



Liberia Electoral Support Project 2020-2024

1-30 April 2021 Project Update

Implementing partner – National Elections Commission



© 2021 UNDP/Maggie Lamb

Participants in the final NEC external Lessons Learned Conference worked together to identify challenges and develop solutions. An internal session was then held in Buchanan for the NEC staff, administrators, and policy-makers to review and consolidate their input.

Key highlights

- Project Board endorses operational closure of the Support to 2015-2018 Electoral Cycle Project funded by EU, Sweden, Ireland, Canada, and UNDP
- 2020 Special Senatorial Elections and Referendum Lessons Learned concluded with five-day internal NEC conference in Buchanan
- Twelve refurbished and newly constructed warehouses, fences, and generator rooms, along with seven hand pumps, officially turned over to NEC

Project activities

The Liberia Electoral Support Project (LESP) officially handed over to the National Elections Commission (NEC) 12 rehabilitated and newly constructed warehouses and related facilities. The rehabilitation was completed under the 2015-2018 Electoral Cycle Project funded by EU, Sweden, Ireland, and Canada. A series of Lessons Learned engagements with electoral stakeholders for the 2020 Special Senatorial Elections (SSE) and Referendum concluded with an internal Lessons Learned Conference in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, bringing together NEC senior leadership, staff, and UNDP. The Project Board operationally closed the Support to 2015-2018 Electoral Support Project.

Transparency and Inclusion

Gender: The Project supports the NEC Gender Unit in developing a comprehensive and strategic action plan to implement activities that have an impact on increasing the political participation of women, persons living with disabilities, and vulnerable groups.

Civic and Voter Education (CVE): The revision of the CVE toolkit, with the view to launch long-term awareness-raising, is ongoing.

Communications: The Project Communication Specialist worked to increase the visibility of UNDP and partners' support to Liberia through the dissemination of a variety of social media and website updates (see links in textbox). The Specialist also finalised partner visibility billboards for installation at each of the magisterial sites renovated by the Project. She reviewed the Terms of References of all the NEC Communication Section Staff and is working to improve the NEC website.

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATES

Lessons Learned:

https://www.lr.undp.org/content/liberia/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2021/un-and-development-partners-fully-commit-to-support-future-elect.html?fbclid=IwAR06lBWtN5gO5AcehOKZ_QeuR07yF2haSRV33PalmKSqNfnksJ9BPk5fkA

<https://www.facebook.com/1692768454319833/posts/3015359935394005/?d=n>

Warehouse rehabilitation:

<https://www.facebook.com/1692768454319833/posts/3014284482168217/?d=n>

<https://www.facebook.com/1692768454319833/posts/3014283912168274/?d=n>

Capacity-building and Institutional Strengthening

Lessons Learned Conferences: The final external Lessons Learned session took place in Gbarnga, Bong County on 5 and 6 April. The NEC, with technical and financial support from UNDP/LESP, then conducted an internal Lessons Learned Conference in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County from 26 to 30 April. The internal workshop consolidated input received in the stakeholder engagements reviewing the 2020 SSE and Referendum. This conference brought together NEC staff, administrators, and policy-makers to review NEC's achievements and challenges. The series of Lessons Learned conferences resulted in realistic and actionable recommendations with clearly set benchmarks to be endorsed by the NEC. It included a review of the 2017 observer recommendations to assess the status of their implementation. UNDP facilitated the participation of the EU Election Follow-Up Mission technical team, and interviews with NEC staff and management.

Invalid ballot analysis: A methodology was drafted to analyse invalid ballots, and collect data on women's participation, as well as the registration of remaining assets in the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. The Lessons Learned consultant also prepared a concept for a post-election survey.

Warehouse closeout: The Project handed over the 12 renovated and newly constructed warehouse facilities to the NEC county (Magisterial) offices. An international quality assurance consultant, contractors, and an NEC technical representative toured the sites in Grand Bassa, Rivercess, Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Gbarpolu, Lofa, Bong, and Nimba Counties, and facilities were officially handed over to the NEC. Magistrates and local NEC staff thanked UNDP and the partners – EU, Sweden, Ireland, and Canada – and promised to ensure that regular preventive maintenance takes place at the facilities. NEC staff at each site expressed appreciation for the construction of the perimeter fences, which will enhance the security of both election materials and electoral workers.

Electoral dispute resolution (EDR): By 15 April, with support from UNDP legal consultants, all NEC level electoral disputes from the 2020 SSE and Referendum were completed. The Supreme Court later returned the Grand Cape Mount case to the NEC for further investigation. The EDR consultants submitted a comprehensive report including lessons learned and a detailed capacity-development programme. The Project immediately started recruitment for a consultant to build on this momentum and begin to implement the programme.

Sustainable energy: The Project assessed solar panel installations and use across the country to advise and support NEC in maintenance and repairs to ensure NEC continues using sustainable energy in its magisterial offices. The pending assessment report will determine the areas where repairs are needed.

Electoral Violence Prevention

The Project continued to follow up with the Peacebuilding Office (PBO) on lessons learned and long-term sustainability of the Early Warning and Response Mechanism. The 2021 draft plan is pending with the PBO.