



## External End-Term Evaluation



**EURECS-ETHIOPIA**  
A EUROPEAN RESPONSE TO ELECTORAL CYCLE SUPPORT  
IN ETHIOPIA

# **EURECS-ETHIOPIA** **A European Response to Electoral Cycle Support in Ethiopia**

Contract N° FED/2020/415-432

October 01, 2019 – March 31, 2024

**Marco MASSONI**



European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES)  
In collaboration with GoInnovation and Forum of Federations

This evaluation is supported and guided by the European Commission and presented by the European Centre for Electoral Support. The report does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the European Commission.

**INDEX**

<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4. INTERVENTION LOGIC – THEORY OF CHANGE</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>5. FINDINGS</b>	<b>17</b>
i) RELEVANCE	17
ii) COHERENCE	18
iii) EFFECTIVENESS	19
iv) EFFICIENCY	20
v) IMPACT	21
vi) SUSTAINABILITY	22
vii) GENDER, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE GROUPS	23
<b>6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>24</b>
a. Lessons Learnt	24
b. Recommendations	25
<b>7. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>8. LIST OF INTERVIEWS IN THE FIELD</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>9. ANNEXES TO THE REPORT</b>	<b>35</b>

## 1. DESCRIPTION

1. Name of coordinator of the grant contract: European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES).
2. Name and title of the contact person: Fabio Bargiacchi, ECES Founder and Executive Director.
3. Name of beneficiary and affiliated entity in the action: National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE).
4. Title of the action: European Response to Electoral Cycle Support in Ethiopia (EURECS-Ethiopia).
5. Contract number: FED/2020/415-432.
6. Overall Objectives of the project: to contribute to increase the transparency and the credibility of the electoral process and foster the public trust in the NEBE. These two objectives are key conditions for effective electoral management and leadership in Ethiopia over the whole electoral cycle.
7. Key/Specific Objectives of the project:
  - a. NEBE's leadership and strategic management capacity are improved.
  - b. NEBE's institutional and operational capacities are reinforced.
  - c. The liaison NEBE-stakeholders is maintained and strengthened.
8. Start date and end date of the evaluation of the action: from October 01, 2019 to March 31, 2024.
9. Total duration (months): 54 months.
10. Total eligible and accepted cost of the action: EUR 16.550.000.
11. EU Contribution: 100% of the total eligible cost of the action (co-financed by the KfW Development Bank<sup>1</sup>).
12. Target country or region: Ethiopia.
13. Final beneficiaries and/or target groups<sup>2</sup>: the final beneficiaries are the citizens of Ethiopia and the target group is the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE).

<sup>1</sup> The KfW (*Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau*) is the German Reconstruction Credit Institute). See: <https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/International-financing/KfW-Entwicklungsbank/>

<sup>2</sup> 'Target groups' are the groups/entities who will be directly positively affected by the project at the project purpose level, and 'final beneficiaries' are those who will benefit from the project in the long term at the level of the society or sector at large.

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ethiopia plays a pivotal role in maintaining stability in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region. Despite ongoing conflicts in certain areas within the country, the EU maintains its commitment to supporting democratization efforts, striving for peaceful conflict resolution and overall stability throughout Ethiopia also by means of good-governance measures.

While also contributing to augmenting transparency, credibility, and public confidence in the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE), the primary goal of the action was to strengthen the NEBE, positioning it as an independent, credible, and effective institution, thereby enhancing inclusive and democratic electoral processes in Ethiopia.

With the ultimate goal to uphold accountability, inform decision-making, foster learning, and facilitate effective management, the evaluation's methodology prioritizes assessing accomplishments as well as the scale of both actions and outcomes. Emphasizing result-oriented approaches, it aims to find the connections between causes and effects, linking inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. As per the its scope, the evaluation assessed the action's findings, using the DAC evaluation criteria, namely: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability along with the cross-cutting issue of gender, youth and vulnerable groups.

### **The European Response to Electoral Cycle Support in Ethiopia (EURECS-Ethiopia)**

The European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES), has implemented the European Response to Electoral Cycle Support in Ethiopia (EURECS-Ethiopia) project, aiming to enhance transparency, credibility, and public trust in the NEBE, as key conditions for an effective electoral management and leadership in Ethiopia over the 2020-2025 electoral cycle. The project, focusing on the improvement of NEBE's governance, operational capacities, and stakeholder liaison, ran from October 2019 to March 2024, with a budget of EUR 16.55 million and was funded by the European Union and Germany through the German KFW Development Bank.

The European Response to Electoral Cycle Support (EURECS), is an ECES initiative, methodologically innovative, that promotes democracy and prevents electoral conflicts, by means of specific tools such as: Preventing Election-Related Conflict and Potential Violence (PEV); Leadership & Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders (LEAD); Leadership & Quality Management Skills for Electoral Administrators (LEAD-Q); INNOV-Elections (a set of hybrid training during the COVID-19 pandemics to empower young and women). In addition to that, some other original ECES analytical tools are the Peace Mediation in Electoral Processes Methodology, the Electoral Political Economy Analyses Methodology (EPEA) and the Electoral Security Threat Assessment (ESTA).

EURECS-Ethiopia is a vital part of the EU's efforts to strengthen democracy in the country. With funding from the European Union and KFW on behalf of the German Government, implemented by ECES since October 2019, it complements other initiatives targeting electoral processes and political dialogue: "PEV-Ethiopia", "Supporting the Ethiopian Political Parties Dialogue" and "Establishing an environment for inclusive, knowledge-based dialogue on the political process in Ethiopia".

In addition to EURECS-Ethiopia, ECES managed three other projects in the country, namely: "Prevention, Mitigation and Management of Election-related Conflicts and Potential Violence (PEV-Ethiopia)", focused on conflict prevention and management during elections, "EURECS PLUS" supporting NEBE in addressing COVID-19 issues and logistics support to NEBE, and the "ECES Sub-Granting Scheme to CECO" that trained domestic election observers and provided voter education support during recent elections, funded by the Irish and the Danish embassies.

## Findings

### Relevance

The project successfully addressed both European Commission and Ethiopian Government priorities in the electoral process. It enhanced NEBE's leadership and management, improved institutional and technical capacity, and fostered collaboration with external stakeholders for more inclusive elections. Despite challenges, NEBE's credibility has grown, in which ECES has greatly contributed to. With lessons learned, future responses are expected to be smoother. Considering its achievements and the continuing needs, it would be beneficial to consider a second phase of the project, particularly to train new NEBE staff and sustain the achieved results.

### Coherence

Germany's substantial funding support for EURECS underscores the critical role of investing in democracy and human rights, particularly through free and fair elections, in promoting peace and security. This innovative approach of EU Member States co-financing projects through their Development Banks enhances the EU's engagement in electoral assistance globally. ECES's effective collaboration with key actors like IFES and UNDP in Ethiopia, coupled with its adaptability during the pandemic, has been pivotal in supporting NEBE and achieving project success. Leveraging these established partnerships will be essential for future undertakings.

### Effectiveness

Since its inception in 2019, NEBE has been able to organize and oversee the two rounds, in June and September 2021, of the Sixth General Elections, and three referenda, with EURECS providing far-reaching support. The EURECS-Ethiopia project significantly enhanced electoral management and leadership in Ethiopia by strengthening the NEBE. Through innovative tools like LEAD and MEPA, the project improved NEBE's self-awareness, leadership skills, and technical knowledge. Training sessions for NEBE staff, establishment of a Media Monitoring Unit, and advisory support on communication policy further boosted institutional capacity. EURECS focused on conflict prevention, aligning with EU recommendations and also provided technical assistance to the NEBE for the remaining elections, such as those in Benishangul-Gumuz and in some specific constituencies in the Amhara region, despite their pending scheduling.

### Efficiency

ECES has demonstrated an efficient allocation of resources for electoral assistance, emphasizing the quick deployment of qualified personnel and adherence to EU guidelines for procurement and financial management. Leveraging partnerships with organizations such as GoInnovation and FoF, ECES has ensured tailored support that addresses the specific needs and challenges of the Ethiopian electoral landscape, thereby maximizing the impact of their interventions.

### Impact

Over the period from October 2019 to March 2024, EURECS significantly contributed to an improved electoral process in Ethiopia, by enhancing NEBE's credibility and transparency. By prioritizing efforts to adhere to international electoral standards, including independence and inclusiveness, NEBE now operates more autonomously than before. However, there remains a need for more effective management of electoral disputes and greater promotion of participatory decision-making to further enhance its capacities. Looking ahead, efforts should prioritize extending strategies to remote areas and ensuring gender parity in all project activities for a comprehensive accomplishment.

### Sustainability

In the face of ongoing security challenges nationwide, NEBE's professionalism has remained evident, underscoring the imperative of preserving its independence for ensuring credible elections. Despite the support provided by EURECS across various fronts, the task of striking a balance between addressing immediate needs and fostering long-term development persists. Moreover, challenges persist in standardizing protocols across NEBE's regional offices, indicating the need for continued efforts in this regard.

#### Gender, Youth and Vulnerable Groups

EURECS has played a crucial role in promoting inclusive civic and voter education across Ethiopia, focusing on marginalized groups like women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Future efforts should prioritize empowering these groups, particularly in volatile and isolated areas, to ensure democratic participation. EURECS has also supported NEBE in developing updated content and implementing PWDs dedicated activities. However, it will be critical to further strengthen regional offices and implement targeted strategies to achieve gender parity in project activities in the context of the upcoming local elections.

### 3. INTRODUCTION

#### **The European Response to Electoral Cycle Support (EURECS)**

The project was designed and implemented according to ECES' "European Response to Electoral Cycle Support (EURECS)" strategy, an innovative and an alternative delivery mechanism to implement electoral and democracy assistance activities consistent with European values and policies, together with the prevention, mitigation and management of electoral related conflicts.

At the heart of EURECS lies the commitment to strengthen overall confidence and trust among electoral stakeholders. This, in turn, fosters trust and encourages active participation in the electoral process.

In terms of operational and project management cycle tools used in the context of the project, EURECS utilizes specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that are built on the electoral cycle approach. These SOPs are developed following guidance from EU Services and Institutions in Brussels and are annually updated with input from audits, expenditure verifications, and lessons learned, while also taking into account recommendations from EU Election Observation Missions (EUEOMs).

In addition to the Roster Database, which contains over 1500 CVs, and was used to facilitate the recruitment of experts for EURECS-Ethiopia, ECES has established Communication and Visibility (C&V) Guidelines, which are readily accessible to both donors and beneficiaries.

ECES has developed four Programmatic and Capacity Enhancing Tools:

1. Preventing Election-Related Conflict and Potential Violence (PEV)  
This methodology employs a two-pronged approach to prevent and manage election-related conflict and violence. The PEV approach is the broader framework of a number of activities tailored to address conflict and violence in electoral processes.
2. Leadership & Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders (LEAD)  
The LEAD curriculum integrates both the concepts of leadership and the conflict management, providing a solid foundation for capacity-building among the different stakeholders engaged in the electoral process.
3. Leadership & Quality Management Skills for Electoral Administrators (LEAD-Q)  
The LEAD-Q prescribes a set of rules, routines and procedures developed to address common weaknesses within electoral administrations targeting a quality management in their electoral processes.
4. INNOV-Elections  
In May 2020, in light of the global coronavirus pandemic, ECES launched INNOV-ELECTIONS, a hybrid approach to training delivery based on the comparative experience of ECES experts and partners in the field, further enhancing the contextualisation of the training programmes to the local realities aiming to enhancing the potential of electoral stakeholders particularly young and women, during the COVID-19 restrictions.

ECES has also developed the following four tools in terms of analytical and knowledge management:

1. Peace Mediation in Electoral Processes Methodology  
The Peace Mediation in Electoral Processes Methodology is the first practical contribution to guide mediation and electoral support actors on opportunities and risks to support-, fund-, or conduct peace mediation in electoral processes. It is based on concrete cases of peace mediation in electoral processes to draw lessons of common risks and windows of opportunities for conflict settlement around the electoral cycle.
2. Electoral Political Economy Analyses Methodology (EPEA)

The EPEA analysis uses the political economy analysis (PAE) methodology to recognise the complexity of electoral processes and the number of factors that influence it, which go beyond election administration, free and fair competition of candidates and observance of the right to vote.

3. Electoral Security Threat Assessment (ESTA)

The ESTA is a specific methodology to conduct constant security and stakeholder mapping that seeks to engage on non-committal terms with the “supply side” of the security sector, including various institutional actors.

4. Electoral Translator

The Electoral Translator is a tool that translates electoral terms in English, French, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish and Arabic (and 6 Ethiopian official languages), enabling access to the language used in electoral processes.

### **The European Response to Electoral Cycle Support in Ethiopia (EURECS-Ethiopia)**

The European Response to Electoral Cycle Support in Ethiopia (EURECS-Ethiopia)<sup>3</sup> is part of the European initiatives for Ethiopia, where the EU has established a “democratic package” composed of four different interventions related to the overall context of the 6<sup>th</sup> General Elections for an approximate envelope of 22.95M EUR:

1. **European Response to Electoral Cycle Support in Ethiopia (EURECS-Ethiopia):** 16.55M EURO, funded by the European Union under the European Development Fund (EDF) and by KfW on behalf of the German Government and implemented by ECES from October 2019 onwards;
2. **Prevention, mitigation and management of Election-related conflicts and potential Violence (PEV-Ethiopia):** 3.6M EURO, funded by the European Union under the IcSP-FPI and implemented by ECES from June 2019 to December 2021;
3. **Supporting the Ethiopian Political Parties Dialogue:** 1.8M EURO, funded under IcSP- FPI and implemented by the Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy (NIMD);
4. **Establishing an environment for inclusive, knowledge-based dialogue on the political process in Ethiopia:** 1M EURO, funded under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace of the Foreign Policy Instrument (IcSP-FPI) and implemented by International IDEA.

EURECS-Ethiopia seeks to strengthen the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE), boosting its transparency and public trust, in order to raise the profile of an independent, credible and effective institution able to deliver inclusive and democratic electoral processes in Ethiopia.

The EURECS project was designed as an innovative and alternative delivery mechanism to implement electoral and democracy assistance activities that align with the EU’s values and policies. It aims to facilitate the implementation of recommendations from EU election observation missions (EOMs) that national authorities commit to achieving. EURECS incorporates election conflict prevention, mitigation, and management objectives into nearly all of its prescribed activities.

More broadly, ECES managed four projects in Ethiopia:

1. The European Response to Electoral Cycle Support in Ethiopia (EURECS-Ethiopia);
2. Prevention, Mitigation and Management of Election-related Conflicts and Potential Violence (PEV Ethiopia) project aimed to prevent, mitigate and manage conflicts that may arise during the electoral cycle by assisting non-state actors (NSA) in addressing root causes of political and election-related violence and conflict;

<sup>3</sup> SEE: <http://democracy-support.eu/eurecs/posts/eurecs> AND: <http://democracy-support.eu/eurecs/>



3. EURECS PLUS aimed to support NEBE in procurement, logistics, civic and voter education, and awareness raising of COVID 19 related issues for an effective electoral management and leadership in Ethiopia over the 2020-2025 electoral cycle.
4. ECES Sub-Granting Scheme to CECOE aimed to support CECOE to train and deploy domestic election observers as well as Voter Education support during the 2021 elections. 1M EURO, funded by Danish Embassy in Addis Ababa and Irish Embassy in Addis Ababa.

### **The National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE)**

The National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE)<sup>4</sup>, the primary beneficiary of the project, is an independent organization established in accordance with Article 102 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Since its establishment, the Board has organized different branch offices at both the federal and regional levels including the two administrative cities. Since its establishment, the NEBE has hitherto conducted six national elections, two local elections, and nine referenda.

In December 2023, Ms. Melatwork Hailu has been appointed as new Board Chairperson of the NEBE, replacing Ms. Birtukan Mideksa, who had resigned in August 2023.

NEBE's international cooperation programmes are with ECES, SEEDS – UNDP<sup>5</sup> and IFES<sup>6</sup>.

Since January 2019, in an effort to reform NEBE, the House of Peoples' Representatives enacted a new proclamation that reduced the management board to five members that serve full time for a period of six years.

According to Proclamation no.1133/2019, NEBE's board has the following powers and duties:

1. Executing impartially any election and referendum conducted in accordance with the Constitution and with Election Law;
2. Granting permission, following up and supervising civil society organizations providing voter education;
3. Registering political parties, following-up and supervising them in accordance with the law;
4. Providing guidelines for the manner in which monetary funds may be divided among political parties and, in accordance with these guidelines, allocating the funds;
5. Determining the manner in which political parties may use media during elections;
6. Undertaking studies on how to divide electoral regions and present a recommendation to the House of Federation on the basis of those studies;
7. Issuing authorization to election observers and following up and supervising their activities;
8. Establishing branch offices of the board in all regional and sub-regional levels;
9. Facilitating and ascertaining that elections held periodically and at every level are conducted in a free and fair manner;
10. Preparing and distributing documents and materials necessary to conduct elections;
11. Issuing directives necessary to perform its duties given by this Proclamation and other laws
12. Certifying neutrality and freedom of electoral officers and also protecting them from any influence that they may come under in relation to their work;
13. Determining the number of polling stations necessary to carry out an election;
14. Establishing the electoral regions and polling stations necessary to carry out an election nationwide;
15. Ensuring that competent and non-partisan electoral officers who enjoy public trust are recruited and trained;

<sup>4</sup> SEE: <https://nebe.org.et/en>

<sup>5</sup> SEE: <https://open.undp.org/projects/00117580> AND: <https://www.undp.org/ethiopia/projects/electoral-support-project>

<sup>6</sup> SEE: <https://www.ifes.org/ethiopia>

16. Collecting and organizing data relating to elections and political parties, by reviewing election laws and their implementation, submitting issues that need revision to the concerned body;
17. Coordinating a joint forum of political parties;
18. Certifying and officially announcing election results;
19. Providing administrative relief for complaints raised in the course of election;
20. Cancelling election results and ordering re-election where it has been convinced that violation of law has occurred which would undermine the outcome of the election. In addition, hold individuals accountable for violations of law, fraudulent acts, or disturbance of peace in relation to an election;
21. Preparing and submitting its budget to the House of Peoples' Representatives for approval and implement it;
22. Preparing election schedules taking place at all levels, approving, and as needed amending and following up the implementation of the same;
23. Submitting reports on its work to the House of Peoples' Representatives
24. Carrying out any other activities necessary to fulfil its responsibilities as defined in this Proclamation and in other laws.

#### NEBE's Branch Offices

1. Harari Region Branch Office – Harari.
2. Somali Region Branch Office – Jigjiga.
3. Benshangul Gumuz Region Branch Office – Assosa.
4. Tigray Region Branch Office – Mekelle.
5. Amhara Region Branch Office – Bahir Dar.
6. Afar Region Branch Office – Semera.
7. Oromia Region Branch Office – Addis Ababa.
8. Gambella Region Branch Office – Gambella.
9. SNNRPS Region Branch Office – Hawassa.
10. Addis Ababa City Administration Branch Office – Addis Ababa.
11. Dire Dawa City Administration Branch Office – Dire Dawa.

Currently, NEBE is preparing to finalize remaining elections (from the 2021 6<sup>th</sup> General Elections) in some Constituencies.

NEBE is also strategizing and considering options for the planning, piloting and implementation of Local Elections country-wide, another major election activity.

Building on the Lesson Learning exercise which was conducted following the 6<sup>th</sup> General Elections, NEBE has embarked on the revision of both the Election Proclamation as well as the NEBE Establishment Proclamation.

Above all, NEBE is in preparation mode for the country-wide 7<sup>th</sup> General Elections in 2026.

#### NEBE'S Strategic Plan<sup>7</sup>

Between January and April 2022, NEBE, supported by ECES and other partners, conducted an extensive lesson learned exercise. The exercise aimed to provide an opportunity for the Board, the Secretariat, and the Regional Branch Offices to collectively reflect on the successes and challenges of the institutional reform process undertaken by NEBE between 2019 and 2021. One of the recommendations from this exercise was for NEBE to develop a standardized strategic plan covering a five-year election cycle period (2024-2028). As a result, NEBE is on the verge of releasing its

---

<sup>7</sup> Strategic planning can be defined as the set of activities and techniques for the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an organisation, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources for carrying out these goals.

inaugural multi-year Strategic Plan (SP), supported with expertise from the project, with the following proposed overall objectives:

- Improve inclusive electoral legal framework and implementation and compliance;
- Increased, inclusive, effective participation and engagement of eligible citizens;
- Improved management and delivery of free, fair, inclusive and credible elections/referenda;
- Enhance effectiveness and lawful, inclusive participation of all electoral stakeholders;
- Enhance Institutional independence, effectiveness and sustainability of NEBE to perform its mandated functions in an inclusive manner;
- Enhance coordinated and cohesive partnerships management and resource mobilization;
- Enhance capacity, infrastructure and application of inclusive ICT in electoral processes;
- Popularize and cascade SP, enhance coordinated implementation, risk management, M- and E-Learning.

#### 4. INTERVENTION LOGIC – THEORY OF CHANGE

##### Intervention Logic – Theory of Change

The evaluation of EURECS-Ethiopia has to be contextualized within the comprehensive Results Framework's Intervention Logic-Theory of Change (ToC). This framework is structured as follows:

- **OUTCOME 1**  
Increased leadership and strategic management capacities of NEBE in conducting transparent and accountable, gender-responsive and rights-based electoral processes.
- **OUTCOME 2**  
Improved institutional and technical capacity of NEBE in conducting credible electoral process.
- **OUTCOME 3**  
Enhanced liaison between NEBE and external groups/stakeholders in an inclusive and responsive electoral process.

##### Intervention Logic

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>Assumptions</i>	<i>Judgement Criteria (JC)</i>
1	Leadership & Strategic Management Capacities	<i>IF</i> the NEBE's leadership and strategic management capacities are improved,	<i>THEN</i> the NEBE is perceived by the Ethiopian citizens as an independent institution.
2	Institutional & Technical Capacities	<i>IF</i> the NEBE's institutional, operational and technical capacities are improved,	<i>THEN</i> the NEBE is in condition to conduct a credible electoral process in Ethiopia.
3	Stakeholders Outreach Relations Capacities	<i>IF</i> the liaison between the NEBE and external stakeholders is maintained and enhanced,	<i>THEN</i> an inclusive and responsive Ethiopian electoral process is achievable.

##### Explanation

**OUTCOME 1:****Increased leadership and strategic management capacity of NEBE in conducting transparent, accountable, gender-responsive and rights-based electoral processes.**

NEBE's effective leadership and strategic management are crucial for conducting electoral activities. Improved leadership capabilities has been enabling NEBE to steer complex electoral processes more confidently. Participation in ECES capacity-building programmes, like the Leadership and Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders Training of Trainers (LEAD ToT), enhanced the NEBE's staff skills in conflict resolution and governance. An increasing NEBE's commitment to inclusivity made possible marginalized groups' participation.

Indicator 1.1 Evidence of election administration in accordance to the constitution and electoral law.

The legal framework governing Ethiopian elections includes the Constitution (1995), the Electoral, Political Parties Registration, and Election Code of Conduct Proclamation (Electoral Proclamation), and the Proclamation to Establish the National Electoral Board, both of 2019. Despite initial plans for 2020, August the 29<sup>th</sup> election, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent State of Emergency (SoE) led to its suspension, with a first round reschedule for 2021, June the 21<sup>st</sup>, because of logistical challenges, resulting in a delayed election process. While some regions (Harari, Somali and SNNPR) held elections on the second round, 2021, September the 30<sup>th</sup>, others, including Tigray and parts of Amhara, Oromia, Afar, and Benishangul Gumuz, did not. Referenda in SNNPR led to the formation of the South Ethiopia and Southwest regional states. Thus, security issues still prevents NEBE from completing elections in some areas, leaving the electorate without constitutionally mandated representation at federal and regional levels.

Indicator 1.2 Evidence of effective implementation of key electoral activities according to the published electoral calendar.

The electoral process faced significant challenges due to COVID-19, security issues, and operational difficulties. Security concerns led to a staggered approach, delaying elections in certain constituencies. In May 2021, NEBE announced the general election for June 21, 2021, and Harari and Somali would be postponed to September 2021, covering 165 out of 251 constituencies. Plans for the third round of elections in Benishangul Gumuz, initially set for December 30, 2021, were suspended indefinitely due to ongoing conflict and a national SoE declared in November 2021. Although the SoE was lifted in February 2022, NEBE announced the timeline for elections in the remaining constituencies in Benishangul, Afar and Central Ethiopia for June 2024.

*OUTPUT 1: INCREASED LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF NEBE*

The principle activity to develop NEBE's strategic management and leadership capacity and effectiveness was tailor-made training, providing the Leadership and Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders (LEAD) and the Master in Electoral Policy and Administration (MEPA) modules to the NEBE HQ and regional staff.

In addition, contextualized training and coaching were provided for NEBE newly hired staff.

Gender approach efforts were undertaken, by mainstreaming gender issues in all trainings, including on policy for tackling Violence against Women in Elections (VAWIE).

NEBE has leveraged peer exchanges with established Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), particularly from the SADC and ECOWAS regions, such as the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC)<sup>8</sup> and the Kenyan Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC)<sup>9</sup>. Two exchange visits were organized to Kenya and South Africa and these exchanges have provided NEBE with invaluable advice, mentoring, and access to best practices in African election management. Through professional relationships developed with these institutions, NEBE has gained valuable insights to

<sup>8</sup> SEE: <https://www.elections.org.za/pw/>

<sup>9</sup> SEE: <https://www.iebc.or.ke/>

enhance its capacity to find and implement solutions from other countries but coherent with the Ethiopian context.

Additionally, assistance was offered in designing communication policies and strategic communication efforts. Furthermore, technical tools of the electoral process were published and disseminated: ECES provided support to NEBE by facilitating the translation, printing, and distribution of Electoral Proclamation No. 1162/2019 and 18 directives into NEBE's four working languages: Afaan Oromo, Somali, Afar, and Tigrinya. Furthermore, ECES assisted in the printing and dissemination of the Candidate Registration Directive, the voters' education handbook, and other related forms and materials.

Lastly, ECES kept providing support to the NEBE for its organizational readiness for the staggered third phase of the Sixth GE in those regions where they did not and cannot still take place.

#### Indicator 1.1 Evidenced support to enhance leadership capacity of NEBE

ECES conducted interventions like the delivery of LEAD and MEPA, induction training, and advisory services to enhance NEBE's leadership capacity. These efforts provided access to international electoral practices, crucial due to staff's limited election-related experience. ECES supported NEBE in strategic planning and delivered training to regional staff, improving leadership and strategic management, evident in NEBE's operations.

#### Indicator 1.2 Evidence of technical support provided to NEBE to hold third phase of the Sixth General Elections

The 6<sup>th</sup> General Elections' third stage in Benishangul Gumuz was delayed due to security concerns, pausing all operations. However, ECES continued providing technical support for the Southern Ethiopia referendum on February 6, 2023, including training of election officers and poll workers.

#### Indicator 1.3 Evidence of NEBE's enhanced capacity to mainstream gender issues in the electoral process

ECES supported NEBE in mainstreaming GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) in its activities.

### **OUTCOME 2:**

#### **Improved institutional and technical capacity of NEBE in conducting credible electoral process.**

NEBE's institutional and technical capacity is vital for effective election management. Acknowledgment by stakeholders and sentiments of the voting population reflect confidence in NEBE's performance. Partial implementation of the Election Management System (EMS) showed progress in upgrading efforts. Improved visibility and communication tools enhanced outreach and transparency.

#### Indicator 2.1 Evidence of credible elections

The SNNPR referendum was held, aimed to establish the "Southern Ethiopia" region, with most areas supporting it, except the Wolaita Zone, where irregularities led to result cancellation. A rerun in June 2023, with precautions, enhanced public confidence in the NEBE. Besides, despite objective challenges, the 2021 GE was deemed credible by election observation.

#### Indicator 2.2 Evidence of improving public trust in NEBE

Efforts to strengthen NEBE's institutional capacity include technical, financial, and logistical support, such as developing a 5-year Strategic Plan, VR training, and staff capacity-building initiatives. These interventions, aiming to enhance NEBE's ability to conduct transparent, inclusive, and accountable elections, improved trust and stakeholder confidence.

#### *OUTPUT 2: IMPROVED INSTITUTIONAL AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY OF NEBE*

ECES supported the NEBE's institutional and technical capacity for its effective electoral management, organizing and conducting training sessions on electoral management and operations for field staff: together with IFES, UNDP, and NEBE, nine training manuals were developed and translated into four local languages while over 220 Master Trainers and 5000 Field Trainers participated in training sessions facilitated by ECES. Poll worker training was conducted across 674 centres, reaching over 180,000 election officers on the whole.

Besides, operational and logistical support was offered to improve voter registration and polling station mapping using the Geographic Information System (GIS). So that a list of constituencies was generated to facilitate the voter registration process, ensuring an efficient allocation of voters to each polling station.

NEBE was supported in setting up a Media Monitoring Unit (MMU), so as to ensure transparency and accuracy in media coverage, with the result – through a dedicated newsletter and website, social media platforms, and a contact centre – of better capacities for the NEBE to timely react and mitigate potential crises that may be stirred up from hate speeches.

Operational assistance was also provided for the establishment and operation of an Election Monitoring System (EMS), through the creation of a database of polling station members that helped NEBE for their recruitment.

Logistical support was extended to ensure smooth operations during electoral processes, and voter registration data was digitized and consolidated.

#### Indicator 2.1 Number of NEBE staff trained on electoral management and operations

ECES trained 23 NEBE regional office heads and technical staff in electoral operations and logistics from October 23-25, 2022, in Hawassa. The training included classroom sessions and field visits to the SNNP regional office and warehouse for experiential learning.

#### Indicator 2.2 Evidence demonstrating NEBE having functional digitalised system

ECES supported NEBE in undertaking pilot voter registration digitalizing, despite operational difficulties, assisting in recruitment, providing technical support, and covering costs. Data entry occurred from December 2022 to February 2023, now used by NEBE for analysis.

### **OUTCOME 3:**

#### **Enhanced liaison between NEBE and external stakeholders in favour of an inclusive and responsive electoral process.**

NEBE's engagement with external stakeholders is critical for ensuring transparent and inclusive elections. Not only enhancing electoral dispute mechanisms helped promoting a more peaceful environment, but also frequent engagement through public outreach programmes fostered trust and understanding among parties. Additionally, increasing youth awareness and participation in the electoral process encourages deeper democratization.

#### Indicator 3.1 Evidence of responsive electoral process

To reinforce NEBE's relations with stakeholders, prioritizing inclusivity and responsiveness, ECES has facilitated consultations and joint assessments, including in Tigray. ECES also assisted in creating a legal compendium and provided training on electoral security and dispute resolution for police officers. Challenges in implementing the EDR led to the approval of subsidiary legislation on Election Grievance Hearing Committees (GHCs) for the 2021 elections, but time constraints and funding issues hindered their establishment. NEBE directly handled complaints, collaborating with political parties and stakeholders, developing a framework for investigating voter registration irregularities and cancelled results in Wolaita Zone due to serious irregularities, organizing a rerun. For this reason, NEBE, ECES, and IFES developed a compendium of Election Jurisprudence to enhance knowledge management and improve responsiveness in addressing disputes.

#### Indicator 3.2 Evidence of inclusive electoral process

NEBE, along with international partners developed a Gender and Inclusion Strategy to mainstream gender issues. In spite of challenges, NEBE made significant efforts to ensure inclusivity in the 2021 elections, praised by EOMs. The AUEOM commended NEBE for incentivizing the participation of women and PWDs, which is still a crucial cross-cutting issue to be better implemented.

#### *OUTPUT 3: ENHANCED LIAISON BETWEEN NEBE AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS*

ECES carried out a number of activities for the NEBE with the purpose to enhance stakeholders' engagement, voter education, and dispute resolution mechanisms within the electoral process in Ethiopia. It is worth mentioning the assistance in facilitating NEBE's dialogue with civil society organizations, particularly focusing on engaging women, youth groups, PWDs and traditional and religious leaders, with the ultimate goal to Promote Participatory Decision-Making Processes in the Electoral Preparations and Reforms with a special focus on post-conflict scenarios, for conflicts to be early detected and possibly prevented. Thus, a Joint Preliminary Assessment Mission was conducted in Tigray with civil society organizations, political parties and the interim administration. Rolling out a Public Service Announcement (PSO) – by means of the creation of guides, billboards, posters, newspaper publications, social media advertisements, radio and TV adverts, and pamphlets – helped disseminating correct information about the electoral process to the public: in 2021, the national campaign reached a total of 32.7 million people, including 15.1 million in urban areas and 17.6 million in rural areas.

Aside from providing support for the registration and accreditation of domestic and international observers, safeguarded transparency and accountability, and capacity building support was provided regarding the electoral dispute framework.

#### Indicator 3.1 Evidence of frequent and constructive dialogue between NEBE and Key Electoral Stakeholders

ECES supported NEBE in organizing consultations with stakeholders for input on draft directives and post-election reviews. They also assisted in NEBE's Strategic Planning process, involving consultations with various counterparts, including CSOs, the media, political parties, and the judiciary.

#### Indicator 3.2 Evidence of support to NEBE to develop youth-focused CVE and public outreach programme

ECES supported organizing dialogue forums between CSOs and NEBE with a particular attention to women, youth and PWDs focused organizations. At the same time, ECES supported NEBE in updating content and conducting youth-focused Voter Education and Public Outreach Programmes, enhancing youth participation and informed citizen engagement in elections.

#### Indicator 3.3 Number of trainings and consultations organised on electoral dispute resolution

ECES trained Police Officers twice for the SNNPR referendum in February 2023, focusing on electoral security and dispute resolution, in collaboration with NEBE's Legal Department and the Ethiopian Police University.



## 5. FINDINGS

### Evaluation criteria

#### Relevance

Extent to which the objectives of the intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and European Commission's policies.

#### Coherence

Extent to which activities undertaken allow the European Commission to achieve its policy objectives without internal contradiction or without contradiction with other Community policies. Extent to which they complement partner country's policies and other donors' interventions.

#### Effectiveness

Extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

#### Efficiency

Extent to which the outputs and/or desired effects have been achieved with the lowest possible use of resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, administrative costs, etc.).

#### Impact

Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

#### Sustainability

Extent to which the benefits from the intervention continue after its termination, or the probability that they continue in the long-term in a way that is resilient to risks.

#### Gender, Youth And Vulnerable Groups

Extent to which project design and management mainstream gender, youth and vulnerable groups inclusion.

### 5.1 RELEVANCE

*To what extent has the action addressed the critical needs of the electoral process in Ethiopia?*

The action as a whole responded to the needs of both the priorities of the European Commission and those of the Ethiopian Government with respect to the electoral process. The ultimate expected results were met: the enhanced leadership and strategic management capacities of NEBE have contributed to conducting more transparent, accountable, gender-responsive, and rights-based electoral processes; NEBE's institutional and technical capacity has been improved, leading to more credible electoral processes; and a better liaison between NEBE and external stakeholders has fostered inclusivity and responsiveness in electoral processes.

In particular, the project was able to profoundly strengthen the conceptual, operational and logistical capabilities of the first direct beneficiary of the entire action, namely the NEBE. What is more, EURECS-Ethiopia was able to execute a comprehensive, long-term strategy to foster democratic development and promote good governance.

Given the EU's steadfast commitment to advancing human rights, strengthening democratic institutions, and upholding the rule of law in partner countries, EURECS was devised and executed in alignment with EU policy and strategic goals. The initiative aligns with the EU's overarching objectives to bolster Ethiopia's reform agenda, with a particular emphasis on supporting democracy, a cornerstone of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and its development cooperation with its partners.

Even in the absence of a European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) for the 2021 electoral round, EU priorities were nonetheless upheld through the technical and Electoral Assistance (EA)<sup>10</sup> extended by ECES to the NEBE. This EA supported the NEBE to conduct elections that were generally considered free, fair, credible, and peaceful<sup>11</sup>.

In this manner, and throughout the subsequent electoral events, the NEBE has proven to the Ethiopian voters as an increasingly reliable, effective, and independent institution. This achievement stands as the paramount objective of the entire operation, largely due to the bolstering of NEBE's institutional capacities through a comprehensive and tailored package of capacity-building measures provided by ECES.

Despite NEBE's ongoing limitations in logistical, procurement, and organizational capabilities, ECES's flexibility and timely responsiveness to NEBE's last-minute requests have been instrumental in achieving success as needed. Lessons learned by ECES in 2021 point to the need of stronger and timelier involvement in operational planning to avoid late minute NEBE requests for logistical stopgap support. Yet, with NEBE's new Strategic Plan in place, future responses to requests are expected to be more streamlined.

In conclusion, the effectiveness and success of EURECS-Ethiopia in both its conception and implementation underscore the potential for a second phase of the project to continue building on these achievements, especially for all the new NEBE staff being recruited, who will immediately need to be adequately trained, bringing their quality standards to the levels already ensured by ECES in previous training sessions in favour of NEBE's human resources.

## **5.2. COHERENCE**

*To what extent the action was externally complimentary with other existing initiatives?*

Investing in democratization and human rights, including the fundamental right to participate in free and fair elections, is crucial for fostering peace, security, and conflict prevention. Germany has recognized this importance by allocating a significant portion of the funding for EURECS through its Development Bank, KfW, straightforwardly to the EU basket, thereby indirectly supporting European global efforts. Even in perspective, an innovative approach for EU Member States – Germany in this case – to be involved in supporting electoral assistance abroad is that of co-financing EU projects through their Development Banks. This strategy aims to enhance the European Union's role in such initiatives, rather than relying solely on individual Member States' interventions in the same context.

<sup>10</sup> The Electoral Assistance (EA) approach, employing the methodological tool of the Electoral Cycle Approach, remains relevant as it emphasizes long-term support, particularly during the intervals between elections. This approach facilitates capacity development and knowledge transfer, fostering resilience to potential democratic setbacks over time.

<sup>11</sup> According to the *CECOE Final Observation Report of the Sixth National and Regional Elections of Ethiopia, May 2022* (page 52): "The elections were generally peaceful and in line with the country's newly revised electoral legislations. However, lack of adequate preparation on the part of the NEBE, the concerning security problems in the country, and other region-specific and country-wide issues significantly affected the quality of the elections held in 2021".

Despite the presence of well-established organizations like the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) during previous electoral cycles, which provided them with ample opportunities to develop strong ties with the NEBE, however ECES managed to establish fruitful relationships with the NEBE too, after commencing its operations in the country upon gaining access for the first time in Ethiopia.

As affirmed by Ms. Rakeb Abate, the IFES Country Director for Ethiopia, “ECES and IFES have had a strong collaboration shoulder-to-shoulder, in delivering their complementary actions to the local partners”.

At the same time, Mr. Franklin Oduro, the Resident Country Director in Ethiopia of the National Democratic Institute (NDI), stated that “all international partners’ programmes are significant, because there are gains only when complementarity works like in this very case of Ethiopia. Besides, it takes to sustain that, and the benefits NEBE has got from collective contributions do remain”.

On the basis of a mutual acknowledgement among key actors, coordination mechanism and avoidance of duplication are of the uttermost importance for a smooth delivery of programmes. There has been hitherto a clear division of tasks among UNDP – counting on greater economic resources to cover the large costs of electoral logistics – IFES, ECES, and their respective partners, all collaborating to support the NEBE in fulfilling its mandate.

The unforeseen circumstance of the Pandemics gave the opportunity to ECES to demonstrate its capabilities also through the EURECS PLUS project, aimed at supporting NEBE in procurement and raising awareness of COVID-19 related issues. Indeed, that period presented an opportunity for ECES to conduct online training sessions for some NEBE Headquarters staff on the Master of Electoral Policy and Administration (MEPA) programme. ECES proactivity and flexibility, thus, paved the way for a very collaborative working relationship with NEBE.

Another crucial factor contributing to the success of the project was the excellent collaboration with the European Union Delegation, which in turn was able to demonstrate the necessary adaptability, taking into consideration the challenges the volatile electoral calendar represented. Indeed, the EU Delegation’s flexibility helped a lot easing the relations between ECES and NEBE. During the initial phase of the project, some minor inaccuracies were observed, which were attributed to the natural process of adapting to a new project and context. This acknowledgment reflects the typical adjustments and learning curve that organizations undergo when embarking on new initiatives. However, Ms. Miriam Skare, Programme Officer of the Delegation of the European Union to Ethiopia, highlighted rapid significant improvements in ECES performance overall. These advancements can be attributed to the valuable experience and trust gained through collaborative efforts with local counterparts over the years, fostering mutual understanding and proficiency.

During the interview, representatives from the NEBE highlighted the effectiveness of ECES's basic training programs. However, they suggested that for more advanced training sessions, there should be increased consultation with NEBE to ensure a higher level of skills transfer. In the same occasion, Ms. Bizuwork Ketete Shibeshi stated that “especially for unforeseen circumstances, EURECS has a comparative advantage to UNDP, by prioritising civil engagements, trainings, institutional capacity development, logistics, and so on and this trend has to continue”. According to many, flexibility and the adaptability are both remarkable qualities of the ECES approach during the changes the project underwent based on NEBE needs, above all at the time of the 2021 GE. Then added Ms. Bizuwork Ketete Shibeshi: “it is very good for NEBE to have had ECES flexible in supporting the adaptation to the elections: flexibility and responsiveness to NEBE’s urgent requests were crucial. In fact, EURECS flexibility was very responsive to NEBE’s request, when due to unforeseen circumstances”.

Taking advantage of the excellent relations established so far among all the stakeholders, it is crucial to capitalize on the experience gained between NEBE, the EUDEL and ECES for the future.

### **5.3. EFFECTIVENESS**

*To what extent were the interventions of the project supporting the development of the capacities of the NEBE and key electoral stakeholders and in which key area?*

Since its newly establishment in 2019, the NEBE has administered three referenda in Southern Ethiopia, along with the two rounds of the 6<sup>th</sup> General Elections in 2021. Throughout this period, EURECS has provided extensive support to the NEBE, offering capacity building, advisory services, and logistical assistance during the two rounds of the 2021 General Elections and the three referenda in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), including the most recent referendum in February 2023.

Effective electoral management and leadership in Ethiopia throughout the electoral cycle hinge on bolstering public trust in the NEBE as a genuinely independent institution for a credible and transparent electoral process, and all stakeholders interviewed have acknowledged the highly effective interventions of the EURECS-Ethiopia project in supporting the development of NEBE's capacities.

In terms of effectiveness, among the most significant EURECS achievements, one has to underline the increased self-awareness and leadership skills for NEBE's decision-making processes and its improved technical knowledge on election.

By and large, the action was internally coherent with its own strategy, making use of original training tools, such as the Leadership and Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders (LEAD) – designed for electoral stakeholders in politically fragile environments.

NEBE management staff have undergone comprehensive trainings, obtaining LEAD certification.

EURECS delivered contextualized training and coaching sessions for newly hired staff at both the NEBE headquarters and regional offices.

Thanks to EURECS' provision of training and advisory services, NEBE received assistance in developing a communication policy and reinforcing strategic communication initiatives. This resulted in NEBE staff being trained in media monitoring, facilitated by the establishment of a dedicated Media Monitoring Unit (MMU).

EURECS provided technical assistance to the NEBE for the remaining elections, such as those in Benishangul-Gumuz and certain constituencies in the Amhara region, as well as potential referenda in other regions where elections have not yet occurred.

The EURECS-Ethiopia, focusing on implementing recommendations from the previous (EUEOMs), those of 2010 particularly, has been shaped with a relevant component expressly dedicated to preventing, mitigating, and managing electoral-related conflicts. This aspect merits renewed focus in the future.

### **5.4. EFFICIENCY**

*To what extent the resources mobilized to support the development of the activities of the project were cost effective and presented value for money ?*

ECES implements electoral assistance activities in a manner that is more cost-effective, allocating fewer funds to international human resources and prioritizing actual activities. The resources mobilized to support the project were not only cost-effective, delivering high value for the donors' investment, but also, ECES's distinctive methodology enabled an immediate start to the project with dedicated human resources ready to commence their work.

ECES uses Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to guide administrative, financial, and operational activities. These SOPs align with the EU's Procedures and Practical Guide (PRAG) and include a visibility and communication plan to reflect EU engagement effectively.

ECES has the capacity to promote cost effectiveness with expenses based on real costs, 6.56% management fees and work on reimbursable costs for human resources with no extra costs for procurement of material at central level<sup>12</sup>.

Additionally, ECES is able to bring capacity to mobilise additional funds from other donors and contribute to established larger basket funds for which ECES can start activities and advance funds following agreements with the EU or other donors, thanks to the solid financial management implemented over the years<sup>13</sup>.

At the project's inception, there was significant cost-sharing with the already established Prevention, Mitigation, and Management of Election-related Conflicts and Potential Violence (PEV-Ethiopia) project, leveraging parallel costs and resources.

Thanks to two recruitment procedures — one with a short timeframe requiring immediate deployment and another with a standard timeframe — facilitated by its Roster Database Management Application, ECES is prepared to promptly submit suggested human resources to the EU services prior to contract signature.

Finally, ECES successfully mobilized key experts from its partners in Ethiopia, GoInnovation<sup>14</sup> and FoF<sup>15</sup>, offering a comprehensive perspective on democracy support, capacity development, and conflict management in the Ethiopian context.

## 5.5. IMPACT

*Is there any evidence that the project's actions have had a positive effect on the credibility and transparency of the electoral process?*

Throughout the period spanning from October 2019 to March 2024, the project's endeavours have notably enhanced the credibility and transparency of the Ethiopian electoral process, with the NEBE

<sup>12</sup> The EURECS project includes a provision for indirect costs of 6.56% (based on the total amount of eligible costs). That 6.56% percentage allows to cover the costs related to indirect management of the project as well as costs related to project design and implementation that cannot be included in the budget (costs for the proposal drafting, for the formulation and identification mission, infrastructure and material, ECES general assurances including social and professional responsibility, costs of potential credit lines at the bank and for any additional resources etc.).

<sup>13</sup> A crucial aspect to bear in mind for future projects is ECES's ability to provide upfront funding, enabling activities to commence immediately upon project and budget agreement, rather than waiting for donor funds to become available. Indeed, ECES has demonstrated its capacity to advance funds promptly for the specific CECOE project, based on prior agreement regarding the budget and activities. These funds are to be reimbursed after the donors' contract signature, in line with the principles outlined in the "retroactivity clause" as per PRAG procedures.

<sup>14</sup> SEE: <https://go-innovation.com/>

<sup>15</sup> SEE: <https://forumfed.org/>

evolving into a more autonomous entity, progressively less influenced by external factors, and moving towards being solely accountable to the House of the People's Representatives.

Nowadays, NEBE considers standard benchmarks not only the existing national legal framework evidently, but also the international electoral principles that have been at the centre of the EURECS project: independence, impartiality, transparency, professionalism, sustainability and inclusiveness.

EURECS-Ethiopia has leveraged existing organizations and networks, reinforcing and encouraging new non-state actors to actively engage. It has promoted networking opportunities and facilitated exchanges among peers. Particularly, the Association of African Electoral Authorities (AAEA)<sup>16</sup> serves as a continental network of Election Management Bodies (EMBs). As ECES, alongside the African Union, is the sole official partner, it has not only facilitated NEBE's participation in the AAEA but also enabled bilateral exchanges with the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) and the NEBE. This enables the NEBE Management Board to share lessons on the challenges associated with organizing elections and to exchange lessons on decision-making process. NEBE can draw upon solutions implemented in other countries, ensuring that these are adapted to the Ethiopian context.

EURECS provided support for the legal dispute resolution process. Additionally, ECES assisted in setting up consultation platforms with political parties, civil society organizations, media, and community representatives, promoting participatory decision-making processes in electoral preparations and reforms.

While EURECS has undoubtedly enhanced the operational and conceptual capabilities of the NEBE, there is a pressing need for future efforts to urge the NEBE to extend its strategies into remote areas. Ensuring gender parity across all project activities in these regions is paramount for the initiative's overall success.

## 5.6. SUSTAINABILITY

*To what extent have beneficiaries taken ownership of the project? Will they be able to sustain, programmatically, politically, and financially, the results of the action?*

Notwithstanding a complex and delicate national landscape, in terms of security across the country, characterized by an ongoing internal conflict, the NEBE has consistently demonstrated increasing levels of professionalism and dedication, showcasing a resolute commitment to continuous evolution and improvement, which has been further facilitated and augmented by the collaborative and synergistic external support rendered by the project. This concerted effort to navigate and thrive within such a challenging environment underscores the paramount significance of preserving and upholding the independence of NEBE's endeavours, thereby ensuring the integrity, credibility, and effectiveness of its operations amidst foreseeable pressures as general elections period is approaching.

EURECS has been able to support the strategic planning development, knowledge management, and experience sharing initiatives of NEBE, assisting it to identify and procure sustainable resources, and at the same time, supporting the human resource capacity building, the legal reform process, training capacities aimed at enhancing the logistical and operational efficiency and effectiveness of the Ethiopian EMB.

---

<sup>16</sup> SEE: <https://aaeagroup.org/>

Given the enduring nature of these processes, it becomes evident that sustained support is indispensable for enhancing and maintaining the performance of local institutions throughout the entirety not only of this very electoral cycle, but also of the next electoral cycles, because achieving sustainability is an ongoing gradual process that may span several electoral cycles. In fact, one electoral cycle only cannot be sufficient to guarantee an efficient and sustainable process. In reality, sustainability support must be pursued and reinforced over the next electoral cycles, integrating lessons learned, as well as capitalizing individual and institutional capacity development.

One notable challenge encountered during the project involved the NEBE grappling with the dilemma of allocating resources between short-term, reactionary endeavours and longer-term institutional and systemic development initiatives. This tension often led to a focus on immediate, short-term activities, which were deemed costly and less conducive to sustainable progress. Additionally, there was and there still is a need to integrate relevant technology and establish standardized protocols across NEBE's regional branch offices, further complicating resource allocation decisions.

### **5.7. GENDER, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE GROUPS**

*In terms of project design as well as implementation and management, to what extent has the intervention addressed issues of human rights, women's inclusion, equality, and women's empowerment?*

Having implemented a comprehensive voter and civic education plan across all regions of Ethiopia, through the support of civic and voter information to vulnerable groups, EURECS facilitated NEBE's dialogue with civil society organisations, especially with electoral stakeholders traditionally neglected, such as illiterate people, women both candidate and voters, youth and first-time voters, IDPs, PWD organisations and traditional and religious leaders.

Particularly in volatile context, overall citizens inclusion is of paramount importance, in order to stem electoral violence that is why future action will need to focus even more on vulnerable groups, by promoting gender equality as well as youth inclusion. In fact, given the demographics, whereby Ethiopia's young citizens are an ever-increasing portion of the total population, further engagement with the youth towards a democratic and credible elections has been and will ever be crucial.

EURECS played a vital role in assisting NEBE in the development of updated content and the implementation of youth-focused VE and Public Outreach Programmes.

EURECS has undertaken notable activities in mainstreaming gender issues in all trainings. Additionally, the project has supported on mainstreaming gender, disability, and IDPs concerns within NEBE policies and programs, covering areas like registration and polling procedures, safety protocols, voter information campaigns, external relations, electoral legal frameworks, outreach initiatives, and data reporting and analysis.

Yet, regional branches urgently need support in terms of capacity building and equipping the regional offices to reduce the urban-rural divide, while ad hoc strategies are to be implemented in remote areas to achieve gender parity in project activities for the future, including the local elections that need to be organised at the local level.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Ethiopia holds a strategic position for the European Union (EU) in the Great Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region, an area where Ethiopia serves as a key country not only regionally but also continentally across Africa.

In fact, ensuring stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity in the sub-region is crucial for the development of the entire African continent.

Despite the Agreement for Lasting Peace through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities (CoHA) between the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in November 2022 in Pretoria, other parts of the country remain volatile due to ongoing clashes, creating an insecure environment unsuitable for holding elections.

Democracy support is at the centre of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the EU's development cooperation with its partners countries. The EU provides extensive support to initiatives and programmes that seek to develop and consolidate human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law in partners' countries.

Therefore, a cohesive EU response is imperative to support democratization efforts in Ethiopia amidst ongoing conflicts. This support aims to facilitate peaceful conflict resolution, reconciliation, stabilization, recovery, and macroeconomic stability across the country.

### 6.1. LESSONS LEARNT

- EURECS seems to be structured in a pattern to recognize the long-term nature of electoral processes. It aims to engage a diverse array of stakeholders, including election management bodies, civil society organizations, political parties, local authorities, parliament, security forces, and media. This inclusive approach ensures a comprehensive and sustainable strategy for electoral support. Therefore EURECS should keep assisting NEBE in aligning with international electoral principles such as independence, impartiality, transparency, professionalism, sustainability, and inclusiveness.
- The NEBE is still not fully autonomous in terms of human resources, logistical and technical and financial resources.  
Hence NEBE, among other things, needs to:
  - *In terms of infrastructures and communications:*
    - Develop customized technical solutions, such as an ad hoc Geographic Information System (GIS), to gain a deeper understanding of and effectively manage the complex and sensitive electoral geography in Ethiopia.
    - Implement a monitoring and evaluation system based on IT solutions.
    - Improve the logistics infrastructure to enhance storing, clustering, packing, transportation, and retrieval processes. Reduce NEBE's dependency on external services for material transportation by implementing internal mechanisms.
    - Create an efficient internal communication platform among NEBE departments and field offices.
    - Develop in-house capabilities for designing, printing, and publishing<sup>17</sup> to ensure sustainability, accuracy, and timeliness.

<sup>17</sup> Being important to enhance NEBE's capacity in printing and publishing election materials, there is need to supply high quality and capacity of duplex/printing machines.



- *In terms of strategy and institutional capacities:*
  - Review NEBE's institutional structure by restructuring the hierarchy to include decentralized decision-making and accountability mechanisms.
  - internal human resource structural adjustments with new and improved salary and incentives as a staff retention mechanism
  - Strengthen voter education efforts, particularly in rural areas and minority languages, to ensure equitable access to essential electoral information and resources for all citizens.
- *In terms of reforms:*
  - Implement and enhance a comprehensive documentation and institutional knowledge management system to effectively manage existing data for future use, ensuring knowledge retention and transfer through proper digitalization of information.
  - Establish a system to replace the Grievance Hearing Committees, which is too expensive and not sustainable.
  - Review the projection of polling station numbers and align them with settlement patterns and population density for improved electoral infrastructure planning.
- Integrating electoral support within broader stabilization and crisis response frameworks, when appropriate, enhances efforts to effectively bolster electoral processes, doubling the impact of such initiatives. Indeed, EURECS seems to be able to address electoral-related conflicts by adhering to international standards, commitments, and obligations, being its primary aim to prevent, mitigate, and manage conflicts arising from electoral processes, ensuring that they align with globally recognized norms and principles.
- From NEBE's perspective, the lack of flexibility due to the excessively long waiting times for donor approval processes jeopardizes the continuity of the electoral cycle. NEBE finds itself in an uncomfortable situation, with the implementation period of EURECS 1 having ended on 31 March 2024, and a second phase to the project not yet having started. Indeed, closing EURECS I and potentially opening EURECS II after some months is not only inconvenient and cost-inefficient but also disrupts NEBE's programming in the interim, weakening the beneficiary's activities. Among the technical partners, IFES and UNDP will not face any interruption and have managed to bridge their respective projects. The efficiency of the technical support to NEBE relies on a strong dynamic between the different partners (IFES, UNDP, ECES). This ongoing collaboration being interrupted for 2 or 3 months could be manageable for NEBE, whereas a longer interruption would be much more problematic. Actually, NEBE has addressed a letter to the EU delegation on 29 January 2024, requesting the EU to extend its support to the electoral process with a minimum of interruption after the closure of EURECS I.
- NEBE greatly values ECES's adaptable support, considering it an invaluable asset. Throughout the EURECS project, ECES has demonstrated exceptional flexibility in responding to NEBE's needs and urgent requests, especially during unforeseen challenges in the electoral process. Prioritizing civil engagements, training initiatives, institutional capacity building, logistics, and other critical areas, ECES has distinguished itself among international partners. This flexible approach has been pivotal in assisting NEBE's goals and should be sustained moving forward.
- It's imperative to recognize that capacity building is a substantial endeavour with long-term implications, and its results may not manifest immediately. In an environment marked by increasing volatility and heightened anxiety among the populace, exacerbated by ongoing conflicts in certain regions, there can be no withdrawal from the crucial role played by the

primary global actors championing democratization processes in the region: the EU, USA, and UNDP, along with IFES.

## 6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

### ECES'S CONTINUOUS SUPPORT TO THE NEBE'S STRATEGIC PLAN (SP) THROUGHOUT THE 2024-2028 PERIOD

Strategic and operational planning has become increasingly important, particularly in light of the rising political and social instability in the country, the complexity of organizing an election has significantly increased. Therefore, based on NEBE's Strategic Plan proposals for potential support by a second EURECS programme, ECES could focus its efforts on the following broad areas during the period 2024-2028:

- Year 1 (2024)
  - Geo-located PS.
  - Institutional Capacity development (Human Resource Development, ICT, partnerships management, Regional and Global networking with other EMBs etc).
  - Integrated programme support for HQ/RBOs.
  - Sustainable CVE.
  - Gender and Social Inclusion.
  - Training Centre establishment: strengthening of systems for all types of election training.
  - Biometric VR feasibility study.
  - Election observation and Human Rights monitoring during elections.
- Year 2 (2025)
  - Implementation of Constituency Delimitation study recommendations.
  - Training Centre further development/training.
- Year 3 (2026)
  - Continuation and building on the rest of Year 1 and 2 Actions listed above.
- Year 4 (2027)
  - Continuation and building on Year 1-3 Actions.
- Year 5 (2028)
  - Evaluation and LL of 7<sup>th</sup> GE and LE Actions.
  - Preparation for 8<sup>th</sup> GE and any LE re-election.
  - Scaling up of PVR.
  - 5-year SP evaluation.
  - Preparation for 2028-2032 new SP.

Therefore, among the innovative tools made available by ECES, it would be advantageous to use the Electoral Political Economy Analysis (EPEA), to re-evaluate the underlying causes shaping election dynamics along with specific recommendations to address bottlenecks in the electoral process.

For these purposes, it could be useful to look at the *Contribution of ECES to the Strategic Planning for the National Election Board of Ethiopia using quality management principles*, a publication proposing to apply ECES distinctive approach "Strategic Planning for Electoral Management Bodies Using Quality Management Principles" to the Ethiopian context and the NEBE. This document focuses on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation aspects of the methodology, given that the NEBE has already concluded, with ECES support, the planning and determination of its Strategic Planning.

### A CONFIDENCE-BUILDING ROLE FOR NEBE

NEBE's emerging role as a pivotal actor in enhancing the inclusivity, transparency, and accountability of forthcoming election processes stands as a testament to its independence within the broader landscape of Federal authorities and civil society. To bolster this role, the Board must prioritize establishing consistent and transparent communication channels with all stakeholders by

means of an improved Stakeholders Outreach Relations Capacity. Through such open dialogue, NEBE can foster trust, enhance transparency, and pinpoint areas for potential improvement. In fact, proactive engagement with stakeholders can help mitigate any perceived biases, ensuring that NEBE's operations are seen as fair and impartial by all parties involved.

#### **IMPROVING COMMUNICATION AND PLANIFICATION BETWEEN ECES AND NEBE**

Leveraging NEBE's Strategic Plan, ECES can better anticipate and address last-minute requests from NEBE, ensuring a more predictable response to unforeseen circumstances. To facilitate such responsiveness, regular bilateral steering committee meetings between ECES and NEBE are recommended. Additionally, designating a focal point at NEBE's headquarters for all activities can help prevent communication breakdowns and streamline coordination efforts. These measures aim to foster closer collaboration and effective support between ECES and NEBE in achieving their common goals.

#### **OPTIMIZING NEBE'S STAFF PREPARATION**

The new project has to emphasize the importance of prioritizing the training and preparation of NEBE's human resources, especially considering the significant turnover expected by the end of 2024. As many staff members are being replaced or are expected to be replaced, it is crucial to ensure that the new personnel are adequately equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles effectively. To achieve this goal, the approach should involve replicating many of the initiatives implemented during EURECS first cycle of training and capacity-building efforts as such, capitalising on them. By extending these initiatives to new beneficiaries, the aim is to ensure equality and fairness for all staff members, regardless of their tenure or experience within NEBE. This approach recognizes the need for continuity and consistency in the training and development of NEBE staff to maintain the institution's capacity and credibility over time.

#### **DECENTRALIZING CAPABILITIES TO THE NEBE'S REGIONAL BRANCHES LEVEL**

The new project has to underline the importance of decentralizing capabilities to the regional level within the NEBE. Decentralization involves empowering regional offices to effectively carry out electoral processes and functions independently, in alignment with NEBE's overall objectives and above all to its Strategic Plan. Given that many regional offices are being established from the ground up, there is a critical need to strengthen the training and capacity-building efforts for staff in these offices. Strengthening the training of NEBE regional offices involves providing comprehensive and tailored training programmes that address the specific needs and challenges faced at the regional level. This may include training on electoral procedures, legal frameworks, voter education, logistics management, and conflict resolution, among other relevant areas. By investing in the training and capacity-building of regional office staff, NEBE can enhance its operational effectiveness and ensure that electoral processes are conducted smoothly and transparently at both the national and regional levels. This decentralized approach also promotes inclusivity and empowers regional stakeholders to play a more active role in the electoral process, thereby fostering greater trust and confidence in the integrity of the electoral system.

#### **MAINTAINING MOMENTUM AND CONTINUITY OF ACTION IN-BETWEEN PROJECTS**

Once a project has been approved, it is vital to speed up the transferring funds process (i.e. transfer agreement) with no delay. By doing so, beneficiaries like NEBE can rely on a continuous stream of support, which is particularly crucial in sensitive and volatile environments. In contexts where electoral processes are ongoing or where there are heightened tensions, any interruption or delay in funding can have significant repercussions. It can disrupt planned activities, impede progress, and undermine the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at strengthening electoral institutions like NEBE. Speeding up the fund transfer procedures ensures that NEBE and other beneficiaries can maintain momentum and continuity in their activities rather than discontinuity. This continuity is fundamental for ensuring that electoral processes proceed smoothly and that NEBE can effectively carry out its mandate despite any challenges or uncertainties. By providing timely and consistent support, fund

transfer procedures contribute to the stability and resilience of electoral institutions, ultimately enhancing their capacity to uphold democratic principles and conduct free, fair, and credible elections. The ECES comparative advantage to be able to anticipate funds upon the signature of a contract – to be reimbursed after the donors' contract signature and in accordance with the principles of the “retroactivity clause” as per PRAG procedures – should not be weakened, on the contrary it should be encouraged, as in this way is the direct beneficiary to straightforwardly profit from it. Furthermore, ECES's advantage lies in its pool of qualified experts who have spent the last five years engaging with various stakeholders in Ethiopia. This experience likely equips them with a deep understanding of the electoral, political, and social landscape in the country, enabling them to navigate challenges effectively and build upon existing relationships and networks. Unquestionably, in contexts where the stakes are high and the margin for error is slim, relying on expert actors becomes even more critical. The complexities of the Ethiopian political and social landscape demand precision and informed decision-making, especially in electoral processes where the stability and legitimacy of institutions are at stake. By capitalizing on the skills and experiences of qualified experts, organizations like ECES can navigate these challenges with greater confidence, helping to ensure that electoral activities are conducted effectively and transparently. This approach not only minimizes the risk of errors but also maximizes the impact of interventions, ultimately contributing to the strengthening of democratic processes in Ethiopia. Finally, due to this combination of expertise, trustworthiness, and local knowledge, ECES seems to be well-positioned to efficiently resume its activities for any EURECS II, in support of the Ethiopian electoral processes.

#### **INCORPORATING THE YOUTH AND WOMEN COMPONENT AS A CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE**

It is crucial to integrate the Youth and Women component as a fundamental consideration in all support activities conducted by NEBE moving forward. Incorporating the Youth and Women component as a cross-cutting issue signifies a recognition of the unique perspectives, needs, and challenges faced by these demographic groups within the electoral context. Moreover, by mainstreaming the electoral stakeholders traditionally neglected, such as women, youth, IDPs, persons with disabilities, illiterates and first-time voters, NEBE can address systemic barriers and inequalities that hinder their full participation in electoral processes. Since a great deal of Ethiopian populations is below 30 years old, youth must be included in the action, further engagement with the youth towards a democratic and credible elections is paramount. Enhancing youth engagement in the electoral process, driven by their belief in its efficacy, offers the distinct advantage of preventing the marginalization of young voices in political participation. This proactive approach mitigates the potential for societal unrest stemming from disillusioned youth, thus averting the risk of widespread protests and social unrest.

#### **ELECTORAL SUPPORT AS ENTRY POINT FOR MEDIATION & PEACEBUILDING**

There is a noticeable trend towards increasing ethnicization within civil society, replacing the previous ethos of Pan-Ethiopianism. This shift has created space for a 'Divide and Rule' paradigm, driven by ethnic considerations. It is imperative to urgently implement measures aimed at mitigating this polarization through conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts, thereby mitigating the potential consequences of this trend. Efforts must be made to prevent ethnic divisions in politics from spilling over into civil society, ensuring that civil society organizations maintain their independence and integrity. CSOs should actively engage in dialogue to address ethnic tensions within society, thereby minimizing ethnic tensions' impact on civil society as a whole. Given the multifaceted nature of electoral support, electoral assistance, together with its mediation component, serves as an entry point to tackle broader issues that may not directly pertain to electoral processes. This approach aligns with the peacebuilding overarching goal of the international community, particularly the EU, to promote appeasement and reconciliation in conflict-affected and ethnicized countries like Ethiopia. Indeed, an increasingly pivotal aspect of the European Union's external action towards numerous African partners, Ethiopia included, will be its unique emphasis and resolute commitment to promoting human rights and mitigating conflicts, particularly in war-torn regions. This entails not only supporting local peace actors to strengthen civil society ownership, but also employing suitable

implementing agents, like ECES with EURECS-Ethiopia did, capable of functioning even amidst volatile conditions, including in conflict scenarios. ECES, in its methodology, stands out for its support of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), empowering them to actively engage in elections, thereby bolstering the credibility and transparency of the electoral process. A notable example is the Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Organizations for Elections (CECOE), the country's largest CSO network specializing in citizen mobilization, which successfully observed the Sixth General Ethiopian Elections in 2021 and three referenda between 2019 and 2023. The ECES support to the CECOE exemplifies this approach, enhancing CECOE's capacity and reputation, potentially facilitating peace and reconciliation efforts amidst political tensions, such as inter-ethnic violence. Lessons learned from this experience, both in terms of methodology and ad hoc replicability, can inform strategies in similar contexts worldwide.

#### **NEXT ELECTIONS FOCUS INVOLVEMENT**

A well-defined election timetable is crucial. With elections pending in some constituencies, the absence of a clear schedule, mainly due to security reasons, has led to considerable economic and logistical challenges in preparing the whole process. The credibility of NEBE and the Ethiopian society will be severely tested by next elections. NEBE needs strong support, in order to plan in a very volatile context the next electoral appointments, namely:

1. Remaining constituencies which did not vote in the June and September 2021 elections. The pending elections, yet to be completed in 2024, are in the remaining constituencies of Benishangul Gumuz, Somali, Central Ethiopia, and Afar, which should be organised in June 2024.
2. Elections for the House of People Representative (HOPR) and Regional Councils in Tigray.
3. The Referenda in Tigray and in Amhara for the contested territories, although no decision has been made yet.
4. Local Elections (2024) that have not been held for ten years), considering that LE are not likely be held in parallel with the General Elections (GE) as suggested by the NEBE's SP.
5. The Seventh General Elections (2026).

## 7. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

### A

AAEA: Association of African Electoral Authorities  
 ACP: Africa, Caribbean and Pacific  
 ADF: African Democracy Forum  
 ADR: Alternative Dispute Resolution  
 ALDA: Association for Local Democracy  
 APRM: African Peer Review Mechanism  
 AU: African Union  
 AWEPA: Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa

### C

CBO: Community Based Organisation  
 CECOIE: Coalition of Civil Society Organization for Elections  
 CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of discrimination against Women  
 CEPPS: Consortium of Elections and Political Processes  
 CFSP: EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy  
 CoHA: Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the TPLF and Federal Government of Ethiopia.  
 CRPWD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities  
 CSO: Civil Society Organization  
 CVE: Civic and Voter Education  
 CVP: Communication and Visibility Plan

### D

DAG: Donors Assistance Group  
 DCI: Development Cooperation Instrument  
 DIP: Democratic Institutions Program

### E

EA: Electoral Assistance  
 EAD: UN Electoral Assistance Division  
 EAST: Electoral Actors Support Team  
 E-Day: Election Day  
 EC: European Commission  
 ECES: European Centre for Electoral Support  
 ECONEC: Electoral Commission Network of the ECOWAS  
 ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States  
 EDF: European Development Fund  
 EDR: Electoral Dispute Resolution  
 EEAS: European External Action Service  
 EFI: External Financing Instrument  
 EIDHR: European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights  
 EISA: Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa  
 EMB: Electoral Management Body  
 EMS: Election Monitoring System  
 ENI: European Neighbourhood Instrument  
 EODS: Election Observation and Democracy Support  
 EOM: Election Observation Mission  
 EPD: European Partnership for Democracy

EPEA: Electoral Political Economy Analysis  
 EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front  
 ERMES: European Resource for Mediation Support  
 ESR: Election Situation Room  
 ESTA: Electoral Security Threat Assessment  
 EU: European Union  
 EU-CSF: European Union Civil Society Fund  
 EU EAM: EU Election Assessment Mission  
 EU EAT: EU Election Assessment Team  
 EU EEM: EU Election Expert Mission  
 EU EFM: EU Election Follow-up Mission  
 EU EOM: EU Election Observation Mission  
 EU ExM: EU Exploratory Mission  
 EURECS: European Response to Electoral Cycle Support  
 EuropeAid: EC Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development  
 EUTF: European Union Trust Fund

**F**

FDRE: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia  
 FoF: Forum of Federations  
 FPI: Foreign Policy Instrument  
 FWC: Framework Contract

**G**

GEMS: Global Election Management System  
 GESI: Gender and Social Inclusion  
 GIS: Geographic Information System  
 GIZ: Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit  
 GoE: Government of Ethiopia

**H**

HoA: Horn of Africa  
 HoPR: House of Peoples' Representatives  
 HQ: Headquarters  
 HR: Human Resources  
 HRVP: High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the EC

**I**

IEAB: International Electoral Accreditation Body  
 IEBC: Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission of Kenya  
 IEC: Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa  
 IcSP: Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace  
 ICTs: Information and communications technology  
 IDEA: International Institute on Democracy and Electoral Assistance  
 IDPs: Internally Displaced Persons  
 IFES: International Foundation for Electoral Systems  
 IFP: Instrument for Peace  
 IGAD: Intergovernmental Authority on Development  
 IPA: Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance  
 IRA: Interim Regional Administration for Tigray Regional State  
 IRI: International Republican Institute  
 ISO: International Organization for Standardization

**J**

JEOC: Joint Election Operations Centre

**K**

KFW: Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (i.e. German Reconstruction Credit Institute – KFW Development Bank)

**L**

LA: Local Authorities

LDA: Local Democracy Agency

LE: Local Elections

LEAD: Leadership and Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders

LEAD-Q: Leadership and Quality Management Skills for Electoral Administrators

LTO: Long-Term Observer

**M**

MEPA: Master in Electoral Policy and Administration

MMU: Media Monitoring Unit

**N**

NAM: Needs Assessment Mission

NDI: National Democratic Institute

NDICI: Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument

NEBE: National Election Board of Ethiopia

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NIMD: Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy

NISS: National Intelligence and Security Service

**O**

OLF: Oromo Liberation Front

ONLF: Ogaden National Liberation Front

OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**P**

PCU: Project Coordination Unit

PEMMO: Principles for Election Management, Monitoring and Observation

PEV: Preventing Election-Related Conflict and Potential Violence

POS: Public Outreach Strategy

PRAG: Procedures and Practical Guide

PS: Polling Station

PWDs: People With Disabilities

**Q**

QMS: Quality Management System

**R**

R-ESTF: Regional - Electoral Security Task Force

R-JEOC: Regional - Joint Electoral Support Centre

RBOs: Regional Branches Offices

**S**

SADC: Southern Africa Development Community



SC: Steering Committee  
SoE: State of Emergency  
SOP: Standard Operating Procedures  
SP: Strategic Plan  
SSSA: Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies (Pisa, Italy)  
STO: Short-Term Observer

**T**

ToC; Theory of Change  
ToR: Terms of References  
ToT: Train the Trainers  
TPLF: Tigray Peoples Liberation Front

**U**

UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme  
UNITAR: United Nations Institute for Training and Research  
USAID: United States Agency for International Development

**V**

VAWIE: Violence against Women in Elections  
VFM: Value for Money  
VR: Voter Registration

**8. LIST OF INTERVIEWS IN THE FIELD**

- Miriam SKARE  
Programme Officer – Democracy and Youth, Governance and Peace  
Delegation of the European Union to Ethiopia.
- Franklin Oduro  
Resident Country Director (Ethiopia) – Chief of Party  
National Democratic Institute (NDI).
- Bizuwork Ketete Shibeshi  
Board Member  
National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE).
- Seada Hassen  
Deputy CEO  
National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE).
- Mulugeta Kebede  
Grant Manager  
National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE).
- Abera Hailemariam  
Executive Director  
Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations for Election (CECOE).
- Rakeb Abate  
Country Director Ethiopia  
International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).
- David Le Nôtre  
ECES Representative in Ethiopia.
- Franck Balme  
Senior Project Coordinator ECES in Ethiopia.
- Melete Gebregiorgis  
Monitoring and Reporting Officer  
ECES in Ethiopia.
- Maria Elena Ruiz-Roman  
European Commission - Directorate General for International Partnerships  
Unit INTPA A4 - Eastern and Central Africa.

## 9. ANNEXES TO THE REPORT

CECOE, *Monitoring Report on the Nomination, Selection and Appointment Process of the New NEBE Chairperson*, January 2024, Addis Ababa.

*Communication of the Commission 191/2000 on Election Assistance and Observation*  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52000DC0191&from=EN>

*EC Methodological Guide for Electoral Assistance*  
[https://aceproject.org/ero-en/topics/electoral-assistance/EC\\_Methodological\\_Guide\\_on\\_Electoral\\_Assistance.pdf](https://aceproject.org/ero-en/topics/electoral-assistance/EC_Methodological_Guide_on_Electoral_Assistance.pdf)

*The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019)*  
[https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/30003/web\\_en\\_actionplanhumanrights.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/30003/web_en_actionplanhumanrights.pdf)

*African charter on the values and principles of decentralization local governance and local development*  
[https://nebe.org.et/sites/default/files/36387-treaty-0049 -\\_african\\_charter\\_on\\_the\\_values\\_and\\_principles\\_of\\_decentralisation\\_local\\_governance\\_and\\_local\\_development\\_e.pdf](https://nebe.org.et/sites/default/files/36387-treaty-0049_-_african_charter_on_the_values_and_principles_of_decentralisation_local_governance_and_local_development_e.pdf)

*Handbook for EU Election Observation – 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2016*<sup>18</sup>  
[https://www.eods.eu/library/EUEOM\\_Handbook\\_2016.pdf](https://www.eods.eu/library/EUEOM_Handbook_2016.pdf)

*Compendium of International Standards for Elections*<sup>19</sup>  
[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/compendium-international-standards-elections\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/compendium-international-standards-elections_en)

*The Electoral Cycle Approach: Effectiveness and Sustainability of Electoral Assistance, ISPI 2011.*  
<https://www.eces.eu/template/booklet%2013.pdf>

*EEAS Mediation Support Project – Mediation and Dialogue in electoral processes to prevent and mitigate electoral related violence*  
[https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/cfsp/conflict\\_prevention/docs/2013\\_eeas\\_mediation\\_support\\_factsheet\\_electoral\\_process\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/cfsp/conflict_prevention/docs/2013_eeas_mediation_support_factsheet_electoral_process_en.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> This third edition provides updated practical guidelines for EU observers and core team. In particular it provides more guidance on specific areas of assessment, such as voter registration (including use of biometrics), campaign finance, online election-related content, new election technologies and participation of persons with disabilities. It also brings up to date the functioning of a mission in the field, including on security, deployment and reporting.

<sup>19</sup> The Compendium of International Standards for Elections aims to assist EU Election Observation Missions and other interested stakeholders in clearly identifying the international standards to use in assessing the conduct of elections.