



ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA
ENSURING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS



PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF THE PREVENTION, MITIGATION AND
MANAGEMENT OF ELECTION-RELATED CONFLICT AND
POTENTIAL VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA (PEV-RSA)

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT-OCTOBER 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES) and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) collaborated in the area of electoral conflict prevention, mitigation and management with the aim of capacitating IEC staff and other electoral stakeholders. The collaboration named “*Project on the Prevention, Mitigation and Management of Election-related Conflict and Potential Violence in South Africa (PEV-RSA)*” was funded by the European Union (EU) at 95% under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and co-funded by ECES at 5%.

In September 2020, Prove & Improve Consulting (pty) Ltd was contracted by ECES to conduct a final evaluation of the project. This evaluation report discusses findings and recommendations gathered from reviewing project documentation and interviewing IEC and ECES project staff and beneficiaries.

The evaluation used a non-experimental design which incorporated a qualitative inquiry to develop an in-depth understanding of the project context, processes, issues and opinions about the relevance and quality of activities and its achievements. The evaluation team conducted a document review of a set of project documents to gain some insight regarding the project. In addition, a total of 16 semi-structured interviews were conducted, 9 with the extended project team including the IEC as both co-applicant and beneficiary and 7 with project beneficiaries who took part in project activities. Respondents were selected from a comprehensive contact list of ECES and IEC project team and trained beneficiaries.

Evaluation findings were structured along key evaluation criteria and questions as presented below:

Relevance
<p>What factors justified the need for a partnership between the IEC and ECES?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Successful and fruitful experience of ECES and IEC partnership working together on a previous project in the SADC region where the IEC had played a significant role in providing technical expertise, provided a springboard for a successful partnership in PEV-RSA.• ECES’ technical and professional expertise to support the implementation and training on electoral cycle support justified its partnership with the IEC.• The need for provision of a well-structured, proactive and systematic strategy towards the implementation of the electoral cycle support.• Experiences of conflict-prone and violent events that occurred in the previous elections in 2009 and 2014 justified the need for the project.• IEC’s evident need of a partnership that would assist them in dealing with conflict matters whilst they concentrated on preparing for the elections.• The IEC is often pulled into electoral conflicts and it may then not be appropriate to have a management system that is entirely integral to the organisation. In that regard, ECES partnership gave the conflict management model a more neutral connotation.
<p>Was the project relevant and appropriate to address the needs of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The election period provides a platform that amplifies conflict and violence issues which in turn affects the smooth delivery of elections. Through the project, electoral stakeholders were capacitated to prevent and mitigate on electoral issues of conflict and violence including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• assassination of candidates and councillors especially in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province. Added to that the taxi industry found an opportunity to start their own demonstrations.

- intimidation of municipal managers and officials
- service delivery protests which were violent and saw the destruction of property in some areas
- intra-party and inter-party battles of power
- resistance to the changing of municipal boundaries, specifically in the Limpopo areas.

To what extent was the LEAD training strategy appropriate to address the needs of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?

- LEAD training was relevant in upskilling both coordinators and panellists in that it brought about an understanding of conflict prevention, mitigation and management.
- Participants were enabled to be pro-active rather than reactive when faced with conflict in their communities

Effectiveness

Did the project achieve its objectives at activity and output level?

- The project achieved all its outputs and activities were successfully completed.

To what extent was the LEAD training effective in enhancing overall conflict management capacity of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?

The LEAD training improved participants' understanding of concepts and approaches in leadership, conflict mapping, management and mediation during the election period.

How effective were conferences on electoral conflict prevention and management?

- Conferences offered an opportunity for information sharing

To what extent did any contextual factors help/hinder project implementation?

- Some challenges that negatively impacted on effectiveness include ECES dual project management team and the fact that key positions could not be full time, barely half time, led to a greater in-kind contribution of time dedicated to the project.

Results

What are some of the overall benefits of the project?

- LEAD training enhanced participants' leadership and conflict management skills. Participants also had a better understanding the electoral cycle methodology which enhanced their knowledge on conflict prevention strategies to apply at each stage of the electoral cycle.
- Moreover, the training provided an opportunity for participants to engage with various stakeholders such as political parties and civil society organisations. Through the training, all participants had a common understanding of electoral processes.
- Overall, the project grew a network of people who can possibly be consistently involved in conflict mediation and resolution efforts in their communities beyond the election period.
- In totality, the project successfully implemented 42 activities prior to the National Provincial elections held 8 May 2019, engaged over 1200 individual individuals in capacity enhancing activities and early warning networks from all 9 provinces in South Africa.
- After the elections, the project and its achievements were acknowledged by the Vice Chairperson of the IEC, Mrs Janet Love, during the announcement of the 2019 election results ceremony.
- The project gave South Africa an opportunity to showcase a successful partnership on electoral support on the international stage. Evidently, through this partnership, ECES and the IEC were

invited to take part in three international conferences to showcase the successful implementation.

- The project brought a comparative perspective through making use of personnel with continental experience from different countries such as Mozambique and Zimbabwe. This allowed stakeholders to learn from other country experiences in order to have a realistic basis of judging South Africa's relative performance as a country and as a democracy.
- The project, particularly its partnership between the EU, ECES and the IEC gave a "global flavour" to the elections because for the very first time, the international community, which has not been very prominent in partnering with South Africa in electoral matters was represented.

Lessons learned

What lessons learnt and recommendations emerge to improve the planning and implementation of future projects?

- It would be highly beneficial to review the financial instrument for a second phase covering the local elections in 2021, if desirable from all parties. The instrument for stability and peace seems a better fit with the subject matter but more, allows for a greater flexibility. Since the project operated as a "request-based" facility for provincial IEC offices, including setting up "pop-up" offices for exchange between IEC provinces and within the province, requests for support sometimes came in quickly and led to more activities in some provinces than others. This was however in line with the instructions received from IEC Chair, namely to focus on certain provinces such as KZN, Gauteng and Western Cape whilst the budget had a provision of equal number of activities in all provinces.
- It would be highly beneficial to allocate more funding towards the full-time commitment of staff in order to closely monitor project activities.

Replicability

- The importance of replicability of the project is justified and was prioritised by stakeholders and beneficiaries who were interviewed during this evaluation.
- Since most Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are working in close collaboration with communities, they are best fitted to benefit from this support that ECES seeks to offer in the second phase of the project.

Considering the findings discussed, the evaluation put forward the following key recommendations:

It is recommended for ECES to:

- Continue its efforts of supporting election conflict prevention, mitigation and management in South Africa to strengthen the capacity of IEC and its stakeholders and also considering the role played by South Africa in electoral matters in the continent, capacitation is a necessity. But do so via a steadier presence in the country, by having a permanent space within the IEC Election Headquarters if possible.
- Play an increased advisory role to the IEC on matters involving the effective recruitment and contracting of coordinators and conflict mediation panellists. This advisory role should look closely into their roles and responsibilities to avoid duplication thereof and for both parties to understand the stipulations in their contracts.

- Ensure effective future project implementation and to avoid unnecessary delays. This can be ensured through sufficient funding – and subsequent budgeting that can ensure day-to-day oversight. This will overcome delays in project implementation expenditure, such as booking of venues and facilities for training.
- Consider supporting the IEC to ensure that provincial coordinators are involved in the planning phases of projects, are recruited on time and are engaged earlier.
- Ensure that facilitators conduct the LEAD trainings effectively without having overwhelming numbers of attendees. This is important for better participant understanding and experience of the trainings.
- Engage SAPS and continue cross-fertilisation between IEC, SAPS and coordinators. This is a key component to effective coordination and complimenting each other's role around election conflict prevention.
- Assist the IEC in sustaining a core capacity of conflict mediation panellists and coordinators who are trained. The IEC can always draw on these in future elections as they already have the knowledge and skills in conflict prevention, mitigation and management. Future efforts to capacitate CSOs is pivotal in this regard.
- Develop a manual on how the cascading of the training is to be conducted to ensure that there is a common understanding of expectations when cascading the training further down.

It is recommended for the IEC to:

- Ensure that its staff members understand the role played by the conflict mediation panellists during the election period. This is important to avoid any duplication of roles and to ensure harmonious working relations.
- Avoid over-staffing provincial offices but instead increase synergies and coordination with other stakeholders including SAPS, CSOs and media.
- IEC would benefit from a greater investment in the CSOs in all provinces, avoiding creating a hierarchy amongst CSOs and seek to further the role CSOs can play locally. For this, a continued partnership could be the vehicle through which increased CSO capacitation is achieved.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS	6
LIST OF TABLES.....	6
LIST OF FIGURES.....	6
1. INTRODUCTION	7
2. EVALUATION DESIGN	7
2.1 Purpose of the Evaluation.....	7
Key Evaluation Questions (KEQ)	7
2.2 Methodology and approach	8
2.3 Evaluation Limitations	9
3. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION	9
3.1 Project implementation.....	10
4 EVALUATION FINDINGS	11
4.1 Relevance.....	11
a. What factors justified the need for a partnership between the IEC and ECES and the subsequent project?	11
b. Was the project relevant and appropriate to address the needs of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?.....	12
c. To what extent was the LEAD training strategy appropriate to address the needs of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?.....	13
4.2 Effectiveness	14
a. Did the project achieve its objectives at activity and output level?	14
b. To what extent was the LEAD training effective in enhancing overall leadership and conflict management capacities of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?.....	15
c. How effective were the conferences on electoral conflict prevention and management? .15	
d. To what extent did any contextual factors help/hinder implementation? (training, conferencing, coordination)	16
4.3 Results of the project.....	17
a. What are some of the overall benefits of the project to target group?	17
4.4 Lessons learned.....	18
a. What lessons learnt and recommendations emerge to improve the planning and implementation of future projects.....	18
4.5 Replicability.....	20
a. What should be continued and/or done differently in the future?	20
5. CONCLUSIONS	21
6. RECOMMENDATIONS	24

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
ECES	European Centre for Electoral Support
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EMBs	Electoral Management
EU	European Union
EUDEL	European Union Delegation
EURECS	European Cycle to Electoral Support
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
KEQs	Key Evaluation Questions
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LEAD	Leadership and Conflict Management for Electoral Stakeholders
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee
PEV-RSA	Prevent, Mitigate and Manage Election Related Conflict and Potential Violence in South Africa
ROC	Results Orientation Centre
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SAPS	South African Police Services

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Evaluation framework8
Table 2: Intended outputs and completion status14
Table 3: Lessons learned19

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The Electoral Cycle11

1. INTRODUCTION

National and provincial elections were held in South Africa on the 8th of May 2019. These were the sixth elections held since the end of apartheid in 1994. Leading up to the elections, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES) collaborated in the area of conflict prevention, mitigation and management with the aim of capacitating IEC staff and other electoral stakeholders. The collaboration named “*Project on the Prevention, Mitigation and Management of Election-related Conflict and Potential Violence in South Africa (PEV-RSA)*” was funded by the European Union (EU) at 95% under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and co-funded by the European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES) at 5%.

In September 2020, Prove & Improve Consulting (Pty) Ltd was contracted by ECES to conduct a final evaluation of the project. This evaluation report discusses findings and recommendations gathered from reviewing project documentation and interviewing IEC and ECES project staff and beneficiaries.

The report is structured as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: Evaluation design (Purpose, methodology and approach and limitations)
- Section 3: Project background and description
- Section 4: Evaluation findings
- Section 5: Conclusions
- Section 6: Recommendations

2. EVALUATION DESIGN

2.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

The PEV-RSA project came to an end in March 2020. As part of project deliverables, the application stipulates that a final evaluation of the project is desired to provide an objective verification of project achievements. The evaluation team held a meeting with the project coordinator who confirmed the purposes of the evaluation to be the following:

- Understand the effects of the project on target groups and other stakeholders.
- Outline key project success and achievements.
- Clarify what worked and did not work during the implementation of the project.
- Document lessons learnt in order to inform the roll-out of similar projects in the future.

Key Evaluation Questions (KEQ)

In order to focus the evaluation, a list of key evaluation questions (KEQ) was developed in line with selected OECD DAC evaluative criteria¹ of relevance/appropriateness, effectiveness, results and lessons learnt. The evaluation team made reference to the project log frame to formulate the relevant KEQs. The Evaluation framework below shows the DAC evaluative criteria, the list of questions answered by the evaluation and the sources of information used.

¹ Chianza, T. The OECD/DAC criteria for International Development Evaluations: An Assessment and Ideas for improvement. Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation, Vol 5, No.9

Table 1: Evaluation framework

Evaluative criteria	Question(s)	Sources of information
Relevance	<p>a. What factors justified the need for a partnership between the IEC and ECES and the subsequent project?</p> <p>b. Was the project relevant and appropriate to address the needs of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?</p> <p>c. To what extent was the LEAD training strategy appropriate to address the needs of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?</p>	<p>Concept Note</p> <p>Project</p> <p>Application form</p> <p>Project team and Target groups interviews</p>
Effectiveness	<p>a. Did the project achieve its objectives at activity and output level?</p> <p>b. To what extent was the LEAD training effective in enhancing overall conflict management capacity of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?</p> <p>c. How effective were conferences on electoral conflict prevention and management?</p> <p>d. c. To what extent did any contextual factors help/hinder implementation? (training, conferencing, coordination)</p>	<p>Post-election review report</p> <p>Application Form</p> <p>Project team interviews</p> <p>Target groups interviews</p>
Results	<p>a. What are some of the overall benefits of the project to target group?</p>	<p>Post-election review report</p> <p>Target group interviews</p> <p>Project team interviews</p>
Lessons learned	<p>a. What lessons learnt and recommendations emerge to improve the planning and implementation of future projects?</p>	<p>Post-election review report</p> <p>IEC/ECES interviews</p>
Replicability	<p>a. What should be continued and/or done differently in the future?</p>	<p>Project team interviews</p> <p>Target group interviews</p>

2.2 Methodology and approach

The evaluation used a non-experimental design which incorporated a qualitative inquiry to develop an in-depth understanding of the project context, processes and issues and to gather opinions about the relevance and quality of project activities and its achievements. The evaluation team conducted a document review of a set of project documents to gain some insight into the project. Documents reviewed include:

- Project inception report
- Application forms
- Project log frame
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by ECES and the IEC
- Project progress reports (activity brief, interim reports)

- Post-election review report

A total of 16 semi-structured interviews were conducted, 9 with the extended project team including the IEC as both co-applicant and beneficiary and 7 with project beneficiaries who took part of project activities. Respondents were selected from a comprehensive contact list of ECES and IEC project team and trained beneficiaries. Due to the tight time frame of the evaluation, project beneficiaries were conveniently sampled where reachable, willing and available respondents were contacted. Qualitative data in the form of experiences, opinions and feelings about project implementation and anticipated results were organised and analysed to extract emerging themes with the objective of answering the evaluation questions.

2.3 Evaluation Limitations

The following limitations to the evaluations are acknowledged:

- **Time availability constraints-** It was not possible to pilot the data collection tools and other evaluation activities such as interviews and data analysis were speedily conducted in the short time frame.
- **Slow rate of correspondence of project beneficiaries contacted.** Considering the short-time frame for the evaluation, follow up was challenging hence the use of convenience sampling.
- **Without a baseline or comparison,** the evaluation relied mainly on respondent's attitudes and perceptions.

3. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

In South Africa, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) is an independent and permanent body established by the constitution to promote and safeguard democracy. In terms of the Electoral Commission Act of 1996 the IEC is mandated to²:

- compile and maintain a register of political parties;
- undertake and promote research into electoral matters;
- develop and promote the development of electoral expertise and technology in all spheres of government;
- review electoral laws and propose electoral laws, and make recommendations; to promote voter education;
- declare the results of elections for national, provincial and municipal legislative bodies within seven days;
- appoint appropriate public administrations in any sphere of government to conduct elections when necessary.

Although the IEC has been competent in fulfilling its role, several issues have been identified as a risk to election processes and with the potential to negatively affect electoral management and security. For instance, the past two elections held in 2009 and 2014 were marked by periods of protracted and sporadic violent protests which affected the smooth delivery of the elections and thus undermined the capacity of the IEC being a central actor mandated to conduct elections. These protests and demonstrations were a response to socio-economic issues of injustice and inequality such as:

- intra-political party conflicts,
- internal frictions within the leading party,

² The South African Yearbook 2018/19, Government Systems, p.8.

- reshuffling of the cabinet,
- public perceptions of the leading elite,
- unlawful spending of public funds,
- social inequalities such as access to higher education and jobs and income generating activities.
- continuous poor service delivery in already under-served communities.

In lieu of these limiting factors, from 2015, the IEC took steps to institutionalise a risk management strategy as a means of strengthening its capacity to deliver credible elections through allowing the IEC to focus on operational matters knowing that conflict prevention and management is being catered for. One of the components of the risk management strategy is coordinating conditions for free and fair elections. Implementation of this strategy has been delivered with the support of ECES, a not for profit private foundation headquartered in Brussels with a global remit. ECES promotes sustainable democratic development through provision of advisory services, operational support and management of large projects in the electoral and democracy assistance field.³

The Project to “Prevent, Mitigate and Manage Election Related Conflict and Potential Violence in South Africa (PEV-RSA)” was then born to support the prevention, mitigation and management of election-related conflicts and potential violence that may arise prior to, during and after the 2019 general elections at national and provincial level. Whilst the elections were conducted on the 8th of May 2019, the timeline for the project was pre-election, March 2018- March 2020 allowing activities to be delivered before, during and after the election period.

Leading up to the 2019 elections, several interactions between the IEC, ECES and the EU Delegation (EUDEL) in South Africa took place throughout 2016 and beginning of 2017, which cemented the implementation of the project. This collaboration culminated into the implementation of the “Project to Prevent, Mitigate and Manage Election Related Conflict and Potential Violence in South Africa (PEV-RSA)” with specific objectives of:

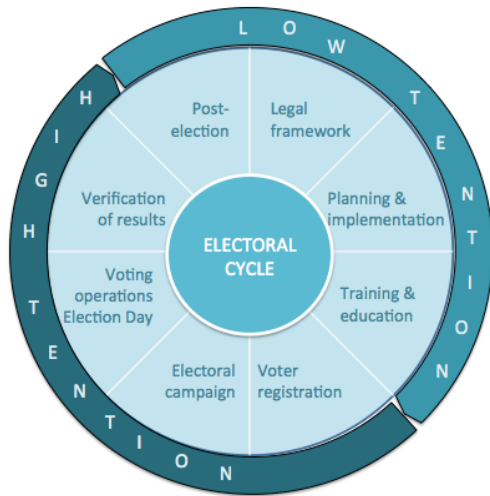
1. Enhancing leadership and conflict management capacities among key players such as the coordinators and volunteers of the province conflict mediation panels;
2. Reviving existing peace infrastructures and connect its work to the province conflict mediation panels by providing secretariat services i.e. coordination, inclusion in capacity building, institutional support
3. Supporting regional/international peer exchange meant to bridge the IEC with Electoral Management Stakeholders (EMBs) in other countries in order to share best practices pertaining to conflict prevention and management.

The target groups of the project activities were predominantly the IEC, province dispute resolution mechanisms, its coordinators, panellists and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The final beneficiaries are thought to be the electorate and, in the extension, the population of South Africa.

3.1 Project implementation

³ EURECS- A European Response To Electoral Cycle Support

Figure 1: The Electoral Cycle



The implementation of PEV-RSA prioritised training of target groups on the electoral cycle. The electoral cycle methodology assumes that it is important for electoral stakeholders to understand each stages and entry points of the electoral cycle in order to better respond to conflict and violence during the election period. Figure 1 shows the different stages of the electoral cycle. The methodology is based on the European Cycle to Electoral Support (EURECS) approach, both copyrighted and developed by ECES. It is assumed that at all stages, the electoral cycle has its own challenges and issues that need to be tackled to ensure the smooth implementation

of election processes. The basic assumption of the cycle is to help to visualize the sequential and interdependent steps, components and phases that make up an entire electoral process. However, ECES recognises that the electoral process has a multidimensional nature and faces cross-cutting issues specific to the context in which it is embedded, which are not always directly related to the election process.

A specific activity that ECES proposed to deliver is Leadership and Conflict Management for Electoral Stakeholders (LEAD) training. The basic assumption of the LEAD training is that it considers leadership and conflict management skills to be the most important abilities of relevant stakeholders involved in election management. It entails both a training of facilitators and a cascading component in which trained participants further train other “lower level” stakeholders in the process. Through this method, it is assumed that LEAD trainings are not based on conventional and passive teaching methods but aim to tackle challenges participants are faced with by delivering innovative and creative solutions.

4 EVALUATION FINDINGS

This section discusses the findings of the evaluation against a set of five criteria determined for the evaluation, namely, relevance, effectiveness, results, lessons learned and replicability.

4.1 Relevance

- a. What factors justified the need for a partnership between the IEC and ECES and the subsequent project?

The partnership in the prevention, mitigation and mediation of election related conflict and violence was justified and needed to ensure the smooth delivery of the 2019 elections. This was reiterated by the IEC project staff who mentioned that they were in need of a partnership that would assist them in dealing with conflict matters whilst they concentrated on preparing for the elections. It was clearly mentioned that the election period provides a platform that amplifies these issues which in turn affects the smooth running of the elections. During the interviews it was noted that occurrences of election related conflict and violence always mean that the IEC is often pulled into electoral conflict and violence matters, which impedes on its independence. Faced with this dilemma, the IEC would benefit from partnering with an organisation with a more neutral connotation to its conflict

management model. In this regard, ECES made a valuable contribution in assisting the IEC with capacity building of key electoral stakeholders in conflict prevention, mitigation and management.

Additionally, both ECES and IEC project team pointed out that prior to partnering on the PEV RSA, both parties had successful and fruitful experience of working together on a project in the SADC region where the IEC had played a significant role in providing technical expertise to ECES. Collaboration in the PEV-RSA was building on from that experience and contribution made by both parties.

According to evaluation respondents, ECES partnership with the IEC was justified mostly by experiences of events that occurred in the previous elections held in 2009 and 2014. Studies conducted by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) highlighted that during this time, South Africa experienced a wave of protests across most provinces due to dissatisfaction with delivery of municipal services such as electricity, running water, ablution facilities and the increasing number of unemployment especially, amongst the youth. These protests were violent and were also marked by xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals.⁴ Furthermore, the PEV-RSA concept note reiterates that in the build-up to the 2014 elections, political campaigns were marred by reports of intimidation and violence, with a backdrop of a number of violent public protests occurring in most provinces and local governments.⁵

During the interviews, these issues were reiterated and were found as the main contributing factors leading to the partnership between the IEC and ECES in an attempt to ensure that in the 2019 elections, this kind of violence and conflict is prevented, mitigated and managed to ensure the smooth delivery thereof. IEC officials indicated that, instances of violence prior to the 2019 elections manifested in the:

- assassination of candidates and councillors especially in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province. Added to that the taxi industry found an opportunity to start their own demonstrations.
- intimidation of municipal managers and officials
- service delivery protests which were violent and saw the destruction of property in some areas
- intra and inter-party battles of power
- resistance to the changing of municipal boundaries, specifically in the Limpopo province.

One IEC official noted that: *“an election period that is infested with conflict will not yield results. For instance, if communities do not allow IEC officials or burn voting stations, elections collapse. As a result, conflict management and awareness interventions are critical to elections and remain so even beyond the voting day and period”.*

- b. Was the project relevant and appropriate to address the needs of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?

Against this backdrop of violence and conflict leading up to the 2019 elections, there was widespread consensus among all IEC and ECES staff of the need for a structured intervention that would assist in the prevention, mitigation and management of violence and conflict in the inter-election, election and post-election period. It was mentioned that with its expertise and experience, ECES partnership with the IEC was justified. ECES has built enormous experience working in conflict mediation, peace building and electoral conflict in the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe. That experience would add value in the South African context.

⁴ <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/the-reasons-behind-service-delivery-protests-in-south-africa>

⁵ PEV RSA Concept Note

The IEC project staff noted that a recurrent challenge for the institution is having sufficient time to capacitate, coordinate and liaise with all relevant non-state actors and to support and mentor their work. Understandably, during election time, the IEC is absorbed by election operations, chairing of various committees and stakeholder management. A capacity building project of electoral stakeholders appeared therefore relevant and appropriate.

Most respondents agreed to the appropriateness of the project objective of supporting the prevention, mitigation and management of election-related conflicts and potential violence that may arise prior to, during and after the 2019 general elections, judging from their past experiences.

As part of the activities to achieve this objective, the recruitment and contracting of coordinators and conflict mediation panellists was found integral and an essential part to conflict management in the South African context.

The importance of having provincial coordinators and conflict mediation panellists was echoed by both the IEC officials who agreed that during a critical time such as elections, all IEC staff members are overloaded and focusing on the election functions. The support received through the recruited provincial coordinators and conflict mediation panellists is thus pivotal in assisting with coordinating training to ensure it is conducted smoothly, as well as escalating conflict-related issues as experienced in their respective provinces. During interviews, it was indicated that provincial coordinators' role was critical and indispensable because they were based within local communities, where violence and conflict were bound to occur. In their absence, elections may have been delayed, derailed and they might not have been free and fair. In this regard, the coordinators' role became central to mitigate and resolve any emerging conflict. It was further noted that in order to ensure that they were ready for the task, ECES supported them through providing training and advisory services offered by provincial advisors. For instance, one provincial advisor indicated that:

“The training offered has a big component on mediation, arbitration and negotiation. We made sure to equip participants in all components.”

- c. To what extent was the LEAD training strategy appropriate to address the needs of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?

Most respondents felt that the LEAD training was relevant in upskilling both coordinators and conflict mediation panellists. They indicated that they learnt how to map conflict likely to arise in communities. Also, they were enabled to be pro-active rather than reactive when faced with conflict in their communities. They could now identify conflict hotspots and possible perpetrators of conflict and devise measures to put in place to prevent conflict. Furthermore, another provincial advisor noted that LEAD was essential in enhancing skills in preventing electoral conflict and violence and understanding what it takes to have a credible election. With the knowledge they gained, provincial coordinators later became part of the training team to train conflict mediation panellists and other electoral stakeholders. One IEC official illustrated the relevance of the LEAD training as follows:

“In the past, we would only recruit from the community, respected leaders such as pastors, traditional leaders etc, based on the assumption that everyone is trained in mediation, which was not always the case because some had a very limited view and experience of mediation for example, resolving church issues, which is quite different with what is happening in the streets, people sometimes do not recognise those structures because it is outside of the church. A different type of skill-set is needed in addition to the recognition, so those people had to be trained”-IEC Official.

Furthermore, it was mentioned that participants were trained on understanding what happens before, during and after the polling or electoral day. One respondent further commented that the training was relevant in that it:

“Educated participants about administering an election through the lens of an electoral cycle. This was useful, especially for participants who were never exposed to administering an election. It also urged participants to grow a practical understanding and appreciation of what makes free and fair elections. Most panellists did not know the electoral process to the depth and comprehension that the training provided them”- Provincial Advisor.

This was further echoed by another respondent who indicated that understanding the electoral cycle approach provides further insight into electoral procedures.

4.2 Effectiveness

- a. Did the project achieve its objectives at activity and output level?

Prior to implementing its activities, a project log frame matrix was developed to guide implementation of the project. The log frame links all the expected outcomes and outputs with activities to be conducted. The question on effectiveness of the project will look at the extent to which the project achieved its outputs. Table 2 below maps intended outputs against their completion status. The evaluation found that all project outputs were successfully completed during the project period.

Table 2: Intended outputs and completion status

Intended outputs	Completion status
9 conflict mediation panel coordinators recruited	9 provincial coordinators recruited and trained
Consolidated and competent national pool of LEAD master trainers	4 LEAD Training of Trainers (ToT) completed (Centurion, Durban, Johannesburg and Krugersdorp)
Cascading of the LEAD training carried out by master trainers, in all provinces	19 Leadership and LEAD Cascade trainings were implemented across the 9 provinces (Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Newcastle, Polokwane, Port Alfred, Kroonstad)
Human “early warning mechanism” coordinated, capacitated and revived (including all LEAD participants)	1200 individuals were gathered in an early warning network aggregated per province.
Handbook on the recruitment, function, potential and challenges of conflict mediation panels developed	Election Conflict Management handbook developed and 44 panellists trained
Sensitisation and information outreach campaign plan developed	Successfully completed
A “Political Safari” outreach campaign implemented	Successfully completed
2 regional conferences on electoral conflict prevention and management.	Two regional conferences on electoral conflict prevention and management were implemented focused on Sustaining Peace through Elections and the Future of International Election Observation.

- b. To what extent was the LEAD training effective in enhancing overall leadership and conflict management capacities of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?

Overall, both the IEC officials, panellists, individuals from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) representatives of the South African Police Services (SAPS) and other stakeholders attested to the effectiveness of the LEAD training workshops. The quote below is an illustration of how the training was perceived:

“The training was an eye opener, it made me realise that no legal prescripts are needed in mediation. You cannot force parties to agree to a particular law. You are only a facilitator of communication between conflicting parties, they own the agreement and, by so doing, they are likely to keep to the agreement. The agreement reached is owned by the parties involved in conflict to maximise the adoption of the agreement and to reach a situation where mediation is achieved”- Provincial Coordinator.

Others reiterated that the training enabled them to do their jobs better and because it was scenario based, through the application of case studies and role plays, it closed the gap between training and implementation. Moreover, it was said that as a result of the training, participants learnt how to predict conflict likely to arise in communities making them pro-active when faced with conflict in their communities. Respondents further noted that the LEAD trainings were beneficial because they improved their understanding of concepts and approaches in leadership, conflict mapping, management and mediation. In a nutshell, all respondents agreed that the LEAD training made their work very easy as compared to previous years.

However, some respondents mentioned that more time could have been allocated to training because some individuals, for example, panellists, who had no prior knowledge of these issues found it difficult to process information in the three days allocated to training.

One IEC official noted that the cascading down of the training to other stakeholders did not work well in most provinces. The issue identified was that whereas facilitators were trained for a period of five days, they were expected to offer the training further down in just a day. The challenge with this was prioritising and selecting which training material to offer in a day, it was difficult for them to choose what is important to prioritise. The training did not give clear descriptions of what the trainers needed to focus on when cascading the training.

- c. How effective were the conferences on electoral conflict prevention and management?

On the successful completion of the project, ECES and the IEC were invited to take part in three conferences to showcase the successful implementation of the project, these conferences included the:

- Peer exchange at the SIPRI Peace and Security Forum in Stockholm where ECES delivered a session in Mediation Effectiveness in electoral processes. In particular, a session on Analysing Mediation Effectiveness that saw the active participation of Chairperson Mr. Mashinini and Senior Manager for Electoral Matters Mr. Abrahams.
- Two regional conferences on electoral conflict prevention and management which focused on Sustaining Peace through Elections and the Future of International Election Observation where PEV-RSA was a show-cased study.

An interview conducted with one of the executives from the IEC provided some insight into the effectiveness of the conferences. The respondent indicated that the conferences were essential in

documenting and producing material on conflict and violence prevention and mediation. Specifically, it was noted that the conferences offered an opportunity for information sharing which is very critical in alleviating distortions, tensions and conflict where possible. Information sharing is the key strategy of preventing misunderstanding during the electoral process. For example, keeping political parties informed of how they need to conduct themselves during an election process is important to eliminate unnecessary disruptions, tensions and conflicts and this increases chances of elections running relatively freely and fairly. He further indicated that:

“The conferences were a platform used by both the IEC and ECES to showcase the success of the project and to give a shared learning experience with other countries. Topics discussed were relevant to the South African context one of the topics looked into the role women can play in conflict mediation”- IEC Official.

- d. To what extent did any contextual factors help/hinder implementation? (training, conferencing, coordination)

Factors that enhanced project implementation included:

Conducive working environment and infrastructure

ECES management mentioned that a conducive and accommodative environment towards the implementation of the project was enabled by the fact that the project was hosted within the IEC premises at the Election House headquarters in Centurion, Pretoria. This set-up was beneficial to both ECES and the IEC in order to ensure coordination of all project components in close collaboration with other IEC-implemented conflict prevention and dispute resolution mechanisms.

Moreover, other respondents outlined that despite some challenges experienced, South Africa has a relatively conducive infrastructure such as facilities (training venues, hotels etc), roads and transportation when compared to other countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. Because most of the project stakeholders such as provincial advisors, coordinators and conflict mediation panellists were required to respond to travel to perform their duties, fewer challenges were experienced in moving from one province to another. Also, fewer challenges were experienced in finding training and accommodation facilities and venues in most provinces.

However, some factors hindered effective project implementation. The evaluation assessed the factors as follows:

ECES dual project team structure and financial management

ECES project team included staff members who coordinated on a part-time basis in South Africa and others who were permanently based in Brussels. This arrangement presented implementation challenges in that it was impossible to closely monitor some project activities. Although this arrangement, was seen as a motive to channel more funds to activities and not to financing full-time commitment of international expertise, ECES advisory role could have been more effective if most staff were full-time and more involved in project implementation. All project financial logistics, administration and travel bookings were done by an ECES accountant based in Brussels. As a result, some challenges experienced were that there were delays for funds to reflect on South African project bank accounts for making payment for items such as booking of training venues and accommodation. This financial model could not allow for advance payments of venues and other facilities, as a result, delays were experienced when it came to timely booking of venues and accommodation for training and workshops.

Project roll-out and implementation

The project assumed a *request-based facility* modus operandi, whereby the provincial offices elaborated on a provincially adapted work plan and determined training needs as per provincial requirements. This set up was in line with the instructions received from IEC Chair, namely to focus on certain provinces such as KZN, Gauteng and Western Cape although the budget had a provision of equal number of activities in all provinces. The challenge experienced was that requests for support sometimes came in quickly and led to more activities in some provinces than others. Sometimes ECES could not always control the high volumes of “requests” that came in from other provinces resulting in an enormous strain on available human resources in the trainings. To that effect, some facilitators mentioned that some trainings experienced overwhelming numbers of attendees which resulted in lesser effective engagement with participants during trainings.

Recruitment, contracting and security of conflict mediation panellists

Some respondents noted that the recruitment criteria for conflict mediation panellists was seen as very basic, only requiring individuals who are well-respected and well-known in communities but without knowledge and expertise in conflict prevention and mediation. Due to this, the IEC mostly relied on individuals who were not effective in doing their jobs. An important observation is that most conflict mediation panellists were recruited on a “voluntary basis” with no prospects of payment. The challenge presented is that the IEC tends to run a risk of recruiting individuals who are desperate and thus not competent. Due to non-payment, it is challenging for the IEC to attract more youth and women in conflict mediation. Another related challenge is that of the security of conflict mediation panellists during interventions. It was pointed out that due to the nature of election conflict and violence, mediation panellists are thrown into dangerous environments, however, their contract does not afford them the appropriate protection they need when faced with life threatening circumstances.

In addition, some respondents mentioned that there is duplication of roles between the IEC staff and conflict resolution coordinators. They were concerned that some officials working in the IEC do the same work that the coordinator is contracted to do.

4.3 Results of the project

a. What are some of the overall benefits of the project to target group?

Notwithstanding some of the operational challenges faced by the project, all stakeholders interviewed pointed out that the project was a success and was very strategic to both the IEC, ECES and the EU.

In totality, the PEV RSA project successfully implemented 42 activities prior to the National Provincial elections held 8 May 2019, engaged over 1200 individual individuals in capacity enhancing activities and early warning networks from all 9 provinces in South Africa.

The project activities, especially the LEAD training enhanced participants’ leadership and conflict management skills. Participants also had a better understanding the electoral cycle and of conflict prevention strategies to apply at each stage. Due to the training, one respondent indicated that they were able to see other strategies used by other countries in conflict mediation and they could apply those, taking into account the South African context. It was also indicated that the training also afforded participants an opportunity to engage with various stakeholders such as political parties and civil society-in terms of bringing them on board with electoral processes. This allowed for a common understanding of the electoral process and a foundation for consensus-building which culminated in very few incidences of conflict and violence. As a result, the elections were held under a relatively conducive environment.

The project grew a network of people who can possibly be consistently involved in conflict-mediation and resolution efforts in their communities. For instance, one respondent mentioned that as a result of the project, they are still keeping contact with some panellists, individuals from the South African Police Services (SAPS) and other stakeholders.

The project brought a comparative perspective through making use of personnel with continental experience from different countries such as Mozambique and Zimbabwe. This allowed stakeholders to learn from other country experiences in order to have a realistic basis of judging South Africa's relative performance as a country and as a democracy. One respondent mentioned that this regional experience was very useful as they were given a chance to see other strategies used by other countries mostly through the work of the provincial advisors. Most notably, the project and its achievements were acknowledged by the Vice Chair of the IEC, Mrs Janet Love, during the announcement of the 2019 election results ceremony in the Results Orientation Centre (ROC) on the 10th of May 2019, broadcasted on National Television News:

“To the diplomatic corps and international community for your support and involvement including the EU and the European Centre for Electoral Support, which has sponsored our conflict mediation programme, which was invaluable in so many areas in this election. Thank you again, thank you”. The National Provincial Elections 2019 was said to have been the most peaceful in South Africa's history, since it became a modern democracy through the first democratic election 1994”- IEC Vice Chairperson.

The interviews further provided key reflections on the project's success. Specifically, it was noted that unlike in some countries, where it has not been the case that the electoral commission is fully involved in projects, for the very first time, the IEC was both a beneficiary and a co-applicant of the project. This form of joint partnership was a key determining factor for success for two reasons: Firstly, it allowed for enhanced project ownership from the IEC and secondly, it gave legitimacy for other stakeholders to partake with conviction and motivation.

It was mentioned that the project and particularly the partnership between ECES and the IEC gave a “global flavour” to the elections because for the very first time, the international community, which has not been very prominent in partnering with South Africa in electoral matters, was represented. For instance, the PEV-RSA project showcased the contribution made by EU in supporting and funding the electoral process. In that acknowledgement and to strengthen the visibility of the EU in the electoral process, the EU logo was placed in all printed material produced by the project with the EU flag and text underneath. EU visibility was also ensured in the projects' dedicated website whereby the EU and South African flag features on the home page. The project produced a set of generic banners used for communication purposes.

4.4 Lessons learned

- a. What lessons learnt and recommendations emerge to improve the planning and implementation of future projects

In light of some of the enabling and hindering contextual factors to project implementation some lessons learned and recommendations to improve future planning are presented in the Table below. The table below maps some lessons learned against some factors that negatively impacted on project implementation.

Table 3: Lessons learned

Implementation enabling and hindering factors	Lessons learned
ECES dual project team and financial management	It would be highly beneficial to allocate more funding towards the full-time commitment of ECES staff to enable them to closely monitor the project in the second phase. It would also be beneficial to review the financial procedure to allow for some flexibility for a second phase. To that effect, ECES should consider establishing an “identity” in South Africa by having a permanent space within the IEC Election House Headquarters if possible. This will also involve having an accountant and administrator who are stationed full-time in South Africa and are available to assist with project operations when needed.
Recruitment and contracting of conflict mediation panellists and provincial coordinators	ECES is encouraged to play an increased advisory role to assist the IEC in ensuring tightening in these areas. This will also involve looking closely into contract stipulations to ensure a full understanding of roles of panellists and coordinators.
LEAD Training time constraints	ECES is encouraged to possibly look at revising the LEAD training programme to ensure that important aspects such as role plays and case studies are prioritised for the full benefit of participants.

While the evaluation provides a list of recommendations emanating from the findings, some recommendations coming directly from project beneficiaries, including provincial coordinators and advisors are noted below:

- Future training and support should add on the existing knowledge rather than re-invent the wheel. This can only be possible if in the future and leading up to the 2021 elections, both the IEC and ECES prioritise educating stakeholders on innovation in the space of electoral support. For example, understanding how the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID 19) will/has impacted on the conduct of elections and the wider electoral legislation and apply case studies of measures implemented in other countries where electoral support was given during this time.
- Leading up to the 2021 elections, for example, there are talks about electronic voting, although these are not confirmed future training should be tailored on discussing implications of new techniques of voting which are being prioritised as a result of COVID 19.
- IEC and ECES need to invest in ensuring sustainability of training efforts and successful continuity of project successes through putting in mechanisms such as drawing on the existing pool of coordinators and advisors who already have knowledge. By so doing, refresher trainings (which are less costly) can focus on improving lessons learnt from past experience. This has been limited by the fact that the IEC in the past has not been able to retain panellists

and coordinators who are recruited only for a specific period and then dismissed after the election period.

- Financial issues such as processing of claims should not form part of the coordinators' duties as this limit them from fully doing their jobs.
- The programme should be implemented as a continuous necessity because of the nature of elections and incidents happening even during the lull period. For instance, coordinators can be used in lull periods to assist in making political parties aware of the importance of solving conflicts. This type of conflict management is an on-going requirement and not only relevant during a "heightened period" during elections.
- This type of project must be resourced effectively to attract credible people through a structure that is able to recruit well-trained personnel in conflict management.
- IEC should engage in more funding activities to invest in more training and upskilling of panellists who are able to deal with the changing political landscape in the country in which election-related conflict is escalating by huge margins.

4.5 Replicability

a. What should be continued and/or done differently in the future?

ECES has shown its commitment to continue partnering with the IEC to resolve electoral matters in South Africa. Their interest builds on the successful completion of the PEV-RSA project as well as the recognition that South Africa is very strategic and an important regional role played by South Africa in electoral matters and in the African continent. South Africa has shown that it is capable of conducting free and fair elections and has been a successful case study that other countries in the region can replicate. It is in this vein that ECES is willing to build its partnership most evidently with the upcoming local government/municipal elections in 2021.

The PEV-RSA project showed that it is possible to further combine synergies for both the IEC and ECES. To that end, ECES has submitted an application for further funding from the EU towards supporting the IEC through the implementation of the Project to Prevent, Mitigate and Manage Election-Related Conflict and Potential Violence in South Africa (PEV-RSA II).⁶ Whilst most of the planned activities for this partnership build on the PEV RSA experience, emphasis will be placed on growing the capacity of CSOs to form a coordinated response and bolster their contribution to electoral processes. Expected results of this partnership include:

- Increased professionalism and outreach amongst CSOs by encouraging and practically assist in establishing a CSO coalition
- CSO-led election conflict prevention, mitigation and management activities
- Civic and voter education outreach and CSO-led dialogue to promote the role of youth and women in pro-peace messaging.
- Regional knowledge- and capacity enhancing education for EMBs and CSOs

In hindsight, the importance of replicability of the project was prioritised by stakeholders and beneficiaries who were interviewed during this evaluation. Respondents alluded that the project results and successes need to be sustained through ensuring that networks created are consistently

⁶ PEV-RSA 11: Application form

involved in identifying, mediating and managing pockets of conflict in their communities so that during the election period, the IEC and other stakeholders concentrate on running free and fair elections.

Most evidently, majority of the respondents advocated for the continued support because of the nature of elections and incidents happening even during the lull period. Incidents at local level that are conflict-prone in nature such as service delivery protests, party politicking are continuously taking place even post the election period. This calls for a kind of a continuous intervention in terms of election conflict management and resolution. Because most CSOs are working in close collaboration with communities, they are best fitted to benefit from this support that ECES seeks to offer.

Capacitation of CSOs working at grassroots level, will ensure that conflict matters are consistently being identified and managed at all times. This is justified by the fact that conflict management is an on-going requirement which cannot only be addressed during a “heightened” period during elections. Capacitation of CSOs will ensure the creation of advocates of social stability and good citizenship in communities, in this way, extreme conflict maybe prevented during election period. This continuation of support ensures a robust coordination of individuals who are capable. Community based organisations are now active in dealing with conflict before it escalates. The project relies heavily on CSOs who are constantly dealing with conflict in local communities

5. CONCLUSIONS

This section presents a summary of the conclusions arrived at by the final evaluation of the Project on the Prevention, Mitigation and Management of Election-related Conflict and Potential Violence (PEV-RSA). Conclusions are structured according to the evaluation criteria used during the evaluation:

Relevance
<p>What factors justified the need for a partnership between the IEC and ECES?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful and fruitful experience of ECES and IEC partnership working together on a previous project in the SADC region where the IEC had played a significant role in providing technical expertise, provided a springboard for a successful partnership in PEV-RSA. • ECES’ technical and professional expertise to support the implementation and training on electoral cycle support justified its partnership with the IEC. • The need for provision of a well-structured, proactive and systematic strategy towards the implementation of the electoral cycle support. • Experiences of conflict-prone and violent events that occurred in the previous elections in 2009 and 2014 justified the need for the project. • IEC’s evident need of a partnership that would assist them in dealing with conflict matters whilst they concentrated on preparing for the elections. • The IEC is often pulled into electoral conflicts and it may then not be appropriate to have a management system that is entirely integral to the organisation. In that regard, ECES partnership gave the conflict management model a more neutral connotation. <p>Was the project relevant and appropriate to address the needs of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?</p>

- The election period provides a platform that amplifies conflict and violence issues which in turn affects the smooth delivery of elections. Through the project, electoral stakeholders were capacitated to prevent and mitigate on electoral issues of conflict and violence including:
 - assassination of candidates and councillors especially in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province. Added to that the taxi industry found an opportunity to start their own demonstrations.
 - intimidation of municipal managers and officials
 - service delivery protests which were violent and saw the destruction of property in some areas
 - intra-party and inter-party battles of power
 - resistance to the changing of municipal boundaries, specifically in the Limpopo areas.

To what extent was the LEAD training strategy appropriate to address the needs of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?

- LEAD training was relevant in upskilling both coordinators and panellists in that it brought about an understanding of conflict prevention, mitigation and management.
- Participants were enabled to be pro-active rather than reactive when faced with conflict in their communities

Effectiveness

Did the project achieve its objectives at activity and output level?

- The project achieved all its outputs and activities were successfully completed.

To what extent was the LEAD training effective in enhancing overall conflict management capacity of the IEC and other electoral stakeholders?

The LEAD training improved participants' understanding of concepts and approaches in leadership, conflict mapping, management and mediation during the election period.

How effective were conferences on electoral conflict prevention and management?

- Conferences offered an opportunity for information sharing

To what extent did any contextual factors help/hinder project implementation?

- Some challenges that negatively impacted on effectiveness include ECES dual project management team and the fact that key positions could not be full time, barely half time, led to a greater in-kind contribution of time dedicated to the project.

Results

What are some of the overall benefits of the project?

- LEAD training enhanced participants' leadership and conflict management skills. Participants also had a better understanding the electoral cycle methodology which enhanced their knowledge on conflict prevention strategies to apply at each stage of the electoral cycle.

- Moreover, the training provided an opportunity for participants to engage with various stakeholders such as political parties and civil society organisations. Through the training, all participants had a common understanding of electoral processes.
- Overall, the project grew a network of people who can possibly be consistently involved in conflict mediation and resolution efforts in their communities beyond the election period.
- In totality, the project successfully implemented 42 activities prior to the National Provincial elections held 8 May 2019, engaged over 1200 individual individuals in capacity enhancing activities and early warning networks from all 9 provinces in South Africa.
- After the elections, the project and its achievements were acknowledged by the Vice Chairperson of the IEC, Mrs Janet Love, during the announcement of the 2019 election results ceremony.
- The project gave South Africa an opportunity to showcase a successful partnership on electoral support on the international stage. Evidently, through this partnership, ECES and the IEC were invited to take part in three international conferences to showcase the successful implementation.
- The project brought a comparative perspective through making use of personnel with continental experience from different countries such as Mozambique and Zimbabwe. This allowed stakeholders to learn from other country experiences in order to have a realistic basis of judging South Africa’s relative performance as a country and as a democracy.
- The project, particularly its partnership between the EU, ECES and the IEC gave a “global flavour” to the elections because for the very first time, the international community, which has not been very prominent in partnering with South Africa in electoral matters was represented.

Lessons learned

What lessons learnt and recommendations emerge to improve the planning and implementation of future projects?

- It would be highly beneficial to review the financial instrument for a second phase covering the local elections in 2021, if desirable from all parties. The instrument for stability and peace seems a better fit with the subject matter but more, allows for a greater flexibility. Since the project operated as a “request-based” facility for provincial IEC offices, including setting up “pop-up” offices for exchange between IEC provinces and within the province, requests for support sometimes came in quickly and led to more activities in some provinces than others. This was however in line with the instructions received from IEC Chair, namely to focus on certain provinces such as KZN, Gauteng and Western Cape whilst the budget had a provision of equal number of activities in all provinces.
- It would be highly beneficial to allocate more funding towards the full-time commitment of staff in order to closely monitor project activities.

Replicability

- The importance of replicability of the project is justified and was prioritised by stakeholders and beneficiaries who were interviewed during this evaluation.
- Since most Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are working in close collaboration with communities, they are best fitted to benefit from this support that ECES seeks to offer in the second phase of the project.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides some recommendations for ECES and the IEC to improve the implementation of future projects.

Considering the findings discussed, the evaluation put forward the following key recommendations:

It is recommended for ECES to:

- Continue its efforts of supporting election conflict prevention, mitigation and management in South Africa to strengthen the capacity of IEC and its stakeholders and also considering the role played by South Africa in electoral matters in the continent, capacitation is a necessity. But do so via a steadier presence in the country, by having a permanent space within the IEC Election Headquarters if possible.
- Play an increased advisory role to the IEC on matters involving the effective recruitment and contracting of coordinators and conflict mediation panellists. This advisory role should look closely into their roles and responsibilities to avoid duplication thereof and for both parties to understand the stipulations in their contracts.
- Ensure effective future project implementation and to avoid unnecessary delays. This can be ensured through sufficient funding – and subsequent budgeting that can ensure day-to-day oversight. This will overcome delays in project implementation expenditure, such as booking of venues and facilities for training.
- Consider supporting the IEC to ensure that provincial coordinators are involved in the planning phases of projects, are recruited on time and are engaged earlier.
- Ensure that facilitators conduct the LEAD trainings effectively without having overwhelming numbers of attendees. This is important for better participant understanding and experience of the trainings.
- Engage SAPS and continue cross-fertilisation between IEC, SAPS and coordinators. This is a key component to effective coordination and complimenting each other's role around election conflict prevention.
- Assist the IEC in sustaining a core capacity of conflict mediation panellists and coordinators who are trained. The IEC can always draw on these in future elections as they already have the knowledge and skills in conflict prevention, mitigation and management. Future efforts to capacitate CSOs is pivotal in this regard.
- Develop a manual on how the cascading of the training is to be conducted to ensure that there is a common understanding of expectations when cascading the training further down.

It is recommended for the IEC to:

- Ensure that its staff members understand the role played by the conflict mediation panellists during the election period. This is important to avoid any duplication of roles and to ensure harmonious working relations.
- Avoid over-staffing provincial offices but instead increase synergies and coordination with other stakeholders including SAPS, CSOs and media.
- IEC would benefit from a greater investment in the CSOs in all provinces, avoiding creating a hierarchy amongst CSOs and seek to further the role CSOs can play locally. For this, a continued partnership could be the vehicle through which increased CSO capacitation is achieved.

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