

# United Nations Development Programme

Electoral Support to Moldova

Annual report

2011

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Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

## Project personnel this year

- ★ Andreas Johansson, Project Consultant (January-March)
- ★ Kate Sullivan, Chief Technical Adviser (April- December)
- ★ Elena Verdes, Project Assistant (March-December)
- ★ Ana Potoroca, Project Intern (May-July)

## Report of activities

### Activity 1: Continued development and implementation of the State Automated Informational System - Elections

#### A: SAISE electoral management

*This component was focused on supporting the CEC to expand their use of SIAS-E at local elections. The system was successfully enhanced and used at the June 2011 local elections. This was a significant achievement as all programming and support tasks were undertaken by local consultants in a very compressed timeframe. The use of the system by the CEC contributed to both the more efficient delivery of the elections and well to the improved transparency of the process.*

1. Work for this activity was focused around the June local elections, and was intended to (a) modify the system for its first use at local elections (b) implement CEC requests for enhancements to the system and (c) support the operation of the system during the election period.

2. Victor Cojocar was engaged as lead national IT consultant in March to begin the modification and enhancement work. It was intended that an international IT consultant would also be recruited to work on these activities. However the international recruitment process failed, and so the CEC requested a different arrangement where Mr Cojocar acted as lead national consultant and additional capacity was to be acquired. The activities were undertaken by Mr Cojocar and additional consultants Mr Ivanov and Mr Koroid. Mr Cojocar liaised closely with CEC members and staff; all work was delivered to specification and the team

worked well together. The team showed great dedication and commitment to their work, and developed several innovations for the display of election data during polling and counting.

3. Once the post-election reporting requirements of the CEC are fulfilled, Mr Cojocaru provided a report on the work done. His terms of reference also required him to ensure that all relevant SAISE<sup>1</sup> documentation is in order before his contract period ended in August; however this requirement was based on an incorrect assumption that the documentation had been left up to date by the previous developer and it was therefore not possible to 'back-document' the whole system. This issue will be addressed by the consultants envisaged in 2012.

4. Following the conclusion of Mr Cojocaru's contracted term, the project could not meet a CEC request to extend his term while undertaking a transparent procurement process. Taking advantage of a non-election period, the project conducted a competition to build a roster of local IT consultants to work on SAISE in the future, which will significantly streamline future procurement of such consultants.

#### B: SAISE voter registration

*This component saw the successful use of the Electronic Voters' Register and the CEC continues to advocate its full implementation. International and domestic observers also support such an outcome, which is now dependent on funding being secured. The CEC have also started to explore the policy and cooperation elements of improving the voters' register, and the project has supported the exploratory and learning phases of this work.*

5. The project IT team also supported the CEC IT staff to run a further pilot of the electronic voter register (EVR) at polling stations in the Centru district of Chisinau, and developed a display system for updated 'real time' participation in those polling stations using the system. The project also supported the pilot through the provision of wireless internet services for each polling station. The pilot used equipment previously purchased by the project and under the temporary custody of the CEC. Mr Cojocaru also participated in the training for the EVR operators.

6. While it is now clear that the EVR works well in a controlled environment such as Centru district, there is as yet no clear plan in place for how the EVR could be rolled out further and under what timeframe. Any rollout would require significant investment in staffing, equipment, training and management. The CEC has addressed the need to plan for the EVR rollout in their strategic planning process (see paragraph 17).

7. The CEC has recognised that the technology alone can not improve the quality of the voters' register, given the lack of a government-wide agreement on responsibility and resourcing for voter registration. Accordingly, a key post-election workstream for the CEC in 2011 was the creation of a working group to look at a variety of underlying issues related to voter registration. The influence of this group was well-reflected in the draft strategic plan and its work will continue into 2012. As an activity of the group a one week BRIDGE workshop was held in November using the Voter Registration module, supported by the project and by IFES.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that from 2012 the system will be known as SIAS –E after the Romanian name

This workshop brought together 17 participants from the CEC, MAEIE, Registru, Cadastral and local public authorities and provides an excellent basis for future work.

8. The project supported an examination undertaken by a Registru consultant that explored issues around the use of the State Population Register in voter registration, and this work will be pursued in 2012. In October the programming courses for the CEC IT staff (deferred from 2010) were recommenced.

### **Activity 2: Out of country voting**

In 2011 the CEC were interested in taking the time to reflect on previous work in this area and consider future actions; the project was pleased to support this approach.

9. No direct support for Out of Country Voting (OCV) services was delivered in 2011. At the request of the Chair of the CEC, the project supported a further provision of the BRIDGE OCV module for 19 CEC, DEC Chisinau and MAEIE staff in October, which included the collection of suggestions and ideas for future OCV services.

10. A further planned action that will not now happen until early 2012 is to bring together a roundtable of the key actors in the previous Out of Country Voting (OCV) programmes – the CEC itself, the MAEIE, IoM and UNDP – to discuss further plans and modalities for OCV at any future parliamentary election or national referendum. This roundtable will be a starting point for the planned work on OCV and other voting channels.

### **Activity 3: Increased institutional capacity of the CEC**

In 2011 the CEC have engaged in a large amount of internal work and the project has been able to support this as appropriate. The strategic plan is a considerable achievement that will stand the CEC in good stead for the years ahead, as well as provide a clear framework for external assistance. Even with limited funds and a busy election period, the project has supported significant development opportunities for the CEC and its staff.

11. This has been the main focus of the project – and the CEC - since the conclusion of the local elections and the return from the summer break.

12. As part of helping the CEC to build their institutional capacity in terms of electoral event planning and evaluation, the project, along with IFES and the Council of Europe, supported a post-election seminar that examined the experience of the November parliamentary election while looking towards the local elections. Similarly, a post-local elections reflection workshop was organised by the project on 28 June. This provided an opportunity for all CEC members and senior staff to consider the local elections in the context of previous events and the findings of observer groups. The CTA also participated in a variety of other post-election events organised by the CEC, IFES and Council of Europe. The CEC are working on a consolidated post-election report.

13. A BRIDGE workshop was being organised for 28-29 July to present the 'Introduction to Electoral Administration' module for 17 CEC members and senior staff. This workshop served to restart the BRIDGE programme that was begun in 2009 and 2010 and was followed by the OCV workshop in October and Voter Registration in November (as detailed in paragraphs 9 and 7, respectively). The international BRIDGE facilitator for Voter Registration also conducted a Professional Development day for existing facilitators and Ludmila Birsa became Moldova's 8<sup>th</sup> accredited facilitator under her guidance.

14. The project also held discussions with Dr Bordieanu, the CEC Head of Training and Civic Education, on plans for the establishment of the Continuous Training Centre, now known as the CICDE after the Romanian name. The project's interest in the CICDE concept is around the systematizing and embedding of skills development for all CEC members and staff, and the provision of a permanent home for such activity within the CEC. The work completed in early 2011 by the project consultant Mr Vermeulen was used as the basis for an action plan for the CICDE's initial phase. While the CTA was included as a member of the working group looking at the establishment of the CICDE, she has limited her participation at meetings to avoid 'over-internationalising' the discussion, but has stayed abreast of developments.

15. In September the project restarted the internal skills training program by offering the remainder of already contracted courses in Microsoft Office to CEC staff. While the original 2011 AWP included English courses, no funds were allocated and this will be pursued in 2012. Given the amount of activities in the second half of 2011, the classes may have been difficult to schedule in any event.

16. The project also supported the CEC in its development of its first strategic plan. Building on the work already done in the CEC in 2010 – including a BRIDGE workshop on strategic and financial planning – the CTA participated in the CEC-convened strategic plan working group and the September workshop to identify strategic priorities and objectives. The CEC published the draft plan on 2 November and hopes to issue a final plan by the end of 2011. The planned activities for 2012 and 2013 closely map to objectives elucidated in the strategic plan.

17. In the UNDP role of leading on donor coordination, a further high-level donor coordination meeting was hosted by the UNDP Resident Representative in November, timed to allow for discussion of the draft strategic plan; the CEC are considering the feedback received. On a technical level, the CTA coordinates meetings with the Chair of the CEC and Council of Europe, IFES and UNDP and developed a matrix of planned assistance actions for the remainder of 2011. At the request of the CEC Chair, the CTA will take a more active coordinating role in 2012.

#### **Activity 4: Increased transparency of the electoral process**

18. While funds had been set aside to provide a local media consultant during the local elections, the Chair of the CEC advised the project in April that this was not now required. The funds were redirected at the June steering committee meeting to support the revised IT support plan agreed for the local elections.

#### **Activity 5: Support on electoral legislation and electoral dispute resolution issues**

19. This work stream was not pursued during the year as no electoral law reform process was initiated.

### **Other activities**

20. In its second year the UNDP Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS) supported a number of relevant activities in 2011 where the project was able to participate or facilitate Moldovan representation, with no impact on project funds. These were:

- The CTA and Country Office Portfolio Manager participated in the UNDP Europe and CIS Electoral Community of Practice meeting in Bratislava in May (the CEC could not attend due to election commitments);
- The Secretary of the CEC and the Country Office Programme Associate participated in a regional BRIDGE workshop on Electoral Systems in Ashgabat in September;
- The CTA participated in a global BRIDGE workshop piloting a revised Gender and Elections module in New York in November; and
- CEC Member Mrs Gutu and the CTA participated in the UNDP Europe and CIS Regional Gender Forum in Istanbul in November.

21. The CTA developed good links with the GPECS team and has included the facilitation of CEC and project participation in further regional initiatives planned for 2012. Please note that current plans will see GPECS conclude its work in June 2012.

22. In July the CEC's Dr Bordieanu and the CTA participated in a workshop on democratic transitions organised by UNDP Romania and the Romanian Permanent Electoral Authority. This workshop provided an opportunity for colleagues from Egypt and Tunisia to learn from the Eastern European experience of transition and was funded by the Romania Foreign Ministry and UNDP.

23. In September the International Day of Democracy was marked by the CEC and by the project team. The project team conducted an open seminar with university students in Balti with the support of the UN Documentation Centre there. The CEC held a press conference in Chisinau to reflect on twenty years of Moldovan democracy.

### **Project risks**

24. As in previous years, the main risk to the implementation of project actions was the potential for the CEC to be required to run a further parliamentary election. While this did not eventuate, the very real possibility of such an election did lead to a concentration of CEC and partner initiatives and events in the months of September and October, which placed a considerable strain on CEC members and staff.

25. A further risk arises from the environment in which the CEC is receiving assistance from three different agencies – Council of Europe, IFES and UNDP. Such a situation can place an undue burden on the CEC as beneficiary and lead to an overload on CEC staff if the various initiatives are not coordinated and spaced throughout the year, confusion as to priorities and outputs and in many cases a less efficient use of the CEC's and donors' resources. While

efforts have been made to coordinate the actions of partners, this has been more successful with the Council of Europe than it has been with IFES.

26. For 2012 and later years, the new CEC strategic plan provides a clear framework for the design of technical assistance. Discussions are underway to avoid overlaps in areas of assistance for 2012.

### Project budget

27. The project budget was modified twice this year. The first modification was to reflect the changes in allocation across activities that were agreed at the June steering committee.

28. The second modification was made once it became clear that the funds allocated were not sufficient to cover the activities agreed between the CEC and UNDP. This situation arose firstly due to the non-inclusion of the project's administrative costs in the original budget, and secondly due to the under provision of funds for recruited international staff (post-contract obligations for Erbling, and the costs of Johansson and Sullivan in 2011). UNDP allocated additional funds to cover these costs and allow scheduled activities to take place.

29. The budget outturn for 2011 is outlined in the attached budget report, provided in the current UNDP Moldova format. Following the budget revisions, expenditure is on track and 100% of project funds will be used by 31 December 2011.

**Kate Sullivan**  
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2 December 2011

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Project Assistant  
2 December 2011