited to national electoral processes, protocols and procedures. It also examined whether the project's design approach was participatory and appropriate in the context of government policies and legal frameworks guiding elections in the country. It further evaluated the benefits realized from the project and how they contributed to reduction of violence; before, during and after elections. The evaluation also analyzed the project's alignment to UNDAF and related international frameworks including the SDGs. . Finally, This section analyzes consistency of the project in achieving its intended outcomes as well as its flexibility and adaptability to shocks and emergencies, including COVID-19.

Finding 1: The Elections Project design demonstrated strong national ownership and strategic relevance, being demand-driven, highly participatory, and building upon previous efforts to strengthen electoral processes in The Gambia.

The project design approach: The project intension and implementation approach were strategic fit to The Gambia's priorities of strengthening electoral processes and procedures. As revealed, the project design approach was 'demand driven' as it emanated from government's request to the UN Electoral Assistance Division to support The Gambia's electoral processes. The project is also aligned to recommendations of a needs assessment mission held in 2019 geared towards improving The Gambia's electoral system. Further to establishing participation and inclusiveness of stakeholders in the project, respondents had good understanding of the project and were involved at the initial stages of the design process which they confirmed as contributory factors to reinforced project ownership and acceptance. The project was also described as a continuation of previous projects of this nature supported by the UNDP in different election cycles aimed at consolidating democracy and good governance in The Gambia. This finding is in alignment with Output 2 of the project aimed at supporting inclusive participation strengthen the elections credibility throughout the political process.

Finding 2: The Elections Project demonstrated strong relevance, aligning with national electoral processes, legal frameworks, and international priorities (UNDAF, SDGs), while also proving adaptable to shocks like COVID-19 and contributing to violence reduction.

Alignment to the UNDAF 2017-2023, National Development Plan (NDP-2017-2021) and SDGs: The project was fully aligned with UNDAF, National Development Plan and the SDGs. UNDAF outcome on Governance and Human Rights focused on the implementation of institutional reforms to ensure rule of law and guarantee people their human rights, such as access to justice, gender equality, basic social services and democratic participation in decision-making processes; all pointing to the relevance of the elections project and especially on maintaining peace and stability during the conduct of elections in The Gambia. Similarly, The elections project was significantly aligned to the National Development Plan (NDP) 2017 -2021, given that one of the key pillars of the NDP i.e., Restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralization and local governance focuses on strengthening key governance institutions including the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), The Judiciary, The National Assembly and National Council for Civic Education (NCCE) all geared towards restoring public confidence in the overall governance institutions and mechanisms in The Gambia.

The Gambia, as a UN member-state is committed to the implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2030. In this regard, the SDGs were domesticated and mainstreamed in the NDP to facilitate the implementation of the SDGs in The Gambia. Meanwhile, the election projects which has key outputs relating to inclusivity, transparency, and accountability, among others, all of which support the strengthening of democracy through the peaceful conduct of elections. These key democratic values are aligned to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality), which primarily focuses on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. Therefore, there is a strong alignment between the elections project and the SDGs.

Finding 3: The Elections Project demonstrated strong coherence and complementarities through strategic linkages with other governance initiatives, enhancing inter-party dialogue and decentralized participation across The Gambia

Linkages with Similar Interventions (Coherence): The Elections Project had linkages with the Strengthening Inclusive Citizen Engagement for More Accountable Governance Project, also known as the Leadership and Accountability Project (LAP) in The Gambia, which was implemented between 2020 – 2022, where one of the outputs focused on enhancing interparty dialogue and communication, fostering regular engagement through the inter-party platform, thereby reducing potential interparty tensions during election cycle. Other projects with linkages and complementarities (through relevant thematic focuses) with the elections project included the Consolidating Democratic Governance for Development in The Gambia Project (2018-2021), Building Capacities of Regional Decentralized Structures in Lower River Region (LRR) and Upper River Region (URR) Project, 2018-2020, for effective participation in governance and accountability in delivery of public service.

On the overall, the project's implementation logic was quite relevant and strategic, given the focus on strengthening the electoral process, inclusive participation to enhance electoral credibility, putting in place relevant mechanism and institutional structures and capacities to enhance accountability. Project intervention also included activities that strengthen dialogue and coordination mechanisms by supporting relevant state and non-state actors to identify any potential elections-related violence through a national early warning mechanism.

Finding 4: The Project delivered significant benefits by enhancing the IEC's communication infrastructure and enabling wider citizen engagement, which fostered electoral transparency, inclusiveness, and contributed to peace during elections.

The benefits realized include complimenting the efforts of partners in particular the IEC, NCCE and NYC in fulfilling their respective mandates in ensuring free and fair elections. In this regard, key project activities included support to strengthen the communication infrastructure of the IEC to facilitate better communication with citizens especially pre and post elections to enhance transparency and inclusiveness of the electoral process. The project intervention also facilitated the procurement of voter registration material which are key to the conduct of any successful elections , Although the project did not necessarily strengthen the institutional capacity of all partner organisations, , it enabled them to reach more people with relevant messages as a result of the improvement of its communication capacity to better engage with citizens through relevant mechanism i.e. website, social media platforms etc. ; all contributing to the maintenance of peace and tranquility during the conduct of the presidential,

parliamentary and local government elections in The Gambia. Remarkably, 96.2% of the 1 million eligible voter registration target was met with 962,157 registered voters, including 545,318 female (56.68%) and 416,839 men (43.32%). Additionally, the IPC contributed significantly towards reduction of electoral violence through the conduct of capacity building programmes, development and dissemination of political tolerance messages. In particular, it's women-wing conducted outreach programs including regional caravans and community radios discussions in the various regions geared towards providing moral support to participating female candidates.

Given the important role of the security agencies in the maintenance of secured and peaceful environment before, during and after the Elections, the police under the Joint Operations Programme facilitated extensive consultations and dialogue with the IEC and other stakeholders resulting in enforcement of impactful security strategies. With support from UNDP and in close alignment with the UN Electoral Assistance Project, an election security management project was implemented purposely for peaceful conduct of Presidential and National Assembly Elections. This initiative which included building capacity of the Police and entire security sector has been lauded for having contributed largely to the credibility and overall success of the elections and the gains achieved, were later consolidated through enhanced concerted efforts for the Local Government Elections[3].

EFFECTIVENESS

The effectiveness section evaluates the extent to which the project achieved its outputs and corresponding activities. It also examines how the interventions implemented reasonably contributed to improving The Gambia's electoral systems and what factors led to such achievements. Given this foundation, the effectiveness criterion focused on analyzing the following five outputs of the project:

- Strengthening transparency of the electoral process
- Strengthening inclusive participation and credibility of the electoral and political process
- Enhancing accountability throughout the electoral process
- Strengthening capacity of electoral stakeholders
- Promoting dialogue and coordination to implement mechanisms for early warning response to elections-related violence throughout the electoral cycle

Table 2: Strengthening transparency of the electoral process.

Output 1 - Strengthening transparency of the electoral process.

[3] Final Electoral Report the Electoral Cycle 2021-2023, The Gambia

Expected Outputs/Results	Baseline	Target	Actual Target	Summary of key output milestones	Progress towards output targets
Output 1 - Enhanced transparency throughout the electoral process Sub-Output: 1.1 The IEC institutional strategic communication Wis strengthened Indicator statement: Indicator 1.1.1 The IEC institutional communication is strengthened Indicator 1.1.2 Media and Civic Education Centre at the Electoral Commission Indicator 1.1.3 A website for the IEC is updated and online. Indicator 1.1.4 IEC is trained on social media and IT Information technologies training 1.1.5 A strategy for internal communication is developed 1.1.6 The IEC has corporate email addresses for all its staff	0			The output envisaged to strengthen the IEC's institutional communication with a strategy for external relations. Furthermore, the output also aimed at improving the capacity of the IEC communication department on media monitoring and media engagement. Consultative meetings with electoral stakeholders were also scheduled to be organized during the project operational phase. During that period, the IEC website was also planned to be developed.	Under this output, the project supported the strengthening of the IEC institutional strategic communication potentials. IT equipment and associated devices including 14 laptop computers, 14 laser jet printers and 14 internet routers) were provided. Additionally, the project supported the IEC to convene 4 consultative forums with political parties, CSO' and the media leading to increased awareness and understanding of The Gambia's electoral process. The IEC Website is online and accessible to the public with relevant information on election matters; contributing to increased awareness and transparency.

Expected Outputs/Results	Baseline	Target	Actual Target	Summary of key output milestones	Progress towards output targets
and departments Sub-Output 1.2 Political parties' capacity to communicate to the electorate is enhanced Indicator 1.2.1 Candidate debates at national and constituency levels in selected areas: 2 x presidential debates and 8 – 10 parliamentary debates in select constituencies identified as hotspots. Sub-Output 1.3 The National Assembly capacity to outreach and communicate with the population is strengthened Indicator 1.3.1 - The communication capacity of the NA is strengthened An external relation strategy is developed . NA communication staff is trained Indicator 1.3.2 The NA website					

Expected Outputs/Results	Baseline	Target	Actual Target	Summary of key output milestones	Progress towards output targets
is updated and online					

Finding 5: The Project effectively strengthened electoral transparency and public trust through NCCE and NYC-led civic and voter education campaigns, driving an increase in voter registration and participation during the 2021–2023 electoral cycle. On strengthening the transparency of the electoral process, the project registered progress, a critical factor for building public trust and ensuring the legitimacy of democratic outcomes. Public awareness campaigns, strategically coordinated by NCCE and NYC, played a pivotal role in disseminating crucial election and voter information, thereby contributing to greater public enlightenment. These campaigns employed a variety of mediums, including radio and TV broadcasts, community outreach and capacity building programs, and social media engagement, to reach diverse segments of the population.

Supported under the project, the NCCE undertook extensive civic and voter education initiatives throughout the 2021-2023 electoral cycle in The Gambia. These campaigns targeted voter registration (May-July 2021), the Presidential Election (December 2021), the National Assembly Election (April 2022), and the Local Government Elections (2023). Each campaign employed a multi-pronged approach involving community sensitization outreaches, extensive media engagements (including 63 TV and radio talk shows and 4,172 TV and radio spots/jingles aired across 9 TV and 21 radio stations, including online and community outlets), and the production and strategic distribution of 3,046 information, education, and communication (IEC) materials (posters/flyers, billboards, and banners). Overall, the combined interventions of the campaign reached 360 communities through face-to-face outreaches.

The overarching goals were to enhance public awareness of civic and political rights, promote informed and inclusive participation in the electoral processes, increase voter turnout, and contribute to peaceful elections at all levels across the country. The NCCE specifically focused on engaging diverse populations, including women, youth, traditional leaders, and Persons with Disabilities, and tailored its messages to address specific challenges such as voter apathy and low representation of women, youths and PWDs in leadership and decision-making levels.

National Youth Council (NYC) nationwide caravan supported by the elections project reached more than 4,500 directly in all the regions in the Gambia. The aim of the caravan was to encourage youth and women to take the lead in the election as candidates and to enlighten youth on the basics of democracy and the importance of political participation towards national development. The caravan took an open place discussion format in *Lumos* (weekly markets) and marketplaces etc. enhancing inclusive participation. District chiefs in the different regions were also engaged in the process with some of their testimonies highlighted below:

Notably, progress in voter registration led to a substantial increase in both the number of registered voters and voter turnout, demonstrating the project's success in stimulating public interest in the elections and encouraging active participation. This surge in civic engagement resulted in a historic increase in registered voters, reaching 962,157 and a voter turnout of 89.34%, in the 2021 presidential election, a remarkable improvement compared to the 868,578 registered voters and 59% turnout recorded in the 2016 presidential election[4]. This significant increase highlights the effectiveness of the project's initiatives in mobilizing the electorate and

"Bringing people to discuss issues of importance to peace and tolerance should be encouraged at all levels. This should be the mission of all most, especially elders of our communities. We're doing our part as elders in bringing people together and urging them to be peaceful. Politics shouldn't divide us and will not divide us"

"Let's listen to all candidates on the policies and programs they have for us and then choose whoever we think has the right policies and programs for us and vote for that person. We need not to fight over anything"

"We are all one people and politics shouldn't divide us. Is us who go to each other's ceremonies and other events"

fostering a sense of civic duty.

Finding 6: The Project effectively promoted voluntary participation and enhanced transparency across all electoral stages, fostering informed citizenry, peaceful campaigning, and boosting public confidence in The Gambia's democratic governance.

Furthermore, the project promoted voluntary participation and enhanced transparency throughout all stages of the electoral process. This involved ensuring that citizens were well-informed about their civic rights and responsibilities during the electioneering cycle, facilitating peaceful campaigning through inter-party dialogues through the Inter Party Committee and public forums, and promoting open and transparent election processes. By focusing on each stage of the electoral process, the project helped to boost public confidence in the integrity of the elections and reinforced the foundations of democratic governance in The Gambia. This is further buttressed by this statement from a participant:

Table 3: Strengthening inclusive participation and credibility of the electoral and political process.

"If not for this engagement, I would have turned up at the polling station on the voting day with my old voter's card. Now that I was told that I need a new voter's card in order to vote for the elections register, I will, when IEC begins voter registration and get registered to vote." Member of the FGD

[4] https://iec.gm

Output 2 -Strengthening inclusive participation and credibility of the electoral and political process

Expected Outputs/Results	Baseline	Target	Actual on Target	Summary of key output milestones	Progress towards output targets
Output 2 - Inclusive participation is supported to strengthen the elections credibility throughout the political process. Sub-output 2.1. The IEC is supported to strengthen the voter registration for inclusive participation Indicator 2.1.1 Technical specifications are reviewed and commented Indicator 2.1.2 Voter registration material is procured (optional – on the basis of dedicated funds for this activity) Indicator 2.1.3 Training material for voter registration staff is produced	0 0 0	100% 100% 100%		This output focuses on supporting IEC in strengthening voter registration for inclusive participation. It also supports IEC, NCCE and CSOs networks working on civic and voter education to efficiently delivery their respective services. Furthermore, the output ensures IEC's procedures are adapted to enhance inclusion in the elections and as well establish citizen engagement platform to encourage inclusion of the National Assembly	Voter registration Staff Training Manual was developed and produced. It was used to guide the training exercises of the voter registration team and also served as reference to during the registration exercise. In April 2021, the National Youth Parliament, The Gambia, Peace Ambassadors and NYC conducted national voter registration campaign through the elections project support. Prior to the 2022 Parliamentary Elections, National Youth Council conducted a nationwide caravan to conduct voter education on Civic Education, Campaign and Elections. The campaigns conducted in 2021and 2022 respectively and led by NYC specifically targeted youth and women to

Sub-output 2.2. The IEC, NCCE and CSOs networks working on civic and voter education are supported Indicator 2.2.1 A voter education campaign is deployed for each of the electoral events: referendum, presidential elections, legislative elections and local elections. Indicator 2.2.2 Thematic national campaigns for gender equality and inclusion women, youth, persons with disabilities in electoral process. Indicator 2.2.3 Peace messaging: developing a campaign on peaceful election. Content developed and campaign rolled out. % of stakeholders who are satisfied with EWER.	0 0 0	100% 100% 100%			peacefully participate (Campaign and Vote) in both the presidential and parliamentary election, thereby promoting effective youth and women participation in politics. The platform for citizen engagement as planned under the output could not be established but there is a Facebook page allowing followers to interact with National Assembly, raising questions and soliciting clarifications on related matters.

Sub-output 2.3. IEC's procedures are adapted to enhance inclusion in the elections.					
Indicator 2.3.1. Technical assistance for EC strategy development on inclusion in elections: develop and rollout EC strategy on gender and inclusion, provide training on transparency and inclusion in electoral participation. Strategy developed and % of stakeholders satisfied with the strategy.	0	100%			
2.3.2. IEC staff at national and regional level is trained to inclusion in the electoral process	1	100%			
Indicator 2.3.3 Technical assistance for inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the electoral process coordinated by the ECSub-output 2.4. Support inclusion of the National Assembly	0	100%			

Indicator 2.4.1. Citizen Consultation Platform is available on the NA website.	0	100%			

Finding 8: The project enhanced the participation of youth, women, and persons with disabilities through voter education and collaboration with state and non-state actors. While marginalized individuals expressed interest in contesting elections, this did not fully translate into party nominations or election outcomes.

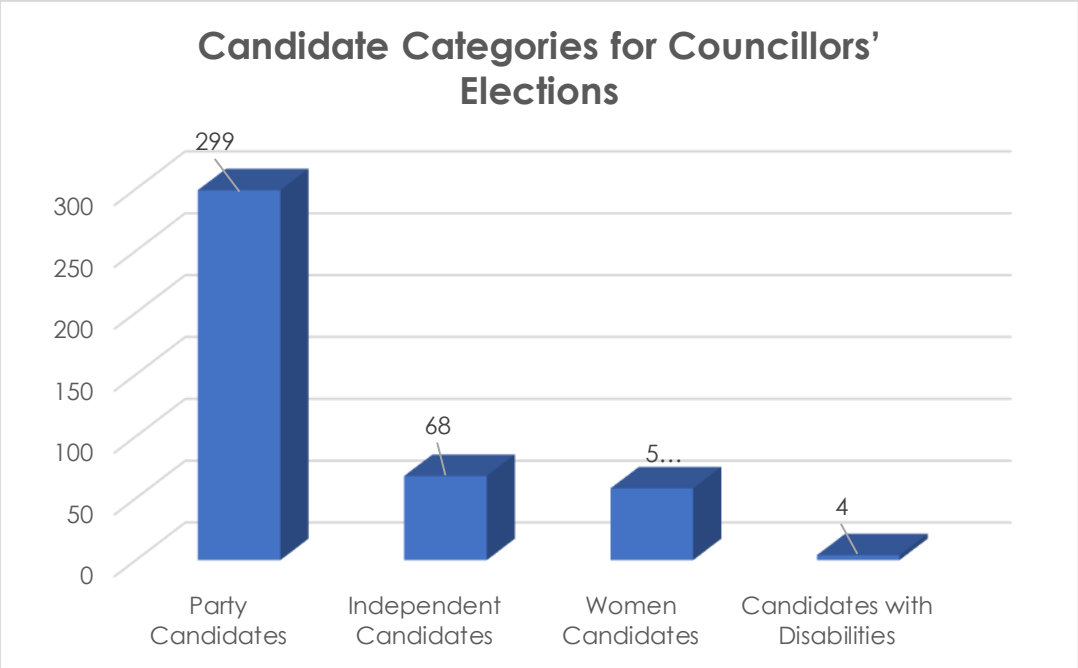
The project's contributions to strengthening inclusive participation and credibility of the electoral and political processes have been remarkable. From the evidence, the promotional activities undertaken by the partners, and especially the media were reported to have enhanced inclusive participation of the population as well as credibility of the electoral and political process. The engagement of Youth and Women across the country during the electoral cycle through voter education on civic and voter registration issues, as well as the dedicated engagement withpersons with disability, further strengthened the inclusive participation agenda in the electoral process in The Gambia. Activities to enhance greater participation in the electoral process through sensitization, funded through the project, also facilitated the collaboration among state and non-state actors to enhance inclusive participation in the electoral process. More women, youths and persons with disabilities expressed interest in contesting the elections, although that did not translate into the numbers selected by the different political parties or voted into office.

In addition to integrating inclusivity and the involvement of Persons with Disabilities in all its Civic and Voter Education campaigns supported by the UNDP throughout the electoral cycle, the NCCE also conducted dedicated Advocacy Seminars across the seven (7) administrative regions of The Gambia (NBR, CRR, URR, LRR, WCR, and KMC/BJL). These seminars aimed to advocate for the enhanced participation of PWDs in The Gambia's electoral processes by raising awareness and promoting inclusivity. The NCCE collaborated with the Gambia Federation of the Disabled (GFD) and engaged approximately 300 participants, primarily representatives from the GFD, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), IEC staff, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), women, youth leaders, and local authorities.

The overall objectives of the seminars were to enlighten stakeholders, advocate for increased support and participation of PWDs in the country's political and electoral processes, identify barriers to their participation, and devise strategies to mitigate these challenges in future electoral cycles.

Finding 9: While the Project fostered inclusive participation, evident in diverse candidate nominations and voter demographics, significant concerns persist regarding the integrity of the attestation process and the lack of disaggregated voter data for comprehensive impact assessment.

For the Councillors' elections, the Independent Election Commission announced 367 candidates for the election, comprising 299 party candidates, 68 independent, 58 women candidates and 4 candidates with disabilities. Following nominations, there was one withdrawal, one objection and one rejection. The official campaign period for the councillorship elections ran from 31st March to 13th April 2023. The elections register remains at 962,157 registered voters, of which 57% are female and 43% male. Fifty-seven per cent (57%) of the registered voters are youths between 18 and 35 years. The election was held in 1554 polling stations in the seven (7) administrative regions of The Gambia.



Category of Registered Voters	Number of Voters (approx.)
Female	548,328 (57%)
Male	413,829 (43%)
Youth (18–35)	548,328 (57%)

While the project contributed to inclusive participation and enhanced the credibility of the electoral and political process, significant concerns persist regarding the use of attestations by community leaders. The practice of paying for attestations raises serious questions about

electoral integrity and requires urgent review. Furthermore, respondents expressed valid observations that the attestation process is susceptible to abuse, potentially facilitating the registration of ineligible voters. This perception, widely held among election stakeholders, particularly opposition parties, poses a significant threat to the credibility of elections and the maintenance of peace and stability.

While the messaging during the voter education targeted participation, peace and tolerance, no survey was conducted to establish the satisfaction level of stakeholders on such sensitizations. Additionally, there is no evidence of disaggregated data on the number of voters in the respective elections. Having such data disaggregated by gender, age, disability status etc. will help in establishing the outcome of such interventions on voter turnout.

Table 4: Enhancing accountability throughout the electoral process.

Output 3 - Enhancing accountability throughout the electoral process

Expected Outputs/Results	Baseline	Target	Actual on Target	Summary of key output milestones	Progress towards output targets
Output 3 - Accountability is enhance throughout the electoral process. Sub-output 3.1. Electoral dispute resolution mechanisms are strengthened Indicator 3.1.1. A joint IEC-Judiciary workshop is organized to harmonize EDR provisions understanding Sub-output 3.2 – The IEC is supported through the boundary delimitation exercise Indicator 3.2.1 an expert provides guidance to formulate recommendations related to	0 0	100% 100%		The output supports the strengthening of electoral dispute resolution mechanisms and the boundary delimitation exercise of the IEC. It also envisaged to strengthen the capacity of the Judiciary in the handling complaints arising from the electoral process and as well capacitate the National Assembly oversight functions	The Judiciary was supported and equipped with 12 Lexis and Nexis (online library access to electoral jurisprudence within commonwealth countries) Licenses, 10 Laptops, Printers, Photocopiers and POE Outdoor Routers and are operational hearing complaints arising from the voter registration exercise. Deployed the UN Standing Police Capacity Officer to The Gambia Police Force to assist in proving advisory services on GPF deployment and preparedness in the lead to the presidential election.

boundary delimitation					
Indicator 3.2.2 consultations are organized with electoral stakeholders on the question of boundary delimitation	0	5			
Sub-output 3.3 – National Assembly oversight capacity is strengthened					
Indicator 3.3.1 An assessment of the NA capacity is completed	0	100%			
Indicator 3.3.2 NA committees are trained to oversight and control functions	0	100%			
Indicator 3.3.3 NA Select committee members on the IEC are trained on electoral operations	0	100%			

Finding 10: Through the Project's support and the involvement of the CSO Coalition on Elections, electoral observers promoted democratic values and enhanced electoral accountability, complementing standard mechanisms such as 'spot counting' to ensure free and fair electoral processes.

Enhancing accountability throughout the electoral process has positive consequential effects as revealed during the evaluation. The spot counting in particular was sighted as the most powerful accountability aspect of The Gambia's election processes. The participation of the CSO Coalition on Elections in advancing the promotion of democratic values, practices, and processes in The Gambia, especially in the context of the ongoing democratic transition, has

been remarkable. As part of efforts at advancing Gambia's democratization process, the CSO Coalition engages in advocacy, mobilization, sensitization campaigns, and other civic activities around political participation in general and to ensure an inclusive electoral process. The Coalition fielded a total of 130 domestic observers across the country for the Counsellors' election on 15th April 2023 and the Chairmanship and Mayoral election on 20th May 2023.

As part of its strategies to enhance accountability of the electoral process, the CSO Coalition on Elections deployed 130 domestic observers across the country for the councilor elections. This commitment demonstrates its continued commitment to free, fair and transparent elections as a key hallmark for building and strengthening democracy and achieving good governance in the Gambia. With support from the United Nations Development Programme and Freedom House, the Coalition observed the election from the opening of polls, the voting process, the closing of polls, and the counting of results, observing more than 300 polling stations.

Finding 11: Project support effectively strengthened the Judiciary's capacity to handle electoral complaints through essential equipment and online resources, alongside advisory services to the Police Force, contributing to accountability and reducing election-related violence.

On strengthening the capacity of the Judiciary in the handling of complaints arising from the electoral process, the project supported them as earlier elaborated the assessment matrix, with 12 Lexis and Nexis (online library access to electoral jurisprudence within commonwealth countries) Licenses, Laptops, Printers, Photocopiers and Outdoor Routers and operational hearing complaints arising from the voter registration exercises. The deployment of the UN Standing Police Capacity Officer to The Gambia Police Force to assist in providing advisory services on GPF deployment and preparedness in the lead up to the presidential election. These interventions immensely contributed to improving accountability and reducing elections related violence. Inherent in elections are potential disputes that may arise from election results; in this regard, project interventions that target strengthening the capacity of the judiciary as an independent arm of government with the relevant capacity to oversee cases relating to election-related disputes are quite useful and strategic.

Table 5: Strengthening capacity of electoral stakeholders.

Output 4 -Strengthening capacity of electoral stakeholders.

Expected Outputs/Results	Baseline	Target	Actual on target	Summary of key output milestones	Progress towards output targets
Output 4 – The Capacity of electoral stakeholders is strengthened. Sub-output 4.1 Technical support and capacity strengthening for the IEC				This output focuses on improving the capacity of the IEC through expert mentoring in targeted areas and the rehabilitation of	Electoral training materials were developed and produced. This was a Hand Book for Polling Officials designed for training of polling staff as well as serve as reference material for polling operations. (confirmation need

				its 7 regional offices.	from IEC on the number of copies produced)
Indicator 4.1.1 The IEC is capacitated through expert mentoring in targeted areas	0	100%			Regional offices of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) were fully rehabilitated and handed over. Prior to this project intervention, these offices presented significant challenges in terms of both structural suitability and accommodation capacity, particularly concerning the ability to adequately house critical staff during electioneering periods. The rehabilitation project has successfully addressed these deficiencies, thereby enhancing the operational capacity and coordination mandate of the IEC.
Indicator 4.1.2 electoral training material for polling staff and IEC staff are developed and produced	0	100%			
Indicator 4.1.3 A training module for electoral operations is available at the Management Development Institute	0	100%			
Indicator 4.1.4 the 7 regional offices are rehabilitated	0	7			
Indicator 4.1.5 a lessons-learnt conference is organized at the end of the electoral cycle	0	1			
Sub-output 4.2 – Security forces are capacitated to support electoral security throughout the process					
Indicator 4.2.1: Security forces are trained to maintain law and order during elections in a manner that inspires public and stakeholder confidence and	0	100%			

contributes to peaceful elections. Sub-output 4.3 – The judiciary is capacitated to support the Electoral Dispute Resolution Indicator 4.3.1 Training for judges organized	0	100%			
Indicator 4.3.2 A Gambia EDR handbook is developed and produced	0	100%			

Finding 12: While the Project's Theory of Change assumed that strengthening institutional capacity would enhance electoral credibility, actual support remained largely limited to the IEC's infrastructure and ICT, NERG, the Judiciary and Police, with broader stakeholder capacity building described as minimal.

A well-organized election relies on the capacity of national actors, such as electoral commissions, to deliver on their respective mandates. Therefore, this output focuses on strengthening the capacity of stakeholders in Gambia's electoral system, and this includes the IEC and other stakeholders such as the security, judiciary, and the media. The capacity dimension is directed towards improving the transfer of knowledge and expertise through the development of technical, organisational, and human capacities with the intent to capacitate these democratic institutions in the long run.

The Theory of Change (ToC), for this output, is anchored on the assumption that strengthening the capacity of key institutions with the mandate to oversee and participate in electoral processes, will significantly enhance the credibility of election outcomes, lessen the potential of electoral disputes, due to professional conduct of elections in line with the laws and ensure greater inclusion, accountability and transparency in the electoral process. While this may be true if the activities required to achieve this are implemented as envisaged in the project. However, Strengthening Institutional capacity of electoral stakeholders was limited to selected institutions; including IEC, Judiciary and the Police. While IEC benefited from institutional support through the renovation of regional offices and the provision of ICT equipment, the Judiciary was supported to establish ten (10) Revising Courts with strengthened IT infrastructure through licenses for online library access to electoral jurisprudence within commonwealth countries with additional computer equipment and accessories.. Furthermore, it supported the deployment of the UN Standing Police Capacity Officer to The Gambia Police Force to

assist in proving security advisory services ahead of the presidential election. All these efforts contributed to enhancing electoral credibility and by extension reduction of elections violence thus contributing to attainment of project's goal.

Table 6: Promoting dialogue and coordination.

Output 5 - Promoting dialogue and coordination to implement mechanisms for early warning response to elections-related violence throughout the electoral cycle.

Expected Outputs/Results	Baseline	Target	Actual on Target	Summary of key output milestones	Progress towards output targets
OUTPUT 5 - Dialogue and coordination mechanisms for early warning and early response to election-related violence are implemented throughout the electoral cycle. **Sub-output 5.1** - Coordination and information sharing in the monitoring of election-related risks of violence Indicator 5.1.1 A monitoring and data-sharing mechanism is in place at national and regional level to identify and analyze risks of election-related violence. Sub-output 5.2 Coordination of state and non-state actors for early response to rising tensions surrounding the elections Indicator 5.2.1 A multi-stakeholders	0 0	100% 100%		Output focuses on establishing monitoring and data-sharing mechanism at national and regional level to identify and analyze risks of election-related violence. It also supports the coordination of state and non-state actors for early response to rising tensions surrounding the elections	WANEP established a situation room for receiving alerts from its field monitors, Field Monitors were also trained and deployed to the regions. During elections, WANEP monitors and analyses incoming messages from all regions. Alerts on risk and gaps were regularly communicated to NERG Hotspots mapping conducted to identify and analyze the risk level in all 53 electoral constituencies. WANEP hosted and coordinated the National Elections Response Group (NERG), comprising state and non-state actors and as well coordinated timely responses to elections related challenges and violence. NERG provides messages and statements concerning the

early response system is implemented during the electoral cycle					credibility of elections, helping to ease tensions that can degenerate into election violence, if such mechanisms are absent

Finding 13: The Project effectively established and operationalized early warning and response mechanisms, notably through the CSO Coalition's Election Situation Room and WANEP's hotspot mapping and field monitoring, significantly mitigating election-related violence despite initial delays in baseline indicator achievement.

The baseline indicates the absence of real-time monitoring and data-sharing mechanisms to analyze and respond to election-related violence and the non-existence of a multi-stakeholder response mechanism comprising state and non-state actors to coordinate early response to any potential election violence. Indicator 5.1.1 (monitoring and data-sharing mechanism is in place at national and regional level to identify and analyze risks of election-related violence) was achieved in 2022, when this was initially planned for 100% achievement in 2022. There was no report to provide reasons why the implementation of this activity was delayed. Meanwhile, indicator 5.1.2 achieved 100% in 2022 as planned.

However, significant progress has been made regarding the promotion of dialogue and coordination to implement mechanisms for early warning response to election-related violence throughout the electoral cycle. With funding from UNDP (the elections project), CSO Coalition set up an Election Situation Room (ESR) as the one-stop center for coordinating the collation, analysis, and reporting of the observations from the field on election day. Comprising team of data entry clerks, coordination and communication, analysts, fact checkers and insider mediators, they gave real-time updates on election matters across the country. Considering the observations and pronouncements of the ESR, election-related violence was almost eradicated along the electoral cycle.

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) in partnership with UNDP coordinated the implementation of output 5 under the elections project between January - June 2022, covering all regions. WANEP implemented this output in collaboration with the National Election Response Group (NERG). Main activities under this output are grouped under (i) pre-election activities, (ii) during elections activities (iii) post-election activities.

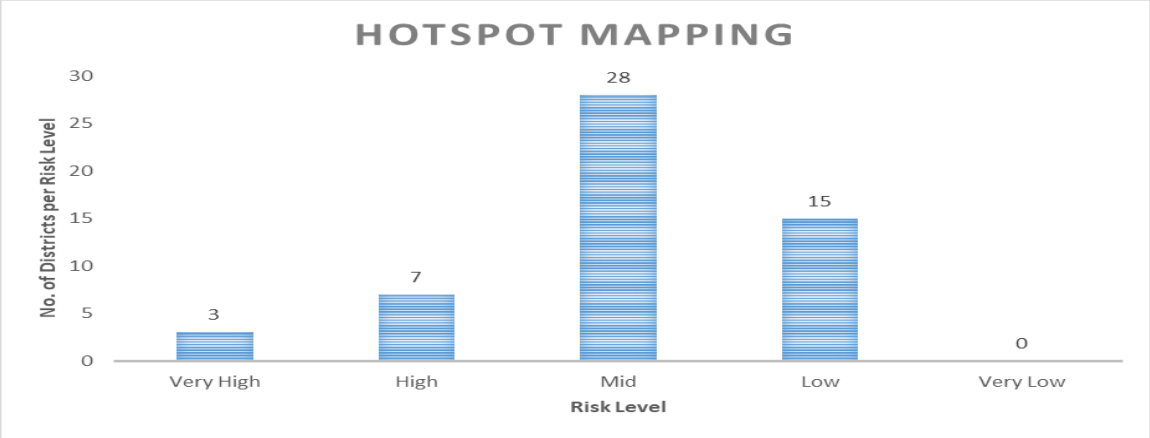
Key activities include hotspot mapping, which was done to identify factors influencing risk of election violence in all 53 electoral constituencies and thereafter provided a risk score to make informed decisions on the needed early warning architecture for each of the regions. The outcome of hotspot mapping (indicators and data) also facilitates the operationalization of the UNDP Crisis Risk Dashboard for effective decision-making. Field monitors (i.e., 21 males and 4 females) were trained and deployed across all risk hotspots, focusing on early warning and response mechanisms.

In this regard it has been reported that WANEP played a significant role in mitigating election related violence throughout the electoral cycle in collaboration with the National Election

Response Group (NERG), an offshoot of the CSO Coalition on elections. The agency supported various activities such as Town Hall meetings, radio programs, mapping of political hotspot areas, deployment of observers and provision of early warning reports.

The graph below highlights the presence of medium risk in 28 electoral constituencies and a total of 10 constituencies with a presence of high risk of election-related violence. The deployment of early warning and response mechanisms by WANEP during the project intervention was very relevant. For instance, according to WANEP, through the established early warning infrastructure, minor challenges were early detected, analyzed and appropriate actions quickly taken to avert potential election problems and triggers for conflict.

Figure 1: Hotspot mapping.



Source – WANEP Report

To enhance dialogue, activities conducted also included a total of twenty (20) town hall meetings in all regions reaching over 500 people, and four (four) radio programmes, leading to enhancing awareness, tolerance, and focus on issues–based politics, away from ethno-political. Interventions targeted engagement with the youth, security forces, women, inter-party committees, and political party leaders. The town halls targeted traditional leaders, councilors, youth representatives, women representatives, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) representatives, etc.

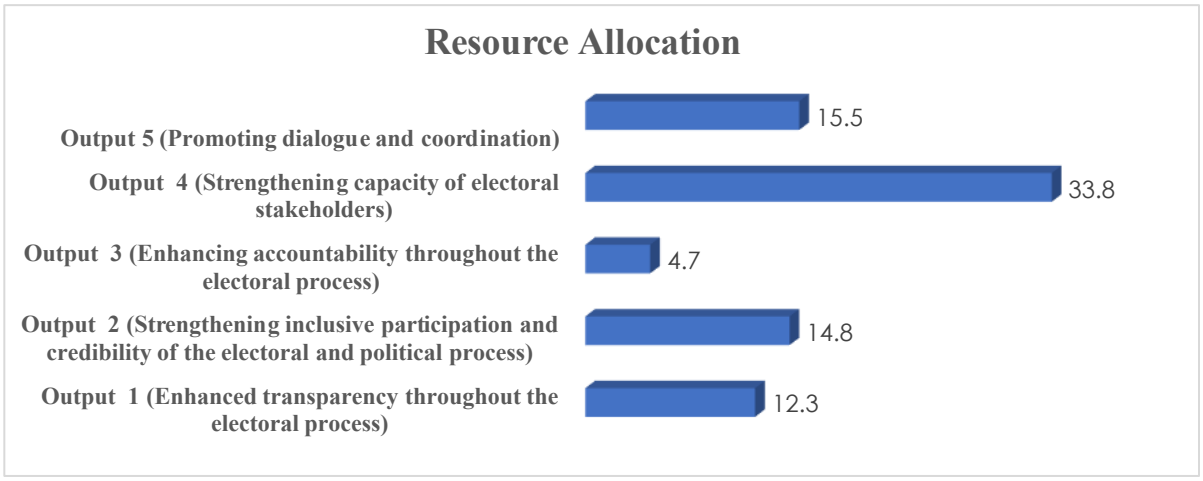
The role of the NERG was very instrumental in enhancing the credibility of election outcomes, contributing to averting the potential for election violence from the supporters of the different parties. The work of NERG centers around the prevention and mitigation of electoral conflicts and violence. Capacity building was provided for NERG members on electoral violence prevention, dialogue, mediation and preventive diplomacy.

EFFICIENCY

This criterion evaluates the extent to which the project has been efficiently managed. It examines budget allocations and human resource planning, the appropriateness of the resource utilization with emphasis on strategies for maximizing achievements with minimum resource deployment. It also highlights efficiency in monitoring & evaluation processes with a view to identifying successes, failures and possible remedial measures.

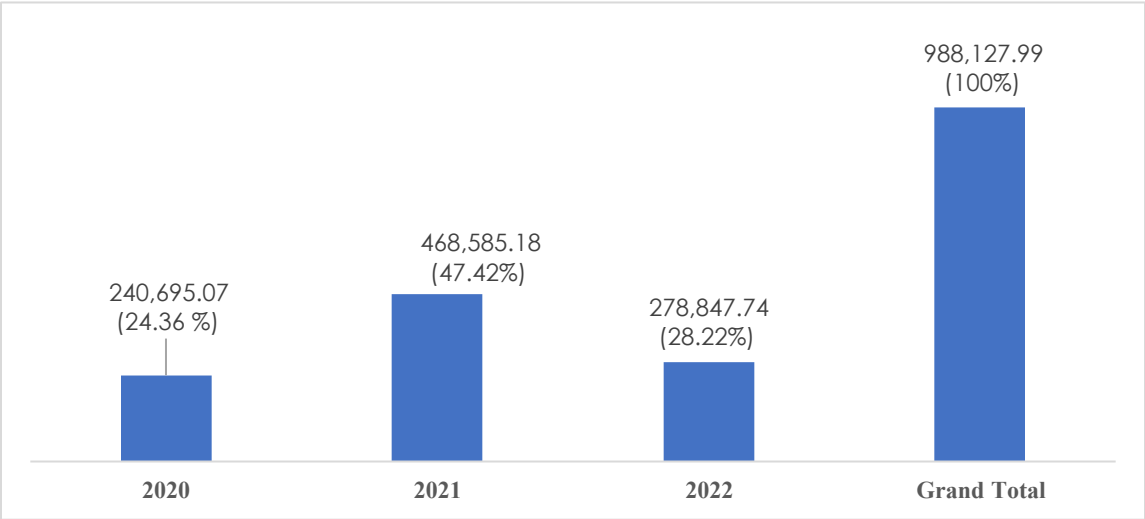
Finding 14: Effective project oversight, through regular joint committee meetings and inter-party dialogues, strengthened trust and fostered a transparent and peaceful electoral processes. On project oversight, significant achievements have been registered notably, the conduct of regular joint coordination meetings of the Technical and Steering Committees co-chaired by the UNDP and IEC as conduit to ensuring efficient project implementation. In addition, quarterly breakfast meetings with party leaders were also conducted on a rotational basis in all the regions ultimately resulting to strengthened trust and confidence amongst party members. These immensely contributed to the mitigation of violence during the electoral process. Regional, community leaders and area Councillors participated in these meetings, which culminated in the signing of the Janjanburah Peace Accord by party leaders. The project's coordination mechanism which provided a platform for party leaders to dialogue and agree to contribute to peaceful conduct of elections in The Gambia impacted the overall democratic governance process in The Gambia.

Figure 2: Resource allocation (in %) of funds by project outputs



Source: UNDP

Figure 3: Annualized project expenditure (in USD)



Finding 15: There were notable disparities in implementation efficiency compared to resource allocation. Outputs 2 and 5 demonstrated strong cost-effectiveness and impact, whereas Outputs 1, 3, and 4 recorded substantial non-implementations of planned activities, despite Output 4 receiving considerable funding

As illustrated in the Figure 2 above, 12.3% of the total resource envelope was allocated to enhance transparency through the electoral process. Information gathered from the reports and interviews indicated the purchase of office and IT equipment and establishment of a functional website for the IEC. The commission also convened consultative forums in March/April and September 2021 respectively, to engage stakeholders on the electoral process in The Gambia. Some of the other key activities under this output were not confirmed to have been completed, such as the planned Presidential and Parliamentary debate, public feedback surveys, strengthening communication capacity of the National Assembly and other relevant institutions.

Of the total project fund, 14.8% was initially directed to address activities relating to strengthening inclusive participation and credibility of the electoral and political process. Key activities undertaken include voter education, dialogue with local authorities, women and youth leaders, media and nationwide community outreach. A voter registration training manual was also developed. As one of the most cost-effective outputs, most of the activities have been conducted except for the setting up of the Citizens Consultative Platform on the National Assembly website.

Interventions that relate to enhancing accountability has the least allocation of resources at 4.7%. This output focuses on enhancing accountability throughout the electoral process. The project supported in strengthening the work of the judiciary by providing office equipment (Laptops, printers, internet access etc.) for the revising courts, Technical Assistance to the GPF on deployment and election preparedness. However, almost all the sub-outputs i.e. strengthening electoral dispute mechanism, boundary delimitation exercise and strengthening National Assembly oversight capacity and all their corresponding activities were never implemented.

At 33.8%, output 4 has the highest allocated resources and focusing on capacity strengthening for electoral stakeholders. Out of the 8 key activities, only 2 (i.e. to produce electoral training materials and handbooks, renovation of the ICE regional offices) were reported to have been implemented. This does not demonstrate cost-effectiveness for this intervention given its focus and resource allocation. However, support was also delivered to enhance response during the COVID-19 pandemic through the provision of face masks, hand sanitizers, thermometers etc.

Output 5 which relate to promoting dialogue and coordination was allocated with 15.5 % of the project total budget. The most cost-effective output where all the activities were achieved beyond expectation despite the limited resources available for the implementation of project activities' monitoring and data-sharing mechanism was established identify and analyze risks of election-related violence for early response. The National Elections Response Group (NERG) a multi-stakeholder group comprising state and non-state actors was established to coordinate timely responses to elections related challenges and violence.

Finding 16: The Project secured only 21.8% (USD 4.5 million) of required resources, mainly from UNDP TRAC, which limited activity implementation and hindered efficiency measurement across outputs. The total resources required to implement the Electoral Assistance Project i.e.

USD 4.5 million was not mobilized for effective implementation of the project. Only 21.8% (USD 988,128) of the total required resources was raised between 2021 - 2022 and all of which were UNDP TRAC resources. Nonetheless the project was able to make significant impact through output 5 and to a great extent output 2 compared to the other outputs 1, 3, and 4.

To fill the funding gap, UNPD and partners engaged in resource mobilization strategy through proposal submission and bilateral engagement with donor partners like Italy, Germany and Japan. The resource mobilization efforts targeted raising USD 1,958,958 (as shown in the table below) for project interventions and response to Covid-19 pandemic. However, this amount was still fell short to fill the resource gap of USD 3.5 million.

Figure 4: Extra resources mobilized to bridge the funding gap.

Amount (USD)	Targeted Donor	Targeted Period of Implementation
1,148,322.42	Japan JSB Winter	2022
92,996.64	Italian Embassy	2021/2022
122,504.55 (COVID-19 Interventions) 595,134 (Programmatic)	German Embassy	2021/2022

The Election Assistance Project had a multi-year work plan, where funds allocated for each output or component was separate. While this was the case, the unavailability of predictable funding at the beginning of the project impacted the effective implementation of most activities. Funds were allocated through the UNDP TRAC resources on yearly basis, while UNDP continued to mobilize resources for full scale project implementation. The evaluation exercise was unable to verify if any of the resources mobilized through bilateral donors indicated above did crystalize to enhance project delivery. Therefore, measuring efficiency of fund disbursement per output was constrained by the above factors.

M&E SYSTEM OF THE PROJECT

Finding 17: Although a monitoring and evaluation framework existed, its implementation was limited due to the absence of dedicated staff, which contributed to irregular data collection, reduced oversight effectiveness, and constrained evidence for informed decision-making.

While a monitoring and evaluation framework exists to monitor project activities, the evaluation could not ascertain the extent to which monitoring activities were carried out routinely, gather feedback and improve project performance. Monitoring would have facilitated the gathering of primary data, which could have enhanced project outcomes through evidence for informed and timely decision making.

The monitoring plan clearly articulated the types of reports to be generated and their frequencies, to track results and gather data for results reporting. Examples include quarterly progress reports, annual monitoring reports, and bi-annual project reviews to assess performance. In addition, A total of USD 20,000 monitoring budget of was allocated for all the outputs alongside a separate budget for the end of project evaluation.

Despite these provisions, the project team responsible for facilitating, monitoring and reporting, among many other responsibilities documented only limited monitoring activities. Notably reports indicated just joint monitoring and verification field visits in March 2021 of the IEC regional offices to inspect progress of work for the renovations.

Furthermore, the project did not have indicated M&E officer or a dedicated person to implement the M&E plan, and this is one of the critical factor in the lapses observed in terms of irregular and inconsistent M&E data, therefore missing the opportunity to identify implementation bottlenecks, conduct relevant course corrections and enhance the lessons learn opportunities for better outcomes. The absence of a well-functioning M&E system also impacted the evaluation, as monitoring data to substantiate the findings of the evaluation was largely missing.

SUSTAINABILITY

This section assesses the extent to which the gains of the project will be continued after its closure. It takes into consideration political will, financial availability, technical capacity and related socio-cultural factors needed to support the continuity of elections support projects. It further evaluates the critical factors impeding sustainability and how ownership and stakeholder engagement are ensured. Additionally, the section analyses the factors that would influence the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project results and mechanisms adopted to sustain donor funded projects in The Gambia.

The evaluation noted that the design of the Elections Project originated from government's request to the UN Electoral Assistance Division to support The Gambia's electoral processes. This in itself demonstrated; felt-need, ownership, acceptance and participation as some of the preconditions of sustainability. The project's implementation strategy was anchored at the then National Development Plan's pillar of "Restoring good governance; Respect for Human Rights; Rule of law; and Empowering citizens through decentralization and local governance". With its inherent programming strategy of long-term and holistic engagement, core functions of democratic actors like the IEC, Judiciary and the Police, as foundation for sustainable development were strengthened. The establishment of the Revising Courts and provision of security advisory services were all measures that contributed to sustainable electoral credibility and mitigation of elections related violence.

While the project exit strategy was not specifically defined in the Appraisal Document, activities implemented were mutually reinforcing with prospects for continuity despite limited resources. The civic and voter education implemented by NCCE and NYC played significant role in disseminating crucial election and voter information, thus contributed to public enlightenment on elections related matters. With the establishment and operationalization of the Elections Situation Room, the CSO Coalition on Elections demonstrated its continued commitment to free, fair and transparent elections as fundamental pillars for building and strengthening democracy and achieving good governance in The Gambia. With support from the UNDP and Freedom House the Coalition observed the election from the opening of polls, voting process, closing of polls, and counting of results in more than 300 polling stations. Significantly, WANEP and the ICP also made remarkable contributions in mitigation of elections violence which if nurtured could lead to continuity and by extension sustainability of similar interventions. The training, deployment of monitors, dialogue, consultations, radio shows, town hall meetings and the alerts that were provided by the monitors contributed in no small matter

to ensuring adequate early warning and response mechanisms which provided the confidence and credibility of the elections. With this early warning infrastructure, minor challenges were early detected, analyses and appropriate actions quickly taken to avert potential election problems and triggers for conflict.

Despite the complimentary efforts of project stakeholders, the evaluation observed some salient issues that needs to be strengthened. Intensive and continuous civic education to enlighten Gambians about the importance of elections is recipe for participation and ultimate sustainability of interventions. Equally, political parties and associated networks should educate and encourage their allies to get registered and vote massively as strong conditions for; political participation, effective democracy and ultimately good governance.

PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION

Dialogue and coordination among the partners were enhanced through regular monthly briefing meetings of the Technical and Steering Committees, as well as quarterly breakfast meetings with party leaders. The fact that this was able to bring together different stakeholders to discuss electoral issues was considered a positive step in promoting dialogue and coordination.

The project established strategic partnerships with Italy, Germany, and Japan to support resource mobilization efforts. Similarly, the UNDP DPPA Support Team at Headquarters provided technical support. Though un-intended (not factored in the original project design) benefits, the project also made immense contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic. When COVID cases rose exponentially in July 2020, it became apparent that additional health care facilities were necessary to address urgent needs. In response, Public Private Partnership (PPP) cooperation between the Ministry of Health of The Gambia, World Bank, UNDP and TAF AFRICA GLOBAL (GAMBIA) Ltd was developed to rehabilitate the abandoned Ndemban Healthcare Centre. Additionally, The Government of The Gambia in partnership with UNDP, WHO, and the World Bank stepped forward during COVID and worked together to procure and deliver The Gambia's first ever oxygen plant installed at the Ndemban clinic capable of producing medical-grade oxygen. The oxygen plant is a Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen generating plant with a 50 cubic meter capacity per hour, that made Ndemban clinic not only self-sufficient in their oxygen requirement but able to supply surrounding hospitals.

EVALUATION CROSS-CUTTING

HUMAN RIGHTS

A crucial human rights aspect of the project focused on advocating for the inclusive participation of marginalized groups, specifically women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), in the electoral process. This advocacy yielded a historical outcome: a notable increase in the number of PWDs, women, and youth contesting in both the National Assembly and Local Government Elections as outlined above.

To achieve this, the project implemented targeted initiatives aimed at removing barriers to political participation, guided by a human rights approach that emphasizes equality, inclusion,

and non-discrimination. The increased participation of these groups by contesting the respective elections not only strengthens democratic principles but also ensures that the voices and perspectives of marginalized communities are integrated into political decision-making processes.

GENDER EQUALITY AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

The process of enhancing the participation of women, youths and other vulnerable groups in the election processes was described as limited, slow and unpredictable. This is because the numbers that expressed interest may not be necessarily selected or voted into office. Apart from support from this project, ECOWAS also provided funds to the IPC to support women aspiring for political leadership positions and establishment of regional branches in collaboration with NCCE and ACTIVISTA respectively.

The evaluation noted that several initiatives were implemented to promote inclusivity and popular participation. In particular, project stakeholders including; National Youth Parliament, The Gambia Peace Ambassadors and National Youth Council collectively embarked on a voter registration campaign. Aimed at promoting the inclusion and participation of young people, women and persons with disability, sensitization team reached out to over 80 communities across the seven regions of The Gambia.

These campaigns significantly contributed to remarkable voter registration and ultimate voter turnout of above 90% of registered voters in the 2021 presidential election. To sustain the gains made, NYC through funding from the UNDP staged a sensitization caravan on Civic Education, Campaign and Election for youth and women to peacefully participate in the preceded parliamentary election to promote effective youth and women participation in politics. The caravan allowed the young people, women and the public to understand the role of parliamentarians, democracy, its principles and peace. They were also exposed to peaceful electoral processes, encouraging peaceful tolerance between the public most especially the young people and women.

Similarity, the evidence revealed the involvement National Council for Civic Education (NCCE) with funding from UNDP on civic and voter awareness creation. The sensitization campaign involved face-to-face community outreach; media sensitization outreaches, and production and distribution of information, communication and education materials across the country. The campaign engaged a cross section of The Gambian populace including Women, Youths, local authorities and differently abled persons availing them critical information about the presidential election ranging from the candidates' nomination process, the conduct of campaign, polling day and conducts in the entire process as well as the maintenance of peace throughout the electoral cycle.

On promoting inclusivity, the evaluation reveals the project supported the implementation of an advocacy event aimed at promoting the Participation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in The Gambia's Electoral Processes. Organized by National Council for Civic Education (NCCE) in collaboration with Gambia Federation of The Disabled (GFD), it attracted 300 participants from the various organisations of differently-abled persons in The Gambia. The session advocated for participation of Persons with Disabilities in The Gambia's Electoral Processes and

as well provided vital platform for stakeholders to discuss and address challenges hindering PWDs' electoral participation. Outcomes that emerged from the session include increased awareness, identification of barriers to political participation and fostering of networking opportunities.

CONCLUSIONS

From the findings, it is evident that democratic elections are core tenets of the governance process and allow citizens to express their rights in choosing leaders to steer the affairs of a country for a given period. Meanwhile, in The Gambia, elections are multi-tiered. Presidential elections are conducted every five years, and Presidents are elected through a simple majority popular vote (i.e., first-past-the-post electoral system). Other elections that follow the electoral cycle include the National Assembly Elections, Local Government Elections, and Mayoral and Chairperson Elections, all of which impacted the political landscape in The Gambia's transition to a more democratic state. During the implementation of the UNDP Elections Project between 2020 – 2023, several elections were held, from the Presidential elections in 2021 to the Legislative Elections in 2022, and extended to cover Local Government Elections, and Mayoral and Chairperson Elections in 2023.

The Gambia currently has 53 constituencies, 120 wards, 962,157 registered voters, and 19 registered political parties5. Meanwhile, women constitute 57% of the registered electorate in The Gambia. Despite this number advantage and their active engagement in politics, there was no female candidate in the previous Presidential elections. Their participation in Legislative and Local Government elections is very limited, where only 8.6% of national assembly members are female and only 7% of local Councillors are female.6

LESSONS LEARNED

The project exerted a demonstrably positive and impactful influence on The Gambia's electoral process, contributing significantly to the consolidation of democratic norms. Specifically, it was observed that the project's initiatives successfully fostered social cohesion by promoting dialogue and understanding among diverse electoral stakeholders, thereby mitigating potential conflict. Furthermore, the project played a crucial role in creating a more level playing field for candidates, through capacity-building workshops, and advocacy and sensitization efforts.

In terms of transparency, the project's support for election observation, public access to electoral information, and the implementation of transparent vote-counting procedures greatly enhanced public confidence in the integrity of the electoral process. The increased participation in the electoral process particularly among women and youth contributed to the realization of this result.

[5] https://iec.gm/

[6] 2024 Conflict and Development Analysis (CDA) Report

Continuous dialogue and collaboration can enhance trust and confidence in bring together different stakeholders to discuss and resolve electoral issues. The impactful role of the Inter Party Committee (IPC) and CSO Coalition on Elections has been remarkable.

The Election Situation Room (ESR) as the one-stop center for coordinating the collation, analysis, and reporting of the observations from the field on election day has been quite strategic.

For the first time in the country's history, all candidates for elections have been provided with security throughout the campaigns. Police Intervention Unit (PIU) Officers were assigned to cover the campaigns and were present at all campaign events monitored. Other private security outfits were also seen providing protection to some candidates/political parties. The Police were equally proactive in monitoring the observance of approved campaign schedules to ensure no political party violated the schedule[7].

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above conclusions, the following recommendations are made to strengthen The Gambia's electoral systems and processes. Implementing the recommendations will as well serve as mechanisms for improving the performance of subsequent election support projects:

Recommendation 1: Strengthen Institutional Capacities of Oversight Bodies and the Relevant Stakeholders to Effectively Monitor Elections and Civic Engagement

UNDP should support capacity-building for WANEP, the Coalition of NGOs, NCCE, NYC, and IPC through technical training, provision of equipment, and institutional support. This includes expanding the Elections Situation Room (ESR) and establishing decentralized civic education structures to promote transparency, reduce election-related violence, and enhance public awareness.

Recommendation 2: Enhance Technological Infrastructure for Electoral Transparency

The IEC should adopt reliable IT tools for real-time data capture at polling stations and integrate them into a robust Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) system. This will ensure timely dissemination of election information, increase transparency, and reduce electoral disputes.

Recommendation 3: Review and Reform Electoral Legislation and Procedures

The IEC should review the Electoral Act 1996 and advocate for its passage to institutionalize the joint conduct of elections. Additionally, the IEC and IPC should establish common terms for compensating party agents to prevent potential election-related violence.

Recommendation 4: Promote Inclusive Participation in Electoral Processes

The IEC, in collaboration with key stakeholders, should implement targeted, gender-responsive interventions that actively promote equitable access to political leadership for women, youth,

[7] Final Electoral Report the Electoral Cycle 2021-2023, The Gambia

and persons with disabilities (PWDs). These efforts should be embedded in broader electoral reforms and civic education initiatives to ensure meaningful participation and representation of marginalized groups.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen the Inter-Party Committee's Role in Conflict Prevention

UNDP should explore opportunities to enhance the institutional capacity of the Inter-Party Committee (IPC) at both national and regional levels, recognizing its critical role in reducing election-related violence and fostering political dialogue.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: LIST OF REFERENCE/ DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Civic and Voter Education Report – NCCE

Conflict and Development Analysis (CDA) Report

CSO Coalition on Elections, Election Situation Room (ESR) reports,

Dialogue and Coordination mechanisms for early warning and early response to election-related violence are implemented throughout the electoral cycle" Implemented by WANEP-The Gambia

https://iec.gm (voter registration report, election reports)

Political Parties Leadership Peace Pledge – September, 2021

Project Document Support Project to the Elections and the Democratic Processes in The Gambia (SPEDG),

Report of the Nation-Wide Caravan on Peaceful Campaign and Election,

The Gambia Electoral Report – 2021-2023

The Nationwide Caravan on Civic Voter Education – NYC

UNDP Project Reports (Finance Reports, Progress Reports, Annual Work-Plans and Budgets, Minutes of meetings)

Voter registration final campaign,

Voter Registration Monitoring Report – NHRC

ANNEX 2: STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

Table 7: List of stakeholders consulted (KII/FGD)

Agency	Name of participants	Gender	Designation	Data collection tool
Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)	Momodou A Jah	M	Database Supervisor	Focus Group Discussions (FGD)
	Sulayman Njie	M	Ag. Director of Finance	
	Sulayman Joof	M	Director of Admin.	
	Abdullah K Jeng	M	Director of Operations	
	Sambujang Njie	M	Chief Electoral Officer	
The Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (TANGO)	Modou Lamin Mbye	M	Focal Person/CSO coalition on elections	Key Infomart Interview (KII)
National Assembly	Gibairu Janneh	**M**	Director of Communications, ICT and Press	Key Infomart Interview (KII)
Ministry of Interior	Mbayang Njie	**F**	**Project Focal Point**	Key Infomart Interview (KII)
Inter-Party Committee (IPC)	Aji Mariama Secka	F	Head of Finance	Focus Group Discussions (FGD)
	Samba Baldeh	M	Co-Chair	
	Alhajie Bayo	M	Head of Administration	
	Awa Touray	F	Finance Secretary	
National Council for Civic Education (NCCE)	Yusupha Bojang	M	Chief Civic Education Officer	Key Infomart Interview (KII)
West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP)	Salama Njie	**F**	**National Network Coordinator**	Key Infomart Interview (KII)

National Youth Council (NYC)	**Omar Bah**	**M**	**Program Officer**	Key Infomart Interview (KII)

Stakeholders Engaged	Male	Female	Total
Project Management Unit (PMU)	1	2	3
IEC (main office)	5	0	5
TANGO	1	0	1
CSO coalition on elections	1	0	1
National Assembly	1	0	1
Ministry Of Interior	1	0	1
Inter Party Committee (IPC)	2	2	4
NCCE	1	0	1
WANEP		1	1
National Youth Council	1	0	1

ANNEX 3: THE EVALUATION DESIGN MATRIX

Table 8: Evaluation design matrix

Criteria	Evaluation questions
1)Relevance	Were the project outcomes in consistence with national priorities and the country's national development plan and related documents? Was the project design appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes; were the project's strategy and planned actions relevant and adequate to meet the needs of the beneficiaries and all involved stakeholders? Has there been any change in the relevance of the project since its design such as new national policies, plans or programme that affect the relevance of the project objectives and goals?
2) Effectiveness	To what extent have project objectives been achieved, and were there any unintended results; what results, intended and unintended, did the project achieve so far across its components?
3) Efficiency	To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost effectively? To what extent has the project built on existing agreements, initiatives, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other projects, partnerships and avoided duplication of similar activities by other groups and initiatives? To what extent has project management been able to adapt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?

Criteria	Evaluation questions
4) Sustainability	What is the likelihood that the project results will continue to be useful or will remain even after the end of the project? What are the key risks which may affect the sustainability of the project benefits (in terms of economic, environmental, institutional and social sustainability)? To what extent is this project likely to build upon results achieved at the country level, particularly in light of the new other donor support?
5) Factors affecting performance	Implementation. To what extent did UNDP deliver on project identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation, approval and start-up, oversight and supervision? How well were risks identified and managed? Execution. To what extent did the implementing partners agencies effectively discharge their roles and responsibilities related to the management and administration of the project? Monitoring and evaluation Was the M&E design? If yes, is the plan practical and sufficient? Financial management . To what extent did the approved project funds disbursed? Project partnership and stakeholder engagement. Were other actors, such as civil society, involved in project design or implementation, and what was the effect on the project results? Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products. How is the project assessing, documenting and sharing its results, lessons learned and experiences? To what extent are communication products and activities likely to support the sustainability and scaling-up of project results?
Lessons learned	What knowledge has been generated from project results and experiences, which have a wider value and potential for replication and use?

ANNEX 4: DATA COLLECTION GUIDE

Table 9: Data Collection Guide

Terminal Evaluation of the Elections Project (2021 - 2023)

Focus Group Discussion/ Key Informant Interviews Guide for National and Regional Stakeholders

February 2025

Name of LGA---------- Participants: Male-----Female-----Total-----

(Attach list of participants by name, gender, agency, designation and contact number)

Date ----------

1. Relevance

The extent to which project outcomes are in consistence with national priorities i.e. National Development Plan, Elections code of conduct, and related policy documents?

Was the project design approach participatory and how were project intervention strategies and stakeholders/beneficiaries identified?

Which stakeholder institutions were engaged and what methods were used in implementing the different project activities?

Has there been any change in the relevance of the project since its design/completion such as new national policies, plans or programmes that affect the relevance of the project objectives?

If you could change anything about the design of the project, what would you change? (Address issues of process, content, outcomes, implementation, etc.).

What evidence is there to show that the project has contributed in enhancing the Gambia's electoral process?

Briefly describe the extent to which the project was responsive to the National Development Plan.

2. Effectiveness

2.1 To what extent has the project objectives and outcomes been achieved in terms of.

Strengthening transparency of the electoral process

Strengthening inclusive participation and credibility of the electoral and political process

Enhancing accountability throughout the electoral process

Strengthening the capacity of electoral stakeholders

Promoting dialogue and coordination to implement mechanisms for early warning and early response to election-related violence throughout the electoral cycle.

2.2 What specific activities did your institution implemented during the project period, why and what form of support was provided?

2.3. Was the project able to deliver the planned support in full and on time? If yes please elaborate and if not Why

2.4. Were any unplanned results/outputs realized in the process?

2.5. What were the strengths (enhancing factors) and weaknesses (impeding factors) during project implementation? Please elaborate.

2.6 What innovations (if any) were demonstrated during implementation?

3. Efficiency

3.1. Were the project funds sufficient and cost effective in achieving the planned outputs? If so, please explain how and if not, why not.

3.2. How appropriate/efficient were the methods/techniques used in project implementation?

3.3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the different institutions involved in the implementation of the project?

3.4 Were reports (Audits, M&E, Mission etc.) provided on time ?

4. Sustainability

4.1. What sustainability mechanisms were put in place to enhance/ensure continuity of the gains/achievements made?

4.2. What is the capacity (human, financial and institutional) of the beneficiary institutions in sustaining the gains made the project?

5. Gender Mainstreaming and inclusion

5.1. To what extent have women been involved in the implementation of project activities?

5.2. To what extent did the project trigger the participation of women, youths, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in the electoral process at national and regional level.

6. Effects of Covid 19

6.1. What has been the effect of Covid 19 in the implementation of the project? If any, please elaborate and describe coping strategies adopted.

7. Overall Impact

7.1. Kindly summarize the effect of this project on the Gambia's election process during the last electoral cycle (Direct or Indirect/Positive or negative).

8. Suggestions for improvement/the way forward

8.1. What have been the key lessons learnt during project implementation?

8.2. What suggestions/recommendations do you have for improving the performance of a future/follow-up project of the nature?