



**Fourth Round**

**PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT**

**PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT**

**“Enhancement of Electoral Awareness and Inclusive Democratic Development of the Kazakhstani Society”  
UDF-KAZ-09-325  
2010-2012**

**Executing agency:** United Nations Development Programme in Kazakhstan

**Implementing partner:** Central Election Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan

**Evaluator:** Ms Zhanargul Kusmangalieva, Director of the Institute of Eurasian Integration

**Signature:** 

**Date:** 25 March 2013



## Fourth Round

# PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

### 1. Executive summary

Overall, the project was implemented in accordance with the project document and fully achieved its main goals and objectives. All activities were undertaken in conformity with the schedule and workplans for respective years. The financial management and human personnel management was realized correctly. The Project has achieved significant visibility and recognition from partners. No major risk deferred the realization of the project, despite some shifts in the schedule of activities connected with extraordinary elections in 2011 and 2012. The implementing partner was noted for its eagerness in the realization of the project and overall the project has had significant positive effect in building awareness on election issues and promoting the right to elect and be elected among vulnerable groups.

### 2. Context/background

The Project was aimed at promoting democratic agenda through raising capacity of election administrators and awareness among youth and vulnerable groups of voters.

The Project consisted of 3 main elements: - enhancement of professional skills and knowledge of election administrators (including local election commissions); - voter education with a focus on young voters and vulnerable groups; and awareness raising on election legislation and practice among general public, including underrepresented groups.

The goal was to promote election administration practices in line with international standards, full exercise of the right to elect and be elected by the local population and further democratization of governance system in Kazakhstan.

The Project objective was achieved through the following components:

1. Series of training workshops for vulnerable groups on election legislation and practice;
2. Series of professional training for new election commissions members and administrators;
3. Promotion of election issues among general public and youth through innovative technologies, including launch of Internet portal and computer games, as well as piloting e-voting exercise among young voters of Pavlodar region.

The Project focus was to suggest innovative ways to promote election reform and democratic changes in the society.

#### **Key project stakeholders:**

The Project strategy was to consolidate efforts of the Central Election Commission as the main administering entity of election process, regional and local NGOs, specializing on election issues, and UNDP Kazakhstan as a source of international expertise.

The Pavlodar Regional Governance School was acting as an **Implementing Agency** and the Central Election Commission as the main beneficiary and also Implementing partner on the Project.

## Fourth Round

### PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

The Project Board comprised of representatives of Pavlodar Regional School, UNDP, Central Election Commission and other stakeholders. The Project Board made the strategic decisions, approved the project work plan, budget revisions, and quarterly reports. The Project Board met on a semiannual basis.

#### **Partners and beneficiaries:**

Partners and beneficiaries of the project included non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, political parties, media representatives, central and regional election commissions, local administrations (akimats) which participated in project activities and provided support to the project activities. The role of election commissions was of high importance in popularization of the project knowledge products and providing professional trainings for the new election commission members.

More specifically, the intended project beneficiary base included:

- Women and people with disability, including from the remote and rural areas
- Young members of the district and precinct election commissions
- Young voters and users of the Internet in Kazakhstan.

#### **3. Programmed objective and components**

The Project objectives were to enhance of electoral participation of underrepresented categories of society and strengthen capacity of newly formed local electoral bodies.

The Project started with *needs assessment phase* by surveying regional NGOs representing underrepresented groups and local communities. Based on survey results tailor made training courses matching the needs of beneficiaries were developed. Other relevant surveys, including those conducted by UNDP were also used to streamline the data and verify findings. The survey had a limited coverage of 86 people, but it represented all main vulnerable groups targeted by the trainings, including disabled, rural youth and women.

The main needs areas revealed by the survey (including issues of voter registration, procedures of electoral system and campaigning) were further reflected in the design of training modules and materials. Training materials were produced in 3 languages (Russian, English and Kazakh) and included modern teaching techniques, including role games, imitations and other interactive exercises.

Geographical coverage and scope of training activities was achieved at good level, encompassing seminars in 5 regions with more than 550 participants. The achieved number of trainings was even higher than planned by the project document. The quality of training was verified by exit survey, 95% of which evaluated trainings as useful and informative. All participants have given positive feedback on the quality of trainers and training materials.

Similar approach was used to conduct activities for the new election commission members. Starting from needs assessment, the project covered 6 regions involving about 250 members of the precinct and regional election commissions. Based on trainings, election commission member had further chance to use gained knowledge during Presidential elections of April 2011 and Parliamentary elections of January 2012.

Modern interactive computer game in 3D format and flash game were developed based on national election legislation and international standards and commitments. The games presented election legislation and



## Fourth Round

### PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

practice in youth-appealing user-friendly format. All materials were provided both in Russian and Kazakh languages and uploaded to election portal [www.umatker.kz](http://www.umatker.kz). Besides the games, the portal contains updated materials on elections, information materials developed by the Central Election Commissions and blog discussion platforms. It also contains e-voting section, which was used for pilot elections in Pavlodar region among youth candidates.

The web portal was launched during the round table at the Central Election Commission on 15 September 2011, with participation of Parliament members, main political parties and youth organizations. Participants signed a Final Declaration which confirmed the interest of beneficiaries in the developed computer games and portal and underlined their usefulness in the general voter education of Kazakhstan.

Mock elections with the use of e-voting instrument provided a real chance to young candidates to practice their knowledge and put themselves to test as the candidates for elections. Many young candidates have undergone all election process stages, starting from formulating a programme, campaigning and through voting procedure. More than 4,000 voters have participated to vote for 27 young candidates on the election day. The winners were awarded with certificates and participated in the Round table discussion in Astana. As another practical result and a sign of sustainability of project outputs, some of mock elections candidates had further participated in real local elections of 2012 and 3 candidates became the member of local representative bodies, *maslikhats*. The other 5 candidates participated in the political party local election headquarters during parliamentary elections of 2012.

Another effort to achieve project sustainability was a release of information materials and computer games on CDs among all local and precinct election commissions, schools and young NGOs.

All major project results and success stories were presented during a Final project conference in May 2012 in Astana with participation of a wide range of stakeholders. The final brochure with best practices and reports from project activities were distributed at the Conference.

On the part of awareness raising and media outreach the Project has implemented a significant work by promoting project materials in the press and on TV. A series of TV rolls were produced and broadcasted at local TV channels, a number of media articles were published. UNDP has also published those materials on its website and social networks.

Overall, the project was implemented in accordance with the project document, and the project activities were adequately designed to reach their objectives. The project ensured close partnership with the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan, local elections commissions and vulnerable groups associations.

All main project outcomes were achieved, including:

- 1) Increased participation of underrepresented groups in the election processes and exercise of their right to elect and be elected.

The evaluation has concluded that this objective was met, as during the recent local and national elections of 2012 an overall increase of youth candidates was about 60%. One participant of project activities was elected as local representative body deputy. Six candidates with disability were registered at local and national elections, with the one winning in Akmola oblast.



## Fourth Round

### PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

#### 2) Enhanced capacity of local election commissions to administer elections.

More than 240 election commission members took part in the training seminars, which coincided with the national election schedule. According to OSCE Final Observation Report on early Parliamentary elections of 2012, "elections were technically well administered". However a number of international standards with regard to impartiality and transparency of the process were not yet met, technical election administration in accordance to the local legislation was implemented at satisfactory level. The project activities well coincided with election timetable, positively contributing to the preparation of present and regional elections commission members for early Presidential elections of 2011, Parliamentary elections and local elections of 2012.

#### 3) Increased participation and electoral learning of youth.

Project activities revealed high interest among youth population in participation in elections as voters and as candidates. Young people mostly lack information and awareness to play more active role in elections and political processes. Party outreach activities do not encompass all youth populations, especially in the remote regions. Most of election related information used to be presented in a dull legal-type format. More dynamic and modern formats were well received by younger audiences. The turnout of mock e-voting through Umitker.kz web portal was higher than expected despite the Internet accessibility problem for rural youth.

#### **Relevance**

The main relevance of Project goals is described in the project document. The objectives of the project were fully in line with national priorities driven by the need to increase public participation in election processes, equip local election commission with knowledge on the processes and legislation and promote wider participation of youth and vulnerable groups in elections.

A number of round tables were held with stakeholders and beneficiaries which reconfirmed the relevance of project activities and results to enhancement of democratic process through elections in Kazakhstan. Innovative solutions proposed by the Project were highly evaluated by Project beneficiaries and partners. As per decision of the Project Board, the Project has fully achieved its objectives and outcomes.

#### **Sustainability and impact**

Thanks to close collaboration with the Central Election Commission, the Project achieved good sustainability of its results, as all the knowledge products were shared and utilized by election administrators. The project has also managed to identify proper risks and appropriate management response. In this respect, the USD-Tenge fluctuation and extraordinary parliamentary and presidential elections affected the work plan of the project. Implementing agency and main beneficiaries became interested in the putcomes and impact of the Project. As one of outcomes of a project round table of August 2012, a group of interested stakeholders including relevant government ministries and agencies, decided to co-operate in further dissemination of project results and sustaining its activities with more government financing. The Pavlodar Regional School of Governance was selected to coordinate this group.

#### **Project design and performance assessment/efficiency**



## Fourth Round

### PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

Overall, project was appropriately designed and managed, including its finances, human resources, monitoring, oversight and support. The project situation analysis shows that the expected project results included:

- Increased participation of underrepresented groups in elections;
- Improved capacity of local election commissions to administer elections;
- Increased number of young voters and young candidates during the elections;
- Better awareness of population on the election process and reform.

The analysis shows that the Project achieved significant success in promoting election education among vulnerable groups by using modern technologies and interactive methods. While the executing agency (UNDP) did every effort to support Project activities, the implementing agency was active in establishing links with partners and expanding the impact of the project.

#### **4. Information about external evaluator and the evaluation process**

The evaluation team comprised of 2 experts from the Institute of Eurasian Integration led by its Director, Ms Zhanargul Kusmangaliyeva. The Institute was selected to undertake the evaluation in accordance with UNDP rules and regulations.

The Institute is an independent think tank, which deals with academic research and analysis on acute social and political issues of Kazakhstan. Created in 2011 under the auspices of Gumilev University in Astana it was staffed with leading experts in law, political science and sociology.

The goal of the assignment was to evaluate the project in terms of achieving of its outputs and goals, based on available project resources.

The methodology followed in the preparation of the evaluation included field visits, review of literature and project documentation, feedback analysis and questionnaires of the participants of project events, interviews with project partners, project personnel and stakeholders.

Duration of the evaluation: the evaluation of the project was conducted in February- March 2013.