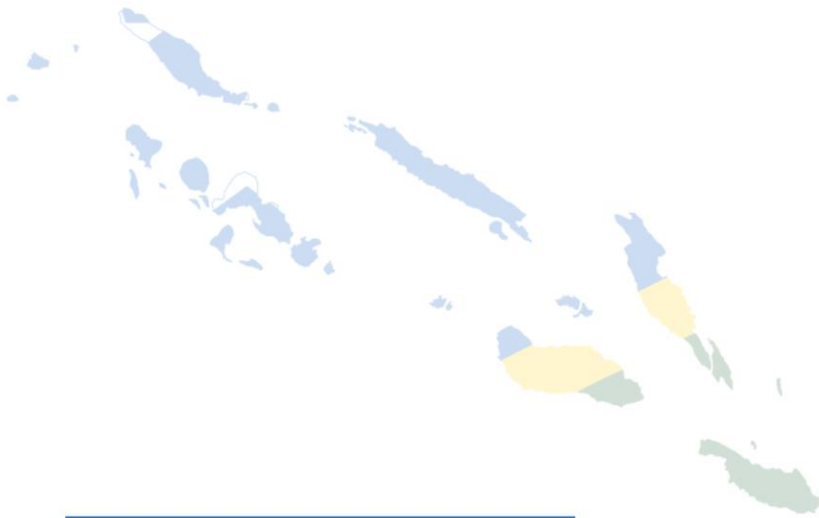




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# UNDP SUPPORT TO THE ELECTORAL CYCLE IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

## Project Update – Q1 & Q2 2025



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# UNDP SUPPORT TO THE ELECTORAL CYCLE IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

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## Guadalcanal and Paripao by-elections

### Ballot paper draw process

As a key step in the preparations for the June 4th by-elections for the West Guadalcanal Constituency and Paripao Ward, the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) conducted the official ballot paper draw following the closure of candidate nominations. This procedure determined the final order in which candidates appeared on the ballot papers. To ensure integrity, the draw was held in a transparent and professional manner, with candidates and media representatives present to witness the proceedings. Following this draw, the commission proceeded with the production of the official ballot papers that were utilized for the election.



### Elections operations and logistics

Throughout the month of May, the SIEC conducted key operational and logistical activities in preparation for the by-elections including:

- Candidates nominations process;
- Procurement of sensitive and non-sensitive electoral materials;
- Voter and civic education campaigns;

- Training and capacity building programs with elections officials;
- Deployment and retrieval of elections materials;
- Accreditation of candidates agents and observers;
- Counting process and announcement of results.

Throughout this process, SECSIP project provided technical assistance and operational support through:

- Project team collocated at commissions' offices
- Procurement of electoral materials (complementing the procurement from SIEC);
- Organizing and facilitating the training of trainers and the training sessions of elections officials;
- Accompanying SIEC teams in the voter education and civic education campaigns conducted in the two constituencies;
- Covering operational costs related to the delivery and retrieval of officials and materials across Guadalcanal province.

### E-Day

As scheduled, on the 4th of June were conducted the two by-elections in Paripao and Guadalcanal constituencies. From the initial observations, the process was conducted in an organized and peaceful manner, with voters expressing their choice freely throughout the voting day. The security during the process of voting was ensured efficiently by the national police force, with no significant incidents being reported.



Upon the end of the voting process (16.00 hrs) the polling stations conducted the closing procedures and the sensitive electoral materials were stored safely in

sealed ballot boxes, in front of observers and candidate's agents.



The retrieval of the materials was a challenging exercise as some of the materials were transported by boat from remote areas of the island. The SECSIP team accompanied and supported all these processes that were completed around 3 AM on the 5th of June.



The project will prepare and share a summary of key electoral data and results.



### Counting and Announcement of Results

The final step of the by-elections was the counting process that took place at Honiara Police Club on the 5 and 6 of June. The counting was conducted in a transparent and open manner, in front of accredited observers and agents.

On the 6th of June, around 22.00 hrs. the final results for the Guadalcanal constituency were announced, concluding successfully another electoral process in the country.

## Electoral Legal Framework Reform Task Force

During the reporting period, the SECSIP continued providing legal and technical support to the SIEC and the Electoral Reform Task Force. This support contributed to ongoing discussions on priority electoral reforms following the completion of the 2024 Joint Elections. The Electoral Reform Task Force convened meetings in February and April 2025 to review and deliberate on the remaining legislative and policy reforms required to strengthen the electoral framework.

Strategically, the task force has committed to finalising the remaining reforms and legal amendments by the end of 2026, at the latest. This timeline is intended to ensure that 2027 and 2028 are dedicated exclusively to operational and logistical preparations ahead of the next electoral cycle. This strategic priority is also reflected in the SIEC Strategic Plan 2024-2028 scheduled for launch in June 2025. The path forward, however, remains challenging, as the outstanding reforms are complex in nature and require broad political consensus as well substantial additional resources from the government.

The task force is primarily focused on proposing legal amendments and procedural adjustments concerning key electoral matters, including the definition of ordinary residence, out of country voting, and out of constituency voting. Each of these areas presents varying levels of complexity and political sensitivity, necessitating in-depth legal analysis and extensive consultations with political parties, members of the Parliament, relevant government institutions, and civil society organizations.

As part of this process, on the 3rd of June, the task force organized a thematic workshop to revisit the outstanding electoral reform priorities and discuss the way forward. As part of the technical assistance and advisory support, the event was attended by the SECSIP Chief Technical Adviser.



The workshop revisited in-depth key pending electoral reforms related to the definition of ordinary residence, timing of elections and synchronisation of electoral calendars for national and local elections, challenges emerging from possible early dissolution of elected bodies. The participants vividly debated the electoral and legal aspects of each topic and provided substantive inputs, taking into account international standards but also contextual aspects.

The conclusions of the workshop will be incorporated in the revised draft laws and amendments and will be submitted for consultations, revision and approval to relevant state institutions and voters.



The task force is undertaking a detailed review of each issue, assessing both the feasibility of implementation within the current electoral calendar and the potential challenges posed by political divisions and time constraints.

## Strategic Planning for the 2024–2028 Electoral Cycle

Following the successful conduct of the 2024 National Joint Elections, the SIEC initiated the strategic planning process for the 2024 – 2028 electoral cycle during the last quarter of 2024.



The process was initially launched in 2024 with technical support from the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and has continued into 2025 with the assistance of the SECSIP. Strategic planning is a widely adopted organizational methodology designed to enhance institutional responsiveness and guide long-term capacity development. This structured and disciplined process enables the organization to define its strategic direction and make informed decisions regarding the allocation of human, financial, and material resources. The overarching objective is to strengthen institutional performance, ensure greater preparedness, and support the delivery of credible, inclusive, and transparent electoral processes.



In the first two quarters of 2025, the SECSIP supported the strategic planning exercise through the recruitment

of two international experts. These experts were tasked with continuing and finalising the process.

Specifically, during the month of April, the SIEC held consultations and workshops focused on the strategic plan. These sessions included participation from civil society organisations, government institutions, ministries and agencies, donors, and the international community.

During the workshops, the SIEC Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) and Head of Operations presented the Commission's mission, vision, strategic pillars, and goals for the next four years. They also explained that the Commission is currently identifying strategic actions, which will be finalized by the end of May.

Participants welcomed the initiative and shared valuable inputs and comments during the open discussion sessions. The SIEC appreciated and valued the feedback provided and committed to carefully considering all contributions received through the stakeholder consultation sessions.

Overall, the feedback from stakeholder groups was largely positive and supportive of the Strategic Framework presented.



The stakeholder consultations included detailed discussion of the SIEC mandate, operations, and future pathways. The insights and feedback from the stakeholder groups confirmed that their priorities and recommendations could be addressed under the SIEC Strategic Framework pillars and goals. These inputs are also being carefully considered in the formulation of the strategic actions currently under development.

It was agreed that stakeholders would reconvene at the end of June for the official launch of the Strategic Plan.



## Perception Survey Preparations

Following the conduct of the 2024 joint elections and the subsequent post-electoral lessons learned exercise, UNDP is undertaking a perception survey exercise. This initiative aims to take stock of trends and public perceptions after the completion of this important electoral process.

The survey is designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data that will support the overall assessment of areas that may require reforms and legal amendments. It will also provide additional evidence-based inputs to inform the reform process.

In addition, the proposed survey will contribute to the planning and design of the future electoral assistance programmes. It will help identify both the strengths and weaknesses of the electoral process.

For this purpose, UNDP is in the process of selecting a specialized firm to carry out the data collection. The selected firm will gather information from a predefined group of respondents to obtain insights into the proposed topics of interest.

The survey will serve multiple purposes. The research firm will conduct the survey using a scientifically based methodology, tailored to the specific objectives.

Data will be collected using standardized procedures to ensure that all respondents are provided with a level playing field. This approach is intended to minimize biased responses that could influence the reliability of the study's outcomes.

The survey is scheduled to take place between June and August 2025.

The initiative will help expand the knowledge base and inform future programming across the four pillars of the

project. It will also serve to establish a baseline from which changes can be measured over time.

In addition, the survey will provide a clear understanding of the experiences and perceptions of voters in Solomon Islands including:

Specifically, the assignment will focus on the following key technical areas:

- Periodic and timely conduct of elections
- Elections and their role in democratic consolidation
- Participation and representation from a gender perspective
- Inclusive engagement and participation of marginalized groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs)
- Electoral reforms in the context of future electoral cycles
- Public confidence in electoral management bodies
- Levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the electoral process
- The role of media and social media in electoral processes
- Electoral observation and oversight mechanisms.

## UN Needs Assessment Mission (NAM)

From 17 to 21 March 2025, an electoral Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) was deployed to Honiara, led by the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) at UN Headquarters in New York, with the support of UNDP. The mission followed a request from the Government of Solomon Islands and its Electoral Commission for continued electoral assistance in support of the upcoming legislative and provincial elections covering the 2026–2029 period.

The purpose of the NAM was to assess the political, legal, institutional, technical, human rights, and security environment in the country, and to determine whether the United Nations should continue providing electoral assistance. It also aimed to recommend the type, scope, and modalities of any such assistance, with the NAM itself conducted as an independent assessment mission, not programmatically or operationally linked to any existing UN presence in the country.

In close coordination with all relevant partners and stakeholders, the NAM assessed the following areas:

- Political, legal, institutional, technical and security environment and electoral framework.
- Capacity and needs of election stakeholders, in particular the electoral management body or bodies.
- UN capacity for electoral assistance and co-ordination mechanisms.
- Current and planned electoral assistance by other organizations including electoral observation.
- Sustainability and cost-effectiveness of requested or proposed electoral assistance.
- Potential risks, benefits and advisability of the UN providing electoral assistance; and
- Potential for election-related violence.
- Assessment of available resources and potential donor interest for the provision of electoral assistance as well as assessment of the gender, human rights, youth and other marginalized groups in the electoral and political processes.

## Establishment of SIEC Provincial Offices

One of the explicit goals defined in the new SIEC's Strategic Plan 2024 - 2028, is to reach and provide services to voters and citizens at large in the nine provinces of the country. This ambitious target was set after the extensive consultations and lessons learned exercises conducted after the completion of the 2024 Joint Elections.

The reports highlighted the need for the provinces to obtain timely, professional and continuous support not only during the electoral period, preceding the E-Day, but also in the post-electoral and pre-electoral periods. This will entail the establishment of SIEC provincial presence in the provinces of the country equipped with trained officials, equipment and resources to carry on their important tasks.

The activities that will be implemented in the inter-electoral period are related to training and capacity building, civic and voter education, communication and liaison with local administration and police, handling requests and petitions coming from the voters in the provinces. For this, the Commission considers a gradual expansion to initially three provinces that will be strategically located to cover geographically the entire country. After assessing this first step, a further expansion to other provinces will be considered.

UNDP is supporting this initiative through technical assistance and potentially will participate in the establishment of the offices in the first three selected provinces.

