ANALYSIS OF UNDP ELECTIONS SURVEY

In May 2006, UNDP launched a survey to help document the assistance the organization has provided to various countries, and to identify key strengths and weaknesses in its electoral assistance activities. Thirty-six (36) responses to the survey were received over a two-week period. The results of the survey are intended for use in identifying capacity development and knowledge product needs within UNDP. This paper summarizes the responses to the survey.

Questions 1, 2, and 3[2]

Respondents were asked, "**In which country did you work on UNDP electoral support**?" and "**Specify the year when the election took place**." The countries have been divided up into those on the African continent and those in other regions, and have also been color-coded to represent post-conflict countries, transitional countries, or others. Also indicated is what **type of election** took place in the country.

KEY: Post Conflict Situation   1st Election   Others

AFRICA	YEAR	ELECTION TYPE	OTHER REGIONS	YEAR	ELECTION TYPE
Benin	2006; 2006	Presidential	Afghanistan	2004; 2005	Presidential Parliamentary Provincial
Burundi	2005; 2005	Presidential Parliamentary Local	Bangladesh	2000; 2001	Parliamentary
DRC	2005	Referendum	Cambodia	2002; 2003; 2006	Presidential Parliamentary
Ethiopia	2005; 2005	Presidential Parliamentary	Comoros	2001; 2002; 2004; 2006	Presidential Parliamentary
Ghana	2004; 2004	Presidential Parliamentary	Georgia	2004	Presidential Parliamentary
Guinea	2005	Provincial Local	Haiti	2006; 1995-1998	Presidential Parliamentary Provincial Local
Guinea-Bissau	2005	Presidential	Kyrgyzstan	2005	Presidential Parliamentary Local
Kenya	2002	Presidential Parliamentary Local	Philippines	2004	Presidential Parliamentary Local
Lesotho	2002	Parliamentary	Suriname	2005	Parliamentary
Malawi	2004; 2004	Presidential Parliamentary	Timor-Leste	2005	Local

Mauritania	2006; 2007	Presidential Parliamentary	West Bank / Gaza	2006	Parliamentary
Sao Tome & Principe	2006	Parliamentary	Yemen	2003	
Tanzania	2004/5; 2005	Presidential Parliamentary Local			

Question 4

"**What role did you play in the election support**?" The responses are divided up into political and technical duties. All 36 respondents answered this question. Of these, 55.6% (20 people) served as UNDP Programme Officers in countries where elections took place.

➢ UNDP RR (Political)
➢ Deputy to the DSRG/RG/RR and/or OIC UNDP (Political)
➢ UNDP DRR UNDP (Political)
➢ UNDP ARR/Unit Chief (Political)
➢ Advisor to UNDP CO RR (Political)
➢ Technical Advisor (Technical)
➢ Legal Advisor (Technical)
➢ Civic Education and Training Adviser (Technical)
➢ Strategic Planning Adviser (Technical)
➢ Special Advisor Operation (Technical)
➢ Resources Mobilization and Partnerships Specialist (Technical)

Question 5 and 6

The questions asked "**How many months before the election did UNDP begin provision of electoral assistance**?"[1] The number (or average number) of months in each case is indicated in parentheses. Almost half of the situations described (10 of 23) fall into the 12 months or longer category. Challenges related to the implementation of assistance are also included.

< 6 Months	6 Months – 12 Months	12 Months +
Guinea-Bissau (4)	Benin (12)	Afghanistan (14)
Kyrgyzstan (4)	Burundi (8)	Bangladesh (48)
Sao Tome & Principe (2)	DRC (6)	Cambodia (15)
West Bank / Gaza (3)	Ethiopia (6)	Comoros (20)
	Georgia (7)	Lesotho (36+)
	Guinea (12)	Malawi (12)
	Mauritania (6)	Tanzania (24)
	Philippines (12)	Haiti (14)
	Timor-Leste (12)	Suriname (14)
		Yemen (14)

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[1] The number of months indicated at times conflicted for countries where there were two or more responses. Where this occurred, the number of months indicated were averaged.

Challenges Mentioned	Frequency
Resources: limited resources; lack of timely financial support to the project; slow responsiveness from donors in supporting the2nd election in two years; Financial Issues: the absence of a way to get cash flow whilst waiting for donor's money to arrive; Receipt of donor funds with delays; Delays in getting funds; Earmarking of donor funds and inflexible implementation conditions resulting in under-utilization of funds	6
Capacity challenges greater than anticipated: lack of capacity of electoral institutions; lack of training of local staff; national institutions lack strategic focus for upholding the sustainability of what has already been achieved through the development assistance; Very low national capacities; Lack of proper capacity in national EMB	6
Time constraints: The project should have started earlier; Limited time for implement all logistics; Lack of time and effort to seriously train local counterparts in order to prepare for a permanent and independent national electoral management body	4
Difficulties in engaging with national counterparts: EMB lack of impartiality; national counterpart defensive strategy to assistance; resistance to engage in cooperation with other national actors; Inability of public information section of the EMB to realize its importance; Mutual distrust within the national electoral commission; attempts of corruption and fraud; Lack of proper leadership.	4
Financial management challenges; Problems related to UNDP difficulties to deliver in time when following the time-consuming UNDP procedures; Lack of efficiency: UNDP finance capacity to disburse checks to the CSOs conducting voter education was insufficient;	3
Lack of preparedness of the regular UNDP staff to cope with the increased workload during an intensive elections project; Diplomacy by International Technical Advisors Insufficient staffing of the UNDP office; Centralized office management style;	3
Voter registration: the registration of voters raised too many disputes; Logistical and security-related challenges during voter registration; Lack of proper infrastructure for registration system	3
Political Parties: Difficulties with supporting political parties; mission should have secured earlier guidance from UN/EAD on how to deal with providing financing for political parties	2
Politics: Foreign interference aiming at discrediting and de-legitimizing the electoral process for political motives; national politics	2
Electoral legal framework	1
Technical: More attention should be given to the technical specifications required for procurement of election materials (e.g. the indelible ink ordered did not contain high enough concentrations of silver nitrate)	1
None	1

Question 7

Question 7 asked: "**Did the UN Focal Point for Electoral Affairs send a needs assessment mission**?"

Country	Response
Afghanistan (Parliamentary/Provincial/Presidential 2004-2005)	YES
Bangladesh (Parliamentary 2001)	YES
Benin (Presidential 2006)	YES

|	
Burundi (Local/Communal/Parliamentary/Presidential 2005)	YES
Cambodia (Local/Parliamentary 2002-2003)	YES
Comoros (Parliamentary 2004)	NO
Comoros (Presidential 2006)	YES
DRC (Referendum 2005)	YES
Ethiopia (Parliamentary/Presidential 2005)	NO
Georgia (Parliamentary/Presidential 2004)	YES
Ghana (Parliamentary/Presidential 2004)	YES
Guinea (Local/Provincial 2005)	NO
Guinea-Bissau (Presidential 2005)	NO
Haiti (Local/Parliamentary/Provincial/Presidential 1995-1998)	YES
Haiti (Local/Parliamentary/Presidential 2006)	YES
Kenya (Local/Parliamentary/Presidential 2002)	NO
Kyrgyzstan (Local/Parliamentary/Presidential 2005)	YES
Lesotho (Parliamentary 2002)	YES
Malawi (Parliamentary/Presidential 2004)	NO
Mauritania (Constitutional Referendum/Local/ Parliamentary/ Presidential 2006-2007)	YES
Philippines (Local/Provincial/Presidential 2004)	YES
São Tome and Principe (Parliamentary 2006)	NO
Suriname (Parliamentary 2005)	YES
Tanzania (Local/Parliamentary/Presidential 2004-2005)	YES
Timor-Leste (Local 2005)	YES
West Bank/Gaza (Local/Parliamentary 2006)	NO
Yemen (Parliamentary 2003)	YES

Question 8

The question asked: "**What were the key findings and recommendations from the needs assessment report? How were they acted on by the Country Office, and how were they greeted by national stakeholders**?" The table below highlights the recommendations of needs assessment missions (NAM), which were shared by 22 of the 36 total survey respondents. Nearly all recommendations mentioned by respondents were identified as being followed.

| Recommendations of NAM	Frequency
Strengthen the capacity of the EMB	7
Promote civic/voter education	5
Advise on new electoral legislation	4
Strengthen voter registration system (including permanent voter registry)	4
Provide financial support to CSOs	4
Provide electoral materials	3
Build capacity of political parties	2
Mobilize international donor community	2
Provide media training for electoral commission, civil society, and media professionals	2
Modify budget of electoral commission	1
Support national observer mission	1
Coordinate international observer mission	1

Question 9, 10

The first question asked: "**Were the key findings/recommendations of the needs assessment mission appropriate**?" and the second asked respondents to elaborate on any negative answers. Twenty-three of 36 respondents answered this question. Also, 87.5% (21 of 24) of those who answered this question said the recommendations were incorporated into the electoral assistance project design.

Were the recommendations of needs assessm mission appropriate?

- Yes: 95.7%
- No: 4.3%
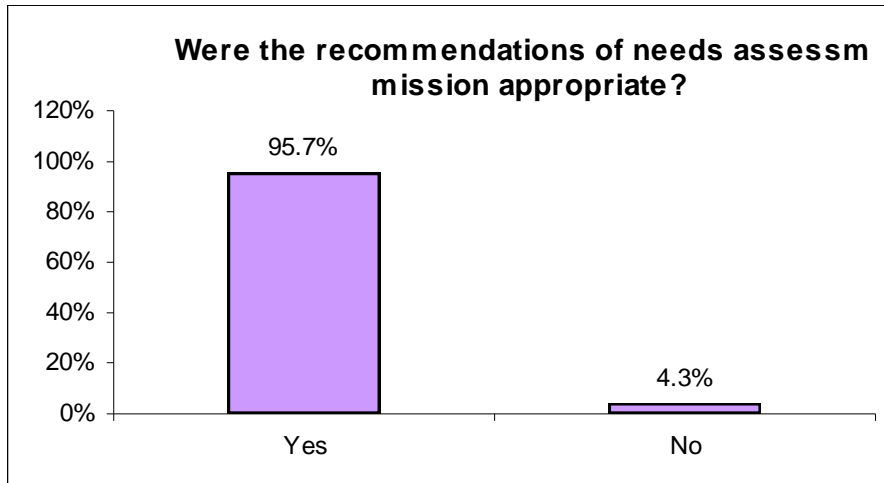
Question 11

The question stated, "**Were they (key findings/recommendations of needs assessments) reflected in the project design/document**? 22 out of 23 respondents to this question answered YES.

Project Design / Document

- YES: 87.5%
- NO: 12.5%
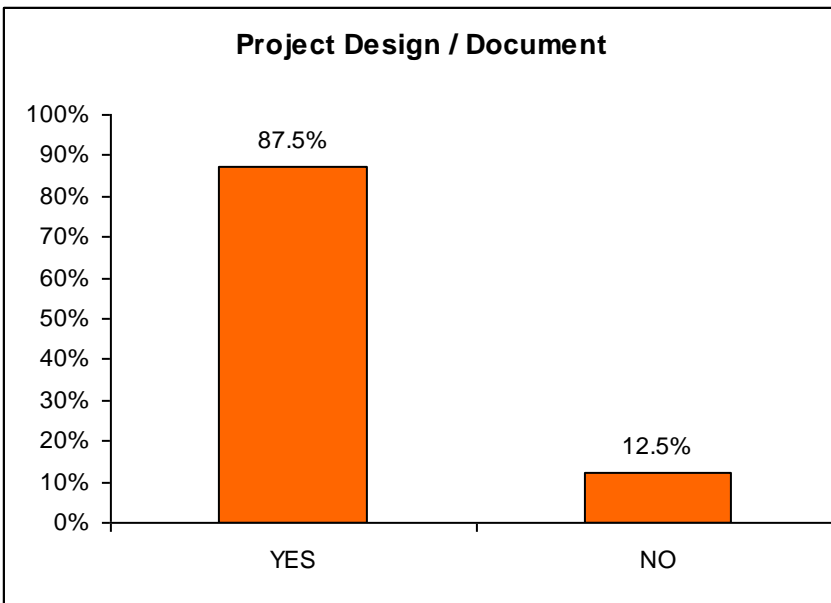
Question 13

The question asked: "**Was an evaluation of the electoral project completed after the elections?**"

Evaluation of Electoral Project

YES	48.5%
NO	30.3%
Don't Know	21.2%
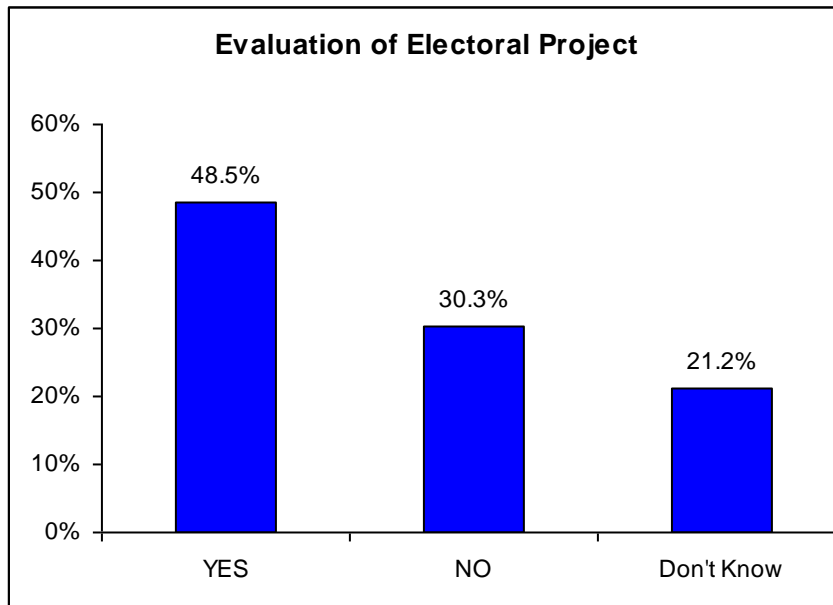
Of the respondents, 30.3% (10 out of 33) answered NO and 21.2% (7 out of 33) did not know whether an evaluation process took place. This highlights the need for a greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation during the design and implementation phases of electoral assistance projects, as well as staff capacity building to identify benchmarks, set and monitor indicators, and report on progress towards results.
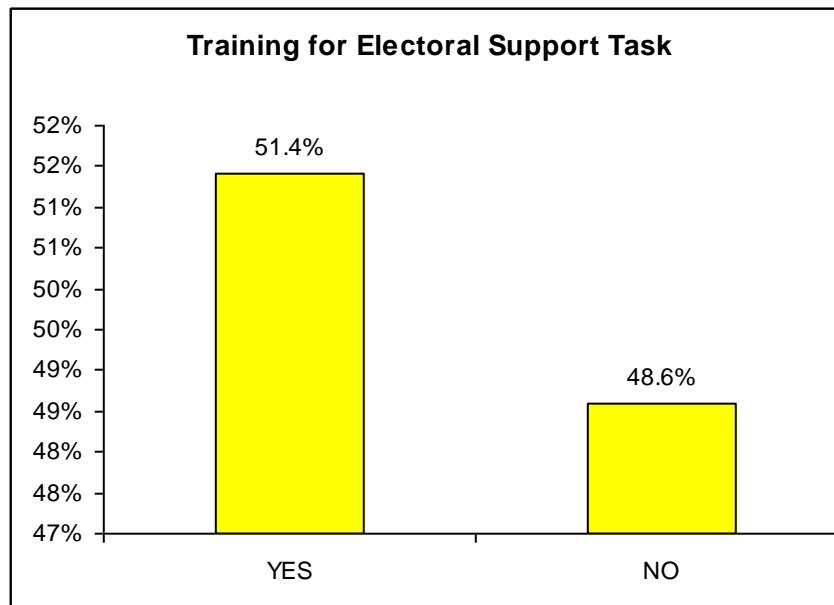
Question 14

Question asked, "**Please rate your level of involvement in the following areas. Please limit your response to the experiences in the country that you specified in the beginning of the survey**."

	Sector	No involvement	Some Involvement	High Involvement	Response Average
LEGAL FRAMEWORK	**Constitution**	**77% (23)**	17% (5)	7% (2)	**1.30**
	Legislation	**59% (19)**	19% (6)	22% (7)	**1.63**
	Electoral system	17% (6)	**51% (18)**	31% (11)	**2.14**
	Electoral bodies	12% (4)	21% (7)	**68% (23)**	**2.56**
	Legal framework	34% (11)	**38% (12)**	28% (9)	**1.94**
PLANNING & IMPLEME	**Budgeting**	9% (3)	38% (13)	**53% (18)**	**2.44**
	Time management	24% (8)	30% (10)	**45% (15)**	**2.21**
	Funding & financing	3% (1)	29% (10)	**69% (24)**	**2.66**

	Resource planning & implementation	0% (0)	41% (14)	**59% (20)**	**2.59**
	Security	**76% (25)**	18% (6)	6% (2)	**1.30**
TRAINING & EDUCATION	**Election officials**	18% (6)	38% (13)	**44% (15)**	**2.26**
	Civic and voter education	18% (6)	24% (8)	**58% (19)**	**2.39**
REGISTRATION	**Parties & candidates**	26% (9)	**37% (13)**	37% (13)	**2.11**
	Voters	29% (10)	32% (11)	**38% (13)**	**2.09**
	Observers	26% (9)	31% (11)	**43% (15)**	**2.17**
ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN	**Party liaison**	**59% (19)**	28% (9)	12% (4)	**1.53**
	Financing	33% (11)	27% (9)	**39% (13)**	**2.06**
	Media	29% (10)	**50% (17)**	21% (7)	**1.91**
	Complaints	**53% (17)**	34% (11)	12% (4)	**1.59**
VOTING OPERATIONS & ELECTION DAY	**Voting**	**35% (11)**	29% (9)	**35% (11)**	**2.00**
	Vote counting	**62% (20)**	19% (6)	19% (6)	**1.56**
	Pre-voting and out-of country voting	**82% (27)**	9% (3)	9% (3)	**1.27**
	Verification of results	**55% (18)**	30% (10)	15% (5)	**1.61**
	Tabulation of results	**61% (20)**	24% (8)	15% (5)	**1.55**
	Complaints and appeals	**67% (22)**	18% (6)	15% (5)	**1.48**
	Official results	**61% (20)**	24% (8)	15% (5)	**1.55**
POST ELECTION	**Continuity**	12% (4)	41% (14)	**47% (16)**	**2.35**
	Sustainability	12% (4)	**45% (15)**	42% (14)	**2.30**

Question 15

The Question asked, "**Do you feel you had sufficient training for the electoral support tasks you performed**?" Although the majority of respondents answered 'YES' to this question, a relatively large percentage of 48.6% answered 'NO'.

Training for Electoral Support Task

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52%
52%        51.4%
51%
51%
50%
50%
49%                           48.6%
49%
48%
48%
47%
        YES                   NO
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not

Participants who answered 'NO' to the question above were asked to **identify the tasks for which they did feel suitably trained**.

Respondents recommended training in managing the **political sensitivities** that come with electoral processes, as well as using an approach to training that is **longer term and focused on capacity development** rather than a one-time event just before elections. In addition, several respondents expressed the concern that they had insufficient **comparative knowledge on electoral processes** in other countries. This made it difficult to see the gaps or faults in their respective countries. More knowledge on electoral systems in general – such as a compilation of best practices on electoral processes – was recognized as being very helpful. Respondents also identified a need for **ongoing feedback and guidance on practical** issues, such as procurement.

Other issues mentioned were:
- Assessing the political environment and negotiating with national partners in the management of the project
- Resource mobilization (conventions, type of fund, particularity of funding partners)
- Coordination of partners within a basket fund
- Managing the distribution of funds for electoral agents and ensuring the collection of receipts
- Procurement and logistics
- Modalities and opportunities of DEX (how to deal, for example, with payment of polling stations in a DEX context but with limited human resource at the CO)

Question 17

The question asked, "**Which 5 activities were the most important for the success of the elections**?" Voter Registration was viewed as the most important component to the success of the elections.

Activity	Frequency
Voter Registration	29
Civic/Voter Education	28

|	
Legal Framework (Promulgation of Electoral Law)	22
Observation	18
Electoral Cartography (Mapping, identification, and location of polling sites)	14
Political Campaign	13
Establish/Re-establish EMB	9
Results Certification	9
Appeals/Resolution of Appeals	7
Candidates Registration	7
Vote Tabulation	5

Questions 18, 19, 20, and 21

Question 18 asked: "**According to local observers, was the election free and fair**?" Question 19 then asked the respondents to **elaborate on the findings of national observers**. Questions 20 and 21 explored this issue, but with a focus on the **findings of international observers**. The below graph illustrates that a strong majority (73.5%) of national observers deemed the election observed to be free and fair, according to the 34 responses received. The percentage of international observers who found the observed election to be free and fair was slightly higher at 79.4%. The comments below the graph provide examples of national observers' findings, along with some explanation of what international observers found, if this was different.
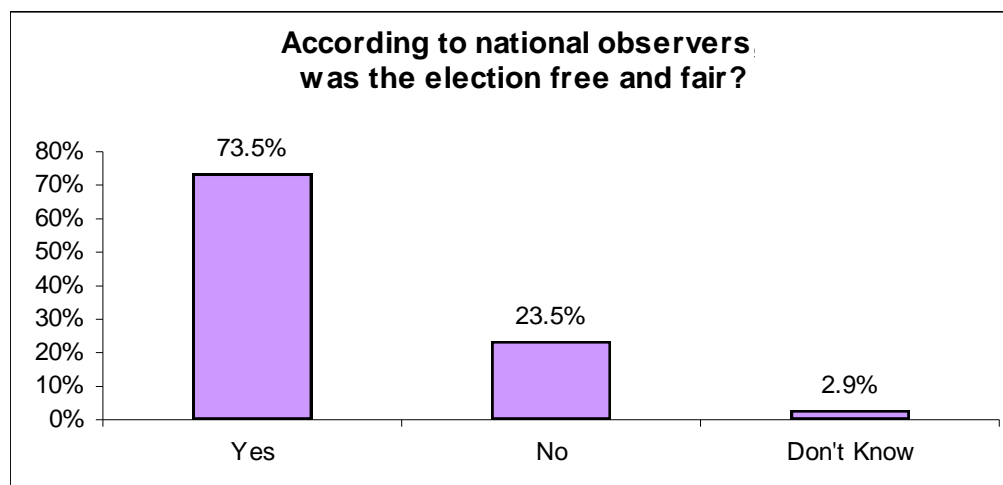

Question 22 and 23

Question 22 asked **if there were significant post-electoral disputes that captured national attention and/or made their way through the justice system**. The graph below illustrates the responses. Thirty-four out of 36 answered this question.

Were there significant post-electoral disputes that captured the national attention and/or made their way through the justice system?

Category	Percentage
Yes	35.3%
No	52.9%
Don't Know	11.8%
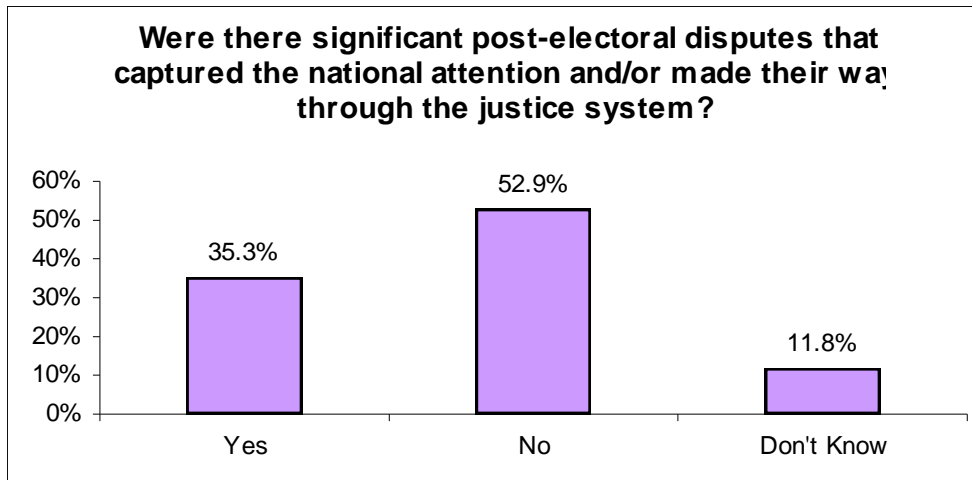
Question 24

The question asked, "**Were the electoral activities implemented according to UNDP's original electoral plan**?"

Implementation According to Electoral Plan

Category	Percentage
YES	63.6%
NO	27.3%
DON'T KNOW	9.1%
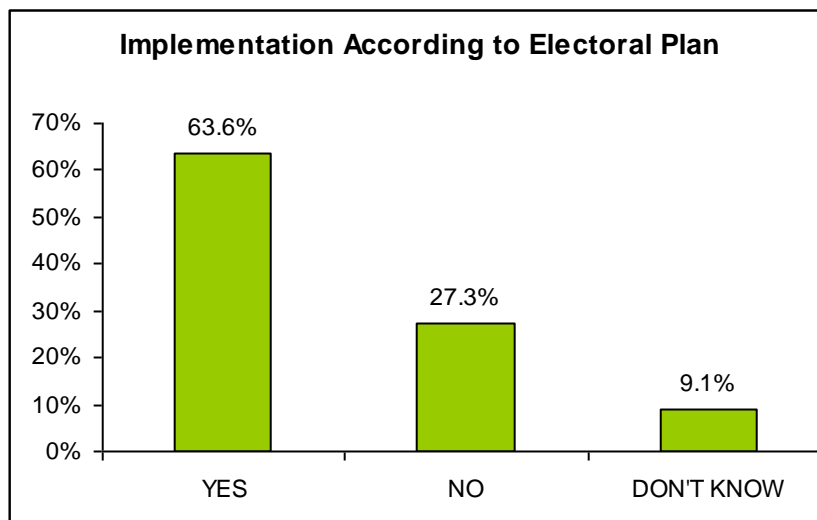
Question 26

When asked "**Who were the financial contributors to the UNDP election project**?" respondents listed the 21 countries and the European Union as captured in the graph below.

Financial Contributors to the Electoral Process
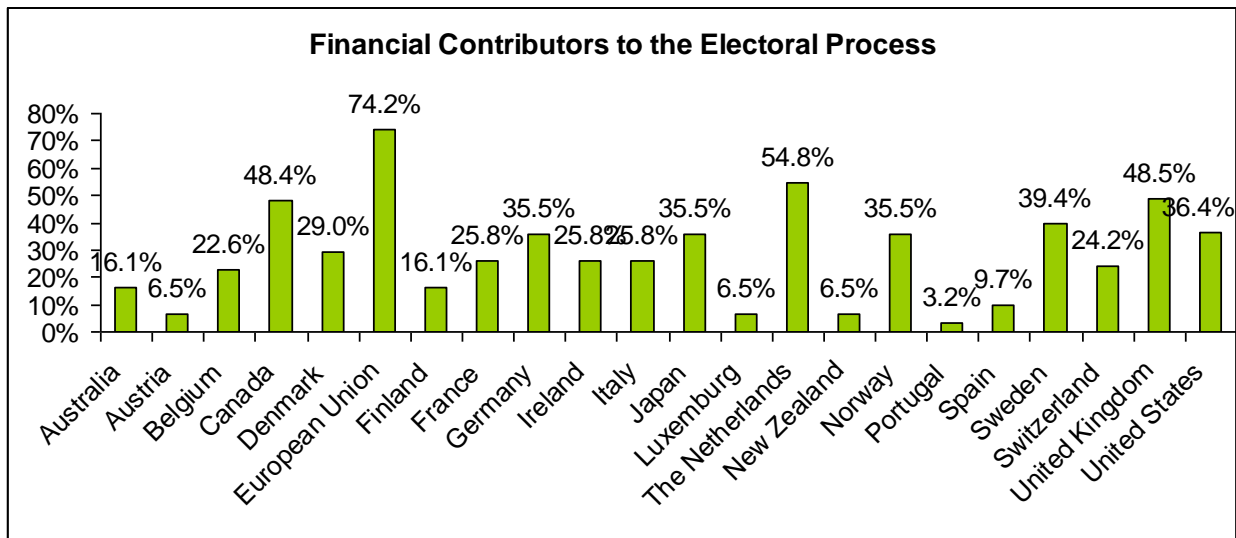
Other countries listed for funding donations included Brazil, Haiti, Mexico, Kyrgyzstan, New Zealand, China, Greece, South Korea, India, and South Africa.

Questions 26, 27, 28, and 29

The following questions were asked:
Who were the financial contributors to the UNDP election project?
How was the funding received?
Was the funding adequate?
Was the funding timely?

The table below tabulates the findings from the above questions. It also provides columns that indicate whether the European Union and/or the United States funded specific countries.

Country	Funding Type	European Union	United States	Adequate Funding	Timely Funding
Afghanistan	Trust Fund Cost Sharing	YES	NO	YES	NO
Bangladesh	Basket Fund	YES	NO	YES	YES
Benin	Basket Fund	YES	YES	YES	YES
Burundi	Trust Fund	YES	YES	YES	NO
Cambodia	Trust Fund Basket Fund	YES	NO	YES	NO
Comoros	DGTTF Cost Sharing Basket Fund	YES	NO	YES	NO

DRC	Basket Fund	YES	NO	YES	YES
Ethiopia	Basket Fund	YES	YES	YES	NO
Georgia	Trust Fund	YES	NO	YES	YES
Ghana	Cost Sharing	YES	NO	YES	YES
Guinea	Trust Fund	YES	NO	YES	NO
Guinea-Bissau	Cost Sharing Trust Fund Government	YES	NO	YES	YES
Haiti	Cost Sharing Trust Fund	YES		YES	NO
Kenya	Trust Fund Track Resource	NO	NO	NO	YES
Kyrgyzstan	Cost Sharing	NO	NO	YES	NO
Lesotho	Cost Sharing	NO	NO	NO	NO
Malawi	Cost Sharing	YES	YES	YES	YES
Mauritania	Basket Fund	YES	YES	YES	NO
Philippines	Parallel Funding	NO	YES	NO	YES
Sao Tome & Principe	Cost Sharing Trust Fund	NO	NO	YES	YES
Suriname	Cost Sharing	YES		YES	NO
Tanzania	Cost Sharing Basket Fund	NO	NO	YES	YES
Timor-Leste	Cost Sharing	YES	NO	YES	NO
West Bank / Gaza	Cost Sharing	YES	NO	YES	YES
Yemen	Basket Fund	YES	NO	YES	YES

Question 30

Question 30 asked, "**Please use the space below to highlight particular issues/challenges when working with a particular partner using the mentioned funding arrangement**." The following is a compilation of the main points that were mentioned. Funding – and the consequences of its delay in particular – is identified as a major issue.

Comments:

- Problems existed within the system of the national counterpart and therefore slowed down delivery.
- Even though the European Commission did its best efforts to transfer quickly the funding, UNDP had to pre-finance some activities.
- The main problem faced was the use of the DEX modality which initially made the project almost unmanageable.
- Some donors were slow in making their funds available; some even arrived after the elections itself. UNDP was helpful by pre-financing projects in such cases. Also, the procedural management was not harmonized and there were major delays in disbursement of contributions and reporting requirements.
- The funding received came after the elections. Also, the retroactivity of their contribution was only granted two weeks before the second vote when all procurement had already been done.
- The funding inflow was unpredictable and insufficient, because the entire funding had not been approved before the beginning of the electoral process. This slowed down the pace of the project. SIDA requested a separate Atlas number (world wide for all projects). This led to problems with the

audit at the end of the year because it caused confusion since SIDA did not have a separate programme document, but was paying for the overall "basket" activities. Two partners (Italy and Austria) provided funds after the elections were over, however, due to lengthy complaints period, their funding was still useful. Japan wanted to fund specific products (the indelible ink) which made it a unique member of the basket fund.

- The EU Funds, which accounted for about 90% of the funding, were received two days before the vote. As this situation was not anticipated, it generated a lot of difficulties for UNDP Finance Unit.
- UNDP pre-financing arrangements allowed elections to take place on time despite the delays in getting contributions from donors. However, the major problem has been the impossibility for the UN Secretariat to provide financial reporting of the first branch of financial resources managed by the SRSG and his team. Further, in a post-conflict country with no proper banking system, the problem of cash flow is always crucial; therefore monies coming too late from several donors (in some cases arriving after the electoral event) prejudiced some activities of the project. The problem is that even when we were sure that the funds were coming, one did not have the option to borrow on a short-time basis and get reimbursed to conduct activities in a timely manner.
- All funding arrangements worked out fine, but the funding was received late
- It was difficult to get money out of the basket fund and apportion door funds among the different projects.
- There were long procedures by the EU and IDB before the approval (UNDP had to pre-finance for both). Also, there were very strict procedures during implementation and little flexibility in allocation of funds resulting in under-utilization of available funds and even the return of funds to donors. The reporting procedures by donors were lengthy and therefore caused high transaction costs for UNDP.
- Donors wanted to fund specific aspects of the project but were unable because they did not have the mandate to do so. On the other hand, some donors had specific requirements that UNDP had to accommodate and this posed a problem to the process.
- The EC was particularly difficult with their timing in signing the agreement and disbursing the funds.
- Donors preferred to undertake parallel funding rather than channeling it through one unit – UNDP – because of the media attractions involved in individual donations. This posed a problem because many viewed this approach by bilateral organizations as interference in the domestic affairs of the country.

Questions 31 and 32

Question 31 asked: "**Please use this space to list and elaborate on up to 5 critical success factors that you faced during the pre-implementation and implementation phases of the electoral support process**." Question 32 asked: "**Please use this space to list and elaborate on up to 5 critical failure factors that you faced during the pre-implementation and implementation phases of the electoral support process**."

These questions revealed key areas of the electoral assistance projects that either facilitated a successful election, or constrained the support process. Twenty-four of 36 respondents provided information. The table below illustrates the number of times an issue was raised among the responses – those in the 'CSF' column signify critical success factors, and those in the 'CFF' column signify critical failure factors. Following the table is an analysis of several issues, where individual country experiences are highlighted.

| TOPIC	CSF (# OF RESPONSES)	CFF (# OF RESPONSES)
UNDP relationship with governments was strong	8	0
Support program and procurement timely	5	4

Civic / voter education timely and of good quality	5	0
UNDP donor coordination effective	4	0
UNDP staff and technical advisors had adequate capacity	2 2 (strong partner)	3
Funding adequate and on time	2	1 (inadequate) 5 (delayed)
Political will expressed by country	2	0
Country capacity was adequate (in EMB especially)	0	4

- **Timing:** Of the nine responses received that raised timing of the overall support and timing of procurement as an issue, five said such aspects were done in a timely manner and four said they were not. The topic of timeliness was not identified as particularly relevant for success or failure by respondents who had worked in post-conflict countries. It was deemed important to begin the fund raising and procurement process of recruiting an implementing partner to manage electoral assistance at least one year prior.

- **Donor coordination:** One person mentioned that it was important for UNDP to set up a donor coordination mechanism dealing explicitly with electoral support. However, he pointed out that the importance of identifying a chair that has previous experience with elections and a secretariat to support coordination. UNDP facilitated frequent contact among itself, lead donors, and the National Election Board. This made the donors feel they were part of the policy dialogue. Another person mentioned that the well-coordinated earmarking of donor contributions to specific lines meant a better-financed package to the government for elections. While the earmarking was positive overall, too much inflexibility in the process led to an underutilization of funds.

- **Staff capacity:** In at least two country offices, UNDP staff was not prepared to cope with the increased workload during an elections project. Project personnel were hired for electoral support tasks, yet the regular UNDP staff had to do much of the operations tasks, particularly in Atlas and ensuring that procurement rules were strictly followed by the otherwise inexperienced project personnel. This led to tensions and stress among regular office staff. Another person mentioned that technical advisors were, for the most, part sensitive to local realities. They worked closely with the UNDP country office to be diplomatic in their advice. This was important because in the few cases where advice was given with condescension, the government promptly rejected it.

- **Civic/Voter Education:** Several countries raised the importance of a timely and high quality civic/voter education campaign during the electoral process. One person mentioned that an electoral campaign using diverse media methods was a critical success factor. Another person mentioned that UNDP was able to open up the role of the media, which led to a media code of conduct and opposition access to public media. A Burundi elections staff also highlighted the role of the media.

- **Political party support:** The UNDP country office should have secured earlier support and guidance on how to deal with providing financing for political parties. This was something for which some donors were pushing.

- **Conflict issues:** In post-conflict settings security during the electoral process is important to how the process evolves. It is necessary, yet can cause increased logistical challenges that must be foreseen by the country office. Also, there is often little infrastructure to facilitate access to isolated areas and general capacity to run the electoral process (i.e. voter registration system) can be severely lacking. In countries where political tensions run high, UN support along with other international and regional actors for consultative processes and political negotiations can be critical to the success of

an election. It is important to involve opposition parties and civil society in the electoral process in order to establish consensus and prevent conflict.

Question 33 and 34

The questions asked, "**If possible, would you have implemented the project differently in this election? If yes, what would you have done differently in this election**?"

Election Implementation Done Differently
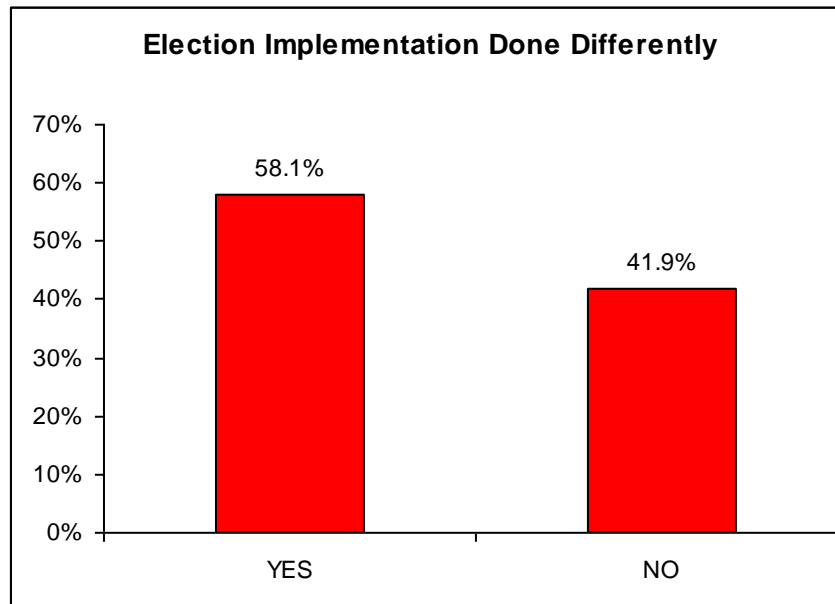
The major things respondents identified that they would have done differently were:

1) Increasing timing and preparation for the election in all sectors, but particularly to allow for better training of electoral support staff;
2) Creating a long-term process of electoral assistance;
3) Improving office management and training by hiring more full-time staff; and
4) Empowering local counterparts taking part in the process. They would also have equipped themselves better to adequately respond to media and general public enquires, and manage finances better.