



Progress report: January-June 2019

Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP II)



PROJECT INFORMATION

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Implementing Partner: Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC)

Chief Technical Advisor: Olga Rábade

DONOR PARTNERS



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAT	Australian Assessment Team
AHC	Australian High Commission
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CEO	Chief Electoral Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DSE	Development Services Exchange
DME	Data Management Expert
EA	Electoral Act
EM	Elections Manager
EOA	Electoral Operations Adviser
IT	Information Technology
NGE	National General Election
OPPC	Office of the Political Parties Commission
PAE	Provincial Assemblies Elections
PGE	Provincial Government Elections
PPC	Political Parties Commission
PPIA	Political Party Integrity Act
PS	Polling Stations
PWD	People With Disability
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
RO	Returning Officers
RSIPF	Royal Solomon Islands Police Force
SI	Solomon Islands
SECSIP	Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands
SIEC	Solomon Islands Electoral Commission
SIEO	Solomon Islands Electoral Office
SISAC	Solomon Islands Social Accountability Coalition
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Solomon Islands held its National General Election (NGE) on 3 April 2019. SECSIP core support to strengthen the capacities of the Electoral Office (EO) as well as the technical assistance to voter awareness activities made a key contribution to the implementation of the 2019 National General Election.

For the first time, two women were simultaneously elected as Members of Parliament. The voter turn-out was estimated at 86% of the total number of registered electors. SECSIP core support included electoral operations as well as data management expertise provided by a short-term consultant contributing to mitigate some of the limited functionalities of the voter registration system and the management of electoral results.

The Electoral Office, with technical support from SECSIP Operations Adviser, conducted three lesson learned workshops in Gizo, Auki and Honiara. These workshops were attended by the Election Managers, Returning Officers and EO officials and advisers. The exercise provided a forum to share experiences on the 2018 voter registration and on the 2019 National General Elections identifying best practices resulting in a learning tool and contributing to the building of the institutional memory. Discussions included issues related to 'ordinarily residence' criteria, the possible expansion of the newly introduced pre-poll to other categories of voters, or measures to enhance accessibility to polling stations. Following these workshops, UNDP Regional Electoral Adviser based in Bangkok conducted a one-week mission during which he met relevant electoral stakeholders and held discussions to assist in the identification of needs for future support.

SECSIP initiative to foster domestic observation through a partnership with OXFAM resulted in the accreditation and deployment 167 domestic observers (74 women, 7 people with disability) to different polling stations. For the first time people living with disabilities were included in this process.

During the first quarter of 2019, SECSIP assistance to enhance inclusiveness included innovative voter awareness activities such as the use of SolRice network for the dissemination of a voter education booklet. The project also supported the Electoral Office on face-to-face voter awareness actions conducted at market places.

The project's multitier approach for increasing voter awareness helped to reach different segments of people such as remote communities, youth and people with disabilities (PWD). To further improve the inclusiveness in the electoral process, SECSIP organized a two-day awareness raising training for 22 people with special ability (9 male) in Honiara. The participants expressed their interest on the topics discussed noting that for the majority this was the first time they were invited to learn and discuss about the electoral process and their voting rights.

SECSIP established partnerships with CSOs at grass root level for voter awareness activities. For example, prior to the NGE during the months of February and March 2019 seven CSOs reported to have interacted with 20,663 people (10,148 were women and 20 PWDs). SECSIP also supported the production of three videos on 'how to vote', 'youth messages to choose the right candidate' and 'electoral offences'. Other tools included a telephone hotline, workshops with media professional on electoral related topics and radio programmes.

With respect to support to women candidates, SECSIP implemented a multi-layered approach which included capacity building actions (candidate schools), and support through resource centres. This included the organization of two women candidate schools to improve the capacities of women candidates and the establishment of four Women Candidate Resource Centres equipped with computers and printing facilities in Malaita, Makira, Isabel and Honiara (the latter provided services for Honiara and Guadalcanal).

Out of the total of 26 women who contested the 2019 NGE 2 were elected members of parliament (4% of total MPs). Despite the low rate of women representatives in sovereign bodies, there are some positive indicators. In 2019 out of the total number of valid votes, 4.49% were cast for women candidates whereas in 2014, the percentage of votes received by women candidates was 2.72% of the total number of votes. Other encouraging indicators of the 2019 NGE were that one woman candidate received more than 50% of the constituency votes and 3 other women candidates obtained between 30-40% of the total votes in their constituencies.

The Project also supported the provincial assembly elections by organising trainings for 16 women candidates running for provincial government elections in Isabel, Malaita, Guadalcanal and the Central Provinces. The focus was enhancement of practical skills including for example, knowledge for the development of campaign messages, materials and communication activities. Support was well received, however, stakeholders noted the importance of continued building women's leadership through the post-election phase.

II. ACTIVITIES BY OUTPUT

OUTPUT 1: Sustainable voter registration system created to strengthen the inclusiveness and integrity of the electoral cycle

As referred in previous reports, in August 2018 due to the engagement by the Electoral Office of an international vendor to provide services which included those initially expected to be provided by SECSIP experts. SECSIP suspended the provision of project technical expertise.

However, as a result of SECSIP's involvement before the suspension improvements were made towards a more reliable voter registration system. This included the identification of software deficiencies, recommendations for risk management measures and options for enhancement of sustainability in terms of hardware, software and human/technical needs. The Project procurement actions included equipment utilized during the voter registration as well as the construction of database and results management centre utilized during the last national general election.

OUTPUT 2: More efficient and effective administrative procedures designed and implemented for the Solomon Islands Election Commission to fulfill its mandate

2.1 SUPPORT IN THE LEAD-UP TO NGE

National General Election (NGE) 2019

SECSIP contributed to strengthen the operational and human resources capacities of the Electoral Office (EO) to manage the NGE efficiently. On 3 April 2019, Solomon Islands held the first national general election since the departure of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in June 2017. The polling, organized by Solomon Islands Electoral Office (SIEO), was reported as smooth with no serious disruptions. The results for all 50 constituencies were announced by 7 April 2019. The 11th Solomon Islands Parliament has 50 members including two females. The voter turn-out was approximately 86% of registered voters. SECSIP team provided



Picture 01: Voters queue in the national general election day

technical support for preparation and management of the polling, counting and declaration of results.

Candidate nomination (CN) process: The nomination process was completed as scheduled on 20 February despite challenges due to bad weather which prevented candidates to travel to the constituency nomination centres to submit their nomination. In order to facilitate the timely submission of nominations and in accordance with the Electoral Act, secondary nomination centers were opened outside the constituencies which were located in provincial capitals and in Honiara. After final verification of candidate eligibility, the total number of candidates contesting in 2019 National General Election (NGE) was 332 including 26 female candidates.

Procurement: SECSIP procured 1,700 polling kits which were delivered to the EO warehouse with additional 100 ink bottles and packing materials as well. Technical guidance was provided to prepare the tender document for printing of 550,000 ballot papers.

Analysis of final Voter Lists: The 2019 voters' roll includes 359,521 registrants (48.54% are female). The highest number of registrants (27.10%) are from 18-25 years age group.

SECSIP electoral operational advice and the quality assurance mechanisms helped the detection of a discrepancy between the final number of entries of the voters lists in relation to the upheld objections. Technical support from SECSIP Operations Adviser (EOA) also contributed to identify and correct the administrative error (misplacement of objection forms) and subsequently amended the voter lists of West Honiara.

Manual: With the support of SECSIP EOA the electoral operations plan has been completed and shared with stakeholders. SECSIP also contributed to the Electoral Managers Manual designing the templates for complaints forms in connection with polling and counting.

Capacity building of Election Managers (EM) and Returning Officers (RO): SECSIP EOA and officials of the Australian Electoral Office facilitated two training: the second training for 10 EMs and 50 ROs on polling, counting, media and observer relations. Special emphasis was placed on the pre-poll and changes in the counting procedures (mixing and making of batches to enhance secrecy of the vote). SECSIP support was instrumental to prepare the templates for the filing of voting and counting complaints which were included in the training manuals with a view to streamline the process and build the credibility of the process. In the first training, organized from 25 to 28 January in Honiara, EOA facilitated two sessions for 70 participants: a) Polling Station (PS) assessment and allocation of Voters to the PS's; and b) communications and reporting.



Picture 02: Training for Election Managers and Returning Officers

Briefing to Australian Assessment Team: SECSIP EOA conducted a briefing to the Australian Assessment Team (AAT) on electoral operations with special focus on contingency planning for the transport of assets and communication means. The AAT was comprised of representatives of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Defence Force, and the Australian Federal Police.

Coordination with Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF): SECSIP EOA continued to maintain effective coordination with RSIPF to work on the security issues related to national general election. He presented a briefing at the Provincial Police Commanders conference held in Honiara 18-22 February.

Pre-polling for police and electoral official

The EO successfully conducted an early voting on 21 March 2019 enabling police and electoral officials engaged in official duties on election day to exercise their right to vote. The pre-poll was conducted in Honiara and provincial capitals of 8 provinces except Temotu as no police officers from this province applied for pre-poll. There was an overall turnout of 90.5% out of the total number of police and electoral officers who submitted and were deemed to be entitled to pre-poll (out of 1319 total registered prepoll applicants, 1195 cast their votes).

Support to Political Parties Commission (PPC)

The two SECSIP legal and research assistants engaged through the graduate programme and working for the PPC participated in the process to assess the applications for registration of new political parties and the issuance of certificates for candidates endorsed by political parties, to be referred to the electoral office as requested by the law. They supported the PPC Registrar in the assessment and review

of the Opposition Coalition Agreement. The two graduates contributed to identify areas of the Political Party Integrity Act (PPIA) requiring amendment. With respect to awareness raising actions, they assisted the Registrar in the preparation of two 15 minutes radio programmes about the functions of the Registrar of political parties and the process for the registration of political parties.

Senior Electoral Advisor, Mr. Carlos Valenzuela conducted two in-country missions (February and April 2019) in Solomon Islands contributing to provide high level advice and guidance on election preparation for polling, counting and release of results

2.2 POST-NGE SUPPORT

Polling data analysis and management

Because of the limited capacities of the voter registration database and electoral management system, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) made a request to SECSIP to engage a short-term Data Management Expert (DME) to provide additional operational support. The DME developed tools and forms for the setting of batches of ballots for the counting and consolidation of results. A report (accessible at <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Zy-QI8R-qlxEt5L41Bj5WdWQbiaBK6t7>) was developed under the guidance of SECSIP CTA and compiles statistical data to assist to identify trends and results analysis.

Post-election lesson learned exercises

Three lesson learned workshops helped to identify good practices, challenges and way forward for future improvement of electoral activities. It contributed to identify weaknesses in the training of polling staff and the need for the continuous capacity building efforts for electoral officials. The increase in the number of polling stations (calculated by allocating 600 voters for a polling station) and selection of locations contributed to an enhancement of the accessibility of voters to the polling stations. Other issues related to the electoral campaign, face-to-face awareness and recruitment of electoral staff were also discussed.

The three workshops were held in Gizo (15-17 April), Auki (26-27 April) and Honiara (23-24 April). SECSIP supported the EO in its organization, logistics and funding. The concept and agenda of the workshops were designed by Mr. Moses Saitala Chief Electoral Officer in consultation with UNDP-SECSIP Electoral Operations Specialist who led the facilitation of the workshops. Participants included Election Managers and Returning Officers of respective provinces, Electoral Office staff and international advisers. The initial findings were discussed during a 1-day de-briefing and review session with Honiara based staff held on 29 April.

The UNDP Regional Electoral Adviser also conducted a one-week mission (13-17 May) in Solomon Islands to assist to identify challenges and needs in terms of project support. During his in-country mission, the adviser had bilateral discussions with stakeholders including national electoral authorities, police senior officers, CSOs,

international development partners and UNDP staff. This assessment will be an important tool for an integrated electoral project support strategy during the next phases of the electoral cycle.

Electoral Act (EA) 2018 review workshop

As part of the lessons learned workshops conducted during the post-election phase, a one-day workshop was held in Honiara on 19 June to discuss the 2018 Electoral Act. At the request of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), SECSIP provided logistical and financial support for this exercise which was attended by Electoral Office staff,

Elections Support System Programme (ESSP) advisers and SECSIP project staff. Participants commented on the 146 sections of the 2018 EA with a view to identify issues and consider whether a review of the legal provisions is necessary. The Government is soon expected to report to Parliament on priorities identified after the 100 days



in office and this workshop was a timely first exercise to commence the identification of possible areas that may require electoral legal review. To this end, the Electoral Office (EO) will produce a paper on the discussions, findings and recommendations of this workshop.

Electoral Office premises building additions

In line with the envisaged increase of the Electoral Office staffing structure, the CEO requested the support of SECSIP for the construction work to expand the office space, SECSIP conducted a competitive bidding in compliance with UNDP rules and procedures for the engagement of a construction company. A technical inspection to assess the progress made against the approved plan and contractual arrangement is periodically conducted by a qualified engineer from the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development. The building additions will enlarge the reception area and the office space for finance and human resources staff. This construction work is expected to be completed in September 2019

OUTPUT 3: National authorities and local networks have better capacity to train and educate the population on voter awareness and civic engagement

3.1 SUPPORT IN THE LEAD-UP TO NGE

Briefing to National Observers for NGE

SECSIP partnered with OXFAM to create an enabling environment to facilitate the participation of 167 domestic observers representing accredited national civil society organisations. This also encouraged the inclusiveness in terms of composition of the observer group particularly women (74 women observers) and people with disabilities (7 people). OXFAM collaborated with DSE (civil society umbrella organization) and SISAC (the coalition of civil society organizations in Solomon Islands) for this action.



Picture 03: Briefing to national observers of NGE 2019

The EO with support from SECSIP organised a briefing session on Election Observation on 22 March in Honiara. Given the importance of having accredited domestic observers (not present in 2014 elections), a questionnaire prepared by SECSIP was distributed to gather some initial information and feedback on the background and composition of this group.

The domestic observation group has prepared a draft report which will be discussed on a reflection workshop expected to be conducted in August. Some identified issues include measures to enhance accessibility of citizens requiring assistance (PWD, senior citizens, pregnant women) or those related to the opening and closure of polling stations. It is expected that the workshop This provide an opportunity to discuss lessons learned amongst participants, validate findings by consensus and establish recommendations.

Voter awareness training for People With Disabilities (PWD)

SECSIP organised a two-day awareness raising training for 22 PWDs (9 male) in Lunga, Honiara on 26 and 27 February. The participants were members of the Solomon Islands Association of People with Disabilities and included provincial representatives and 2 sign language interpreters. The focus was to provide electoral information particularly about changes introduced by the 2018 Electoral Act (i.e. no serial number in ballot papers, polling procedures for voters requiring assistance). During this training, the participants expressed their interest on the topics discussed noting that for the majority this was the first time that they were invited to learn and discuss about the electoral process and their voting rights.

This was also an opportunity for the Electoral Office to receive information on the needs and challenges experienced by this segment of voters and the feedback received will assist electoral authorities to explore possible mechanisms to enhance their participation.



Picture 04: Voter awareness training for PWDs

"I have finally known the rights of disable people during election. Knowing that our ballot paper has the same power as any able person is encouraging and should send a clear message that we are equally important, and our disabilities should never be counted."
Quote from a PWD participant

Continued collaboration with SolRice in Voter Awareness

Building on the first innovative and successful collaboration with SolRice to distribute to remote islands 110,000 leaflets providing voter registration information in 2018, SECSIP undertook the second collaboration with SolRice on pro-bono basis to distribute 110,000 booklets (https://drive.google.com/open?id=1quFfu4osbESHifl094R6aub66e7Pbw_B) providing basic voter awareness information on concepts of democracy, parliament,

election, role of members of parliament, civil society and media through its channels and networks. Like in the first initiative, the booklets were inserted by the members of the Association of the PWD and distributed through SolRice networks. A press conference in presence of Australian High Commissioner, CEO, SECSIP team and media professionals was held on 11 February to launch the second collaboration.



Picture 05: A member of PWDs organization providing speech in the press conference

Media refresher workshop in Malaita province

A total of 18 media professionals and civil society representatives based in Malaita province participated in a media refresher workshop on electoral related topics. The participants (4 provincial journalists, 2 women with disabilities, 4 CSOs members, 3 women candidates, 2 women leaders, 3 women supporters) discussed issues related to the role of media concerning elections, impartial and gender balanced reporting, inclusiveness, new electoral act. in a one-day workshop held in Auki, Malaita on 13 February 2019.

Reflection workshop with CSOs

Lessons from face to face voter awareness activities conducted by CSO partners were documented through a three-day reflection workshop organized in Honiara (23-25 January) and helped to continue building the knowledge of 23 participants (12 women) from 8 CSOs partners. To ensure coherence with the Communication Strategy of the Electoral Office its Senior Voter Awareness Manager, Ms. Philothea Paul, facilitated sessions on voter information, electoral materials and trained participants in some of the changes brought by the adoption of the new Electoral Act. Representatives of the three new CSO partners (Tawatana Community Conservation Development Association, Ngela Forum Trust Board (NFTB) and Nuo Theatre Trust Board) also attended this workshop.

SECSIP extended the contracts of 5 CSO's (cost extensions for Hearts of Hope, Tefila, Guadalcanal Provincial Council of Women, Stages of Change) till the end of June 2019

to conduct face to face awareness activities. A no-cost extension was issued for Church of Melanesia (ACOM) till 30 April 2019. SECSIP also signed new contracts with three new CSOs: Tawatana Community Conservation Development Association (TCCDA) to do awareness activities in East and West Makira Constituencies, Ngela Forum Trust Board (NFTB) and Nuo Theatre Trust Board (NTTB) to cover Ngela Constituency and Temotu Pele and Temotu Nende.



Picture 06: Demonstration of ballot box, security seals during reflection training

Voter Education and Awareness

- SECSIP in partnership with Telekom Television Ltd (TTV) produced a 5 minutes video (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FtqKA8j0N9NFrBCRu7ytlwbOwClIKZV1/view?ts=5c9b5b87>) demonstrating 'how to vote' and aired from 29 March to 3 April.
- SECSIP and EO communication team engaged a youth group to produce 1 video on 'youth messages to choose the right candidate' and 2 animations on 'electoral offences' also broadcasted by TTV and disseminated amongst youth using share it application with their mobile telephones. As an example of the positive feedback, a renowned politician Mr. Patteson J Oti posted the below message with respect to this initiative of the youth of Solomon Islands. Video and animation links: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16PFTgMaatYayPlm4ywrJfo9AtaNhSHMs?usp=sharing>.



- During the second phase of face to face voter awareness activities, seven CSOs reported an estimated outreach of 20,663 (10,148 women, 20 people with disability) people in 13 constituencies. Geographical area coverage by partner CSOs is given in the annex (section vi).



Picture 07: Attendance of people in a face to face voter awareness activity

- SECSIP provided financial and technical support to the voter awareness activities in market places of different provinces which helped to reach large gathering of people. Electoral office media and communication team with support from SECSIP graduates (2 voter awareness assistants) and national media consultant conducted these in February and March 2019.
- SECSIP prepared and distributed a limited production of 2019 Calendar with key electoral dates and containing illustrations made by the secondary school competition on women's leadership and political participation (poster category).
- SECSIP CSO Coordination Manager (CSO CM) assisted the EO communication team in its efforts to enhance outreach of voter education in Western Province through a training participated by 18 women staff from 9 CSOs. She also conducted voter awareness in four communities of North Vella and distributed 700 mini voter awareness booklets, 22 offences and penalties posters, 22 how to vote poster and 22 sample ballot paper posters.
- SECSIP also contributed in the designing of two brochures on 'election activities', 'electoral offences and penalties'; and revising the handbook of media code of conduct.
- SECSIP also designed and funded the setting of a hotline number (Nov 18 to March 2019; available every day from 7am to 9pm, including Saturdays and Sundays), and contributed to the contents and funding for the production of 8 weekly radio programs (pre-recorded and edited by SECSIP Media Consultant using project provided recording equipment) and drafting of press releases

3.2 POST-NGE SUPPORT

Provincial Assemblies Elections (PAE) 2019 monitoring

For the first time Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) were engaged in PAE monitoring on 12 June. SECSIP engaged two partner CSOs namely Tefila and Stages of Changes to deploy a total of 25 (15 women) national monitors to conduct a technical follow-up of the PAE in three provinces: Guadalcanal, Ngella and Malaita. The Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening (MPGIS), Returning Officers and SECSIP provided trainings to those monitors before their deployment to the selected provinces. SECSIP also provided information on relevant legislation (Provincial Government Act and Regulations). Monitoring reports from these CSOs are expected to be received during the month of July 2019. SECSIP Women Leadership Adviser (WLA) provided support to provincial election women candidates and monitored 11 polling stations located in East and West Guadalcanal.

OUTPUT 4: Electoral and legal reform supported to contribute to a stronger electoral commission and representative democracy

During the reporting period no amendments were made to the 2018 Electoral Act. Development of procedures via subsidiary legislation (regulations) were adopted by the Electoral Commission. This included regulations revising the ballot draw procedures as well as regulations developing Section 69 of the Electoral Act on the obligation of all candidates who contested the national general election to file a Statement of Accounts within 90 days from the publication of the election results.

“During the reporting period, the Electoral Office asked for clarification from the Attorney General’s Office, in particular in regard to who is declared working in a ‘public office’ for the purposes of eligibility as a candidate. The advice of the Attorney General was that anyone involved in substantive operational tasks regarding voter registration, such as data entry officers, were prohibited to contest the elections. A further clarification dealt with members of the Provincial Assemblies. In a first clarification, the Attorney General Office explained that any MPA would be required to resign if intending to contest the election; the advice was later clarified that only the members of Provincial Assemblies that had not been dissolved were required to resign.”

OUTPUT 5: Increased capacity of the SIEC to promote women’s political participation

5.1 SUPPORT IN THE LEAD-UP TO NGE

Women candidate school for National General Election (NGE)

Two candidate schools organised by SECSIP were instrumental to provide intending women candidates with information and materials they can immediately incorporate into their campaigns to continue building skills and developing practical tools for

women candidates. Training modules included design of campaign strategies, fundraising opportunities, communications, canvassing.

The first candidate school, organised from 25 February to 1 March, was attended by NGE women candidates and one male supporter for each candidate. A total of 15 women candidates and 15 male supporters participated throughout the one-week training. Following the successful completion of the first candidate school, SECSIP organized the second school from 4 to 8 March for 19 women intending to run for the 2019 elections for provincial assemblies. This capacity building initiative ended with key remarks for the International Women’s Day. Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs Permanent Secretary Ms. Ethel Sigimanu, Australian High Commissioner Counsellor Ms. Melissa Stutsel and UNDP Country Manager Ms. Anna Chernyshova addressed the participants emphasizing their role as women leaders.



Picture 8: Women candidate school facilitating by the international consultant

Both candidate schools were facilitated by an international consultant with expertise on gender and women leadership engaged by SECSIP. The content of the candidate schools was designed according to the findings of SECSIP Research conducted in early 2018 as well as the feedback provided by women candidates during different gatherings of women leaders.

Resource centres for women candidates

The project established four resource centres in Malaita, Makira, Isabel and Honiara provinces for women candidates in NGE and provincial assembly elections. This enhanced access to office equipment and services including design of campaign materials, printing, photocopying and access to electoral legislation and other relevant information.

Honiara resource centre had the highest rate of utilization. Candidates from other provinces (Temotu, Isabel and Central Islands) also used this centre. These centres also used as the service points for distribution of posters, voter education booklets, leaflets etc. prepared by the Electoral Office and SECSIP.

The resource centers were established in collaboration with three hosting entities (YMCA, Malaita Provincial Council of Women and Makira Provincial Council of Women) which provided the office spaces. SECSIP provided IT equipment (laptop, printer, internet connection etc.) and other necessary materials including generators to make these centers fully operative and also trained 11 people (10 women) on how to use the equipment. Statements of Intent defining the framework of collaboration and attaching guidelines on the use of the resource centres were signed by UNDP Country Manager and representatives of the collaborating entities on 8 March during the closing ceremony of the second women candidate school.



Picture 9: Isabel women candidate resource centre

Support network for women candidates

During this reported period, the project organized and financially supported discussions of 15 intending women candidates and women leaders through the Women Support Network. Electoral Commissioner Ms. Taesi Sanga chaired the meeting of this network. CEO provided a presentation on important electoral information for women candidates. Discussion also included update about women candidate school, resource centres for women leaders, preparation of aspiring women candidates, affiliation with political parties, etc. Ms. Ethel Sigimanu (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs) and Ms. Vaela Ngai (Supervising Director, Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs) also attended the discussion.

5.2 POST-NGE SUPPORT

Women candidates' performance in 2019 NGE

Out of 26 women candidates contested in 2019 NGE for 9 provinces except Rennell and Bellona, 17 candidates had affiliation with political parties and 9 were independent candidates. A total of 7 women candidates of 2019 NGE had also participated in 2014 NGE.

The percentage of people who voted for women candidates in 2019 was 4.49% of the total number of votes. It was higher than the percentage of people who voted in 2014 NGE for women candidates (2.72% of the total number of votes).

While the number of female candidates remained the same (26) as in 2014, there has been a decrease in the total (male and female) number of candidates. Therefore, in relative terms, in 2019 the percentage of elected candidates over nominated candidates was 7.69% for women (15.69% for male candidates) while in 2014 NGE, it was 3.85% for women (10.40% for men).

In terms of the total votes casted in a specific constituency, a woman candidate was able to secure more than 50% of total votes casted in her constituency in 2019 whereas no woman could secure such percentage of votes in 2014 NGE. Additionally, three (3) women candidates secured between 30-40% of votes in 2019 whereas no woman did attain this in 2014 NGE. The table below shows the polling data for women candidates.

Particulars	2014 NGE	2019 NGE
Votes received by women candidates	7,043	13,935
% of total votes casted for women candidates	2.72%	4.49%
Nominated women candidates	26	26
Winner candidates (women)	1	2
Women candidates with >50% votes	0	1
Candidates with 30-50%	0	3
Candidates with 20-30%	1	1
Candidates with 10-20%	4	1
Candidates with <10%	21	20
Candidates contested in previous NGE		7

Post-NGE reflection workshop with women candidates

SECSIP organised a reflection workshop on 15 May in Honiara. The workshop was attended by 12 NGE women candidates who contested in 12 constituencies in Guadalcanal, Choiseul, Malaita, Makira and Isabel provinces and Honiara as well.

"The skills and tool we learned from SECSIP were very helpful during our campaigns. We think, SECSIP should continue supporting us to target 2023 election from now on."
Participants' remarks during the workshop

The participants provided several recommendations related to policy and legislation, future role of SECSIP and women based organisations following two group works. The recommendations included the following:

Policy and legislations related recommendations:

- Review the Electoral Act 2018 in consultation with women based CSOs and other relevant stakeholders.
- The Solomon Islands Government (SIG) needs to support TSM to increase women’s political participation in Solomon Islands.

Recommendations for SECSIP:

- Continue working with the women candidates for the next four years targeting 2023 NGE.
- Improving empowerment through connecting them with different donor partners and other funding opportunities; utilizing their skills for fundraising ideas etc.
- Continue voter education and awareness till next NGE.
- Advocate for integrating women’s political leadership within school’s curriculum.
- Assess women candidates for their credibility and validity in running for the elections.

Recommendations for Women’s Organisations:

- Review of the electoral legal framework taking into consideration women’s perspective and further encouragement of women’s political participation
- Conduct and increase advocacy on women’s political leadership and participation.
- Establish a women’s political party.



Picture 10: Post-NGE reflection workshop

Women candidate school for Provincial Assemblies Elections (PAE)

SECSIP organised three candidate school trainings for 16 women candidates running for provincial assemblies' elections in Isabel, Malaita, Guadalcanal and the Central Provinces which assisted to enhance basic knowledge about relevant legal framework particularly the Provincial Government Act and electoral regulations. Topics included in these 3-day trainings were election campaign basics, fundraising, campaign planning, voter targeting, message development, campaign communication, etc. A total of 32 women registered to contest in the provincial government election on 12 June 2019. At the end of training, the participants developed their own campaign messages, posters and action plans with implementation strategies.

Women candidates in Provincial Assemblies Elections

A total of 32 women contested in the Provincial Assemblies Elections (PAE)¹ and 4 women were elected including one woman for Honiara City Council. The three elected women will be members of the Provincial Assemblies of Isabel, Temotu and Guadalcanal. Two of them are former Provincial Assembly members (Ms. Rhoda Sikilabu in Isabel and Ms. Jocelyn Ipei in Temotu) and one is a new elected member (Ms. Rose Tala from Guadalcanal Province).

In addition to candidate schools training, SECSIP Women Leadership Adviser provided one to one coaching to candidates on how to address challenges during the campaign period.

III. MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Roundtable discussion with Development Partners (DPs)

At the invitation of the CEO, a roundtable discussion was held on 14 February. The agenda included an update on the preparation of the national general election, and a presentation by SECSIP CTA on project achievements, future actions and project financial status. Attendees included representatives from the Australian High Commission, Embassy of Japan, Asian Development Bank, British High Commission and New Zealand High Commission.

¹ In Makira province the election will take place in December 2019



Picture 11: Discussion with development partners

Project Board Meeting

The SECSIP Project Board held a meeting on 28 May 2019. During this meeting, SECSIP CTA provided an update on the ongoing activities of the project and presented to the Board the possibility of contractual extensions for SECSIP Graduates and for two national consultants. A revision of the Project Annual Working Plan (AWP) reflecting a new contribution from the Government of Australia and additional UNDP TRAC 2 funds was presented and endorsed by the Board. Other key issues discussed were the post-election lesson learned, outstanding women initiative, voter awareness activities, and knowledge attitude and practice survey (KAP).

In addition to the Board members Hon. Mr. Patteson Oti, Speaker of National Parliament, Chairperson of SIEC; Mr. Mose Saitala, Chief Electoral Officer and Ms. Anna Chernyshova, UNDP Country Office Manager (acting). The meeting was also attended by SIEC Commissioner, Ms. Taeasi Sanga and SIEC Head of Operations, Mr. Freddie Bosoboe and international partners (Ms. Olivia Chambers, Second Secretary and Ms. Natalina Hong, Senior Programme Manager from the Australian High Commission; (EU presented its apologies). Also in attendance were ESSP advisers UNDP Effective Governance Team and SECSIP staff.

IV. EXPENDITURE

Outputs	Total Budget USD	Total Expenditure USD
Output 2: Enhanced capacity of the SIEC to manage an electoral cycle	436,830	519,689.23*
Output 3: National authorities and local networks have better capacity to train and educate the population on voter awareness and civic engagement	181,000	166,789.75
Output 4: Electoral and legal reform supported	22,000	8,255.80
Output 5: Capacity of the SIEC to promote gender mainstreaming	159,250	90,033.86
Management and Administration	894,025	335,092.08
TOTAL USD	1,693,105	1,119,860.72

* SBD 157,355.34 committed expenditure of 2018 was accounted in 2019

V. RISK LOG

Risk	Mitigation Action	Timeframe	Progress of Mitigation Action (s)
<p>Engagement of stakeholders by the Electoral Commission is not as extensive as originally envisaged</p>	<p>Activating inter agency coordination body, IMEOC for better collaboration of national general election</p> <p>Collaboration between SIEC and RSIPF.</p> <p>SECSIP envisages activities to enhance engagement of stakeholders (public, government ministries, donors and CSOs). This may involve collaboration mechanisms to build awareness and encourage participation.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>IMEOC. In line with SECSIP ProDoc and the Election Assessment conducted in May-June 2018, a proposal for the revision of the charter for the Inter-Ministerial Electoral Operations Committee (IMEOC) was conducted in 2018. The IMEOC commenced its coordination activities at the beginning of 2019. The reactivation of the IMEOC as a transversal inter-departmental mechanism facilitated the coordination amongst state agencies in the lead up to the 2019 national general election.</p> <p>The Electoral Office (EO) signed a MOU with RSIPF (in September 2018) to facilitate coordination of electoral related security issues during 2019 national general election. SECSIP Operations Adviser regularly attended coordination meetings.</p> <p>Partnerships had been established with CSOs, religious/faith groups and private sector. This has enhanced outreach of voter awareness and dissemination of supporting materials. Efforts have also been made to build CSO capacity through periodical meetings and, one to one coaching. Grant support provided to CSOs till May 2019.</p>
<p>Electoral Legal Framework passed by Parliament close to</p>	<p>Engagement of technical expertise for legislative drafting.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>SECSIP support included the engagement of a Legislative Drafter (Sept 2017-2018) who worked with the Task Force for drafting three bills for Cabinet approval</p>

Risk	Mitigation Action	Timeframe	Progress of Mitigation Action (s)
<p>the election. This may affect EO capacity to implement its mandate. It will also affect adoption of subsidiary legislation, development of procedures and socialization of new legal provisions in a timely fashion.</p>	<p>Identification of priorities to be developed through subsidiary legislation.</p> <p>SECSIP proposal of introduction of voter registration objection forms detailing grounds and providing a non-exhaustive list of possible documentary evidence.</p>		<p>(Electoral Bill, Political Parties Integrity (Amendment) Bill, and Constitution (Consequential Amendment) Bill). However, SI parliament passed the three bills only in Aug 2018 entering into force upon publication in September 2018. SECSIP provided technical advice contributing to the preparation of drafting instructions for voter registration regulations.</p> <p>This resulted in the review of previous regulations and adoption of changes consistent with the act (ballot draw, campaign, statement of accounts). The introduction of pre-poll to electoral officials and police forces (other categories would require development of subsidiary legislation).</p> <p>Forms were submitted and approved by the SI Electoral Commission. This contributed to streamline voter registration complaint process & enhance consistency of decision-making by Revising Officers.</p> <p>Need for legal technical expertise for the review and continuous development of the Electoral Legal Framework, including the Political Parties Bill not yet debated in Parliament.</p>
<p>Capacity constraints in key institutions (SIEC/EO, PPC,</p>	<p>Careful and pragmatic prioritisation, planning and</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>SECSIP engaged an Electoral Operations Adviser who worked closely with electoral office Head of Operations in the planning and implementation of election events</p>

Risk	Mitigation Action	Timeframe	Progress of Mitigation Action (s)
<p>Ministry of Home Affairs) to implement and participate in electoral activities.</p> <p>Vulnerability given the dependability of biometric voter registration system from a foreign commercial vendor. Access to sensitive data. No appropriated data recovery processes and infrastructure. No sustainability (technical, human & financial)</p>	<p>sequencing of activities together with stakeholders.</p> <p>Technical assessment of biometric voter registration system and proposal of a plan endorsed by CEO with a view to contribute to the enhancement of BVR reliability and sustainability.</p>		<p>(June 2018-May 2019). He provided operational support in the lead up to the NGE and post-election operational lessons learned exercises.</p> <p>Engagement of a national Human Resources Adviser by SECSIP who assisted the EO in the recruitment of temporary staff in the lead up to the election and in the planning of the proposal for the review of the EO staffing structure.</p> <p>Graduate Programme. A total 10 graduates engaged with (7) electoral office and (3) PPC in different capacities to address capacity constraints (from June 2018 onwards). The number of graduates after the NGE has been progressively reduced.</p> <p>SECSIP engagement of expertise to support BVR in accordance with endorsed plan by CEO. Due to engagement by Electoral Office of foreign commercial vendor to provide services (including those initially expected to be provided by SECSIP experts), SECSIP suspended provision of project technical expertise.</p> <p>Engagement of a Data Management Expert (short-term consultancy) at the request of CEO. The DME developed tools and forms for the setting of batches of ballots for the counting and consolidation of results. This contributed to mitigate the limited capacities of the</p>

Risk	Mitigation Action	Timeframe	Progress of Mitigation Action (s)
			voter registration database and electoral management system
<p>Voter registration update does not include all eligible citizens</p> <p>Significant number of cross-constituency voter registration (vagueness of 'ordinarily resident')</p>	<p>The roll had not been updated since 2014 (partial update conducted in 2017 limited to Western Province and Choiseul). Citizens who have turned out 18 (an important segment of the voting population) need to be included. Those who have deceased have to be deleted from the roll.</p> <p>Design of voter registration objection forms detailing grounds and providing a non-exhaustive list of possible documentary evidence.</p> <p>Support to awareness efforts with a view to enhance inclusiveness and reliability of the roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeting key segments of the population to encourage (youth, women, 	<p>Completed (January 2019)</p>	<p>The estimated percentage of citizens included in the 2018 voter registration is within 85 to 90% of the eligible population. https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Zy-QI8R-qlxEt5L41Bj5WdWQbiaBK6t7</p> <p>Voter registration was completed in September 2018 with high number of registration activities.</p> <p>Period for lodging objections/omissions ended on 29 November 2018 (more than 16,000 objections). Public hearings by Revising Officers to decide on objections were held in December (completed by 23 December 2018). Efforts were made to identify case scenarios to train Revising Officers particularly those with respect to criteria for 'ordinarily residence'.</p> <p>More detailed objection forms contributed to the consistency and coherence of the decision-making process, as well as build the knowledge of the electorate with respect to the objection process and assist the SIEC for lessons learned exercises.</p> <p>Final lists were published in January 2019.</p>

Risk	Mitigation Action	Timeframe	Progress of Mitigation Action (s)
	<p>rural population in remote locations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design actions and products to explain the 'ordinarily residence' criteria and encourage registration accordingly 		<p>In addition to face to face conducted with CSO partners, SECSIP support included media actions through radio, SMS, and production and dissemination of materials explaining criteria for compliance with 'ordinarily residency' and the objection process. This included leaflets and posters as well as banners, booklets. The Project also proposed and supported the telephone hotline and the upgrade of the SIEC website facilitating access to voter information.</p> <p>Supplementary actions targeting youth had included school elections project and secondary school poster and essay competition.</p>
<p>An increasingly contested electoral environment may result in more focus on issues related to poor electoral administration as a basis for contesting elections. This may place electoral authorities under a greater degree of pressure</p>	<p>Ensure electoral preparations adequately account for the potential of increased local contestation. Ensure this recognition is reflected in robust electoral preparations including training and logistical arrangements so that electoral officials will be better placed to respond to pressures applied by candidates</p>	<p>Completed (April 2019)</p>	<p>SECSIP Operations Advisor closely worked with EO Head of Operation to timely implement electoral operational plan. As part of a joint action (Australian Electoral Commission, ESSP and SECSIP), formative actions were provided to enhance capacities of Registration Officers, Election Managers, Revising Officers. To build transparency and commitment of relevant officials, a pledge certificate and ceremony was designed by SECSIP and introduced as part of the trainings. These officers then conducted cascade training actions for polling staff.</p> <p>An enabling environment for the participation of domestic observers was facilitated by arrangement made by SECSIP with OXFAM/DSE (Development</p>

Risk	Mitigation Action	Timeframe	Progress of Mitigation Action (s)
and may politicise electoral processes	Accreditation of electoral observers (international and national)		Service Exchange)/SISAC (SI Social Accountability Coalition). SECSIP provided guidelines to encourage the inclusiveness in terms of composition of the observer group. This resulted in 167 domestic observers from national CSOs being accredited (74 women observers and 7 from SI Association of People with Disabilities).
Election-related violence can be expected to be localised in origin.	<p>Local communities, and key local institutions such as churches, will have an important role to play in helping manage election related conflict.</p> <p>Electoral preparation should consider how to engage and incorporate communities into election planning and security arrangements.</p> <p>Security planning should include sufficient focus on police training and community outreach as part of election-related security operations.</p>	Completed (April 2019)	<p>Continuance of engagement of local CSOs and religious/faith groups through face to face actions implemented by the Electoral Office with the support of SECSIP National Media Adviser and Awareness Graduates.</p> <p>EO design of face to face awareness campaign held at markets supported by SECSIP with particular focus on electoral offences & penalties. Awareness products on election offences included posters and video.</p> <p>SECSIP micro-grant scheme establishing partnerships in 25 constituencies within 9 provinces (including Honiara City Council).</p> <p>Information sharing mechanisms through SIEC/RSIPF Joint Operation Center established under MOU were in place ahead of NGE 2019. SECSIP technical expertise supported the mechanisms to facilitate the coordination of information sharing between the two institutions.</p>

Risk	Mitigation Action	Timeframe	Progress of Mitigation Action (s)
			Some security related incidents took place in Honiara once the result of the parliamentary voting to elect a new Prime Minister was communicated to the public.
Natural disasters that impact directly on stakeholder priorities and ability to implement and participate in activities under the project.	Ensure flexible schedule for activity implementation to minimise potential impact on outputs and ensure sequenced and timely implementation of project activities, with adjustments made where necessary.	Ongoing	There were no major natural disasters during the reporting period. However, during the candidate nomination period, due to difficult weather conditions (heavy rain) most candidates had problems to travel to the nomination centres located in the constituency. This triggered that the Electoral Commission adopted a decision to open second nomination centres located at provincial capitals which enable timely completion of the candidates' nomination. The Electoral Office sought a legal opinion from the Attorney General's Office. Consideration should be given to review/introduce legal provisions to ensure flexibility in accordance with the law.

VI. ANNEX I: GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE THROUGH FACE TO FACE VOTER AWARENESS

CSO	First Phase-constituency	Communities	Second Phase-constituency	Communities
Guadalcanal Provincial Council of Women (GPCW)	South Guadalcanal Constituency East Guadalcanal Constituency (Guadalcanal province)	East Guadalcanal: Totongo Community at Loggu ward, Macolu community, Nangali community, Bolale community, Ghombu community South Guadalcanal: Malagheti, Peo, Kuma, Haliatu, Raeavu, Koleulawith	North West Guadalcanal and East Guadalcanal. (Guadalcanal province)	NWG: Selwyn college, Maravovo, Cholala, Visale, Tamboko, Kakabona, Tanagai, Barana, Vatukola, Tamboko, Tanaghai Parish, Vatukulau. East Guadalcanal: Bilitania, Kopiu, Avuavu station, Marau Market and Mangautu.
Hearts of Hope (HoH)	East Kwaio, West Kwaio (Malaita province)	Ogou Village, Kwaimela, Kingstone, Balafi, Oloburi Community High School, Nunubilau, Nunubilau Community High School, Malou, Gounabusu, Gounabusu Community high School, Abitona, Canaan, Ilanunu, Sifilo, Naau, Kwariakwa, Asimana, Baunani, Maolaiala, Maa, Kwaa and Ngariwane,	East Malaita and West AreAre (Malaita province)	East Malaita: Nazareth, Aekafo, Gatesamani, Manulele, Tabakwaru, Nafinua, Anofiu/Foubaba, Anoasia, Ngongosila, Kwai, Foumamanu, Uatae West Are Are: Tavairoi, Uhu, Narikeara, pipisu, Aiarae , Wairokai, Waisisi, Kiu, Hauporo/Wairaha, Tawaimarea

		Faubaba, Gwale (correct name and spelling Kware)		
TEFILA (Malaita)	Fataleka, Baegu/Asifola (Malaita province)	Kware, Kakalano, Gwaunatafu, Sisifu, Tasisi, Manaere, Ata'a, Sulufou, Rufoki and Subobonu of Fataleka Constituency, Malaita province. Baegu constituency: Gwaunatolo/Fouia, Sulione/Aiaofia and Bush Communities, Fersubua Community, Manabeu, lilifia, Usu sue Catholic Mission Station, Kofiloko community, Ailali, Whitestone community	West Kwara'ae and Small Malaita Constituencies (Malaita province)	West Kwaraae: Fiu, Gwaunaruu, Buma, Gwaunaoa, Bio, Fote, Dala-South, Kakara, Aota, and Boboilangi. Small Malaita: Roone, Fanalei, Walande, Saa, Liwe, Parasi, Tarapaine, Sarawasi, and Riverside. Total 600 sets of voter education materials were distributed in Roone, Kalona, Bulu, Uunimenu, Oloha, and Taramate communities.
Stages of Change (SoC) Theatre	Rennell Bellona Islands (Rennell and Bellona province)	Matamoana, Ngongna, Pauta, Matangi, Hutuna, Tegano, Lavangu, Tahanuku, Gongona	North West Choiseul and South Choiseul Constituencies (Choiseul province)	Paranui Community, Sasamunga High School and Sasamunga Community, Nukiki Community, Taro Market, Vurango Community, Sirovanga, Chivoko, Molevanga, Choiseul Bay High School and Taro Community
FRIENDS OF the CITY (Honiara)	East Honiara, Central Honiara West Honiara (Honiara)	East Honiara: Burns Creek soccer field, Pnatina SSEC compound,	-	-

		<p>Gilbert Camp, Anglican road front, Fulisango SSEC field</p> <p>Central Honiara: Kaibia SSEC community, Tuvaruhu Community, Lord Howe Settlement, Choviri Community</p> <p>West Honiara: Tasahe A Area, Buburu/Lengakiki Community, Windy Valley Community, Namoruka Community</p>		
Church of Melanesia (ACOM)	Gao/Bugotu Constituency (Isabel province)	Tausese village of Gao/Bugotu constituency; Kolomosu, Kmaga, Buala villages of Marine Kokota constituency.	-	-
Nuo THEATRE Trust Board	-	-	Pele constituency and Nende constituency of Temotu province	Pele: NTTB covered following villages - Nyivale, Laro, Lipe/Nyibanga, Temoa, Nyimoa /Balipa'a, Otelo/Ngamanyie/Nyialo, Nopali, Nyibanga, Nende/Banepe, Nyieli/ngamubulou, Nenubo, Otabwe /Ngamanyie/Manuopo, Ngamanyie, Ngawaa/Nola, Ngadeli/Ngarado,

				<p>Nipiloli/Matema/Pileni, Tanga/Nuwaa, Malapu/Nganamaala'a, Malobu, Tuo</p> <p>Nende: the villages covered were – Lata market, Nea/Neboi, Neba/maneputi, Nole, Noipe, Vanga/Nyela, Mrnau/Uta/Banua, YO'O/Naban, Malo/Menevi, Nangu, Bamoi /Bonate/Bibir, Gaito /Akaboi/Ma'ango, Gaito, Mango juice /kaLa bay/Noka, Niumatema/Manepina/Manelu/Naban, Landing wharf, Matu, Nyivale, Lipe & Nyimoa, Ngamubulou &Nenubo, Nieli &Banepe, Napali ,Otelo,Ngamanie, Otambe, Laro, Malobu ,tuo, Nialo, Manuopo.</p>
Nggela Forum Trust Board (NFTB)	-	-	Nggela Constituency in Central Islands Province	<p>Soso-Sandfly/Buena Vista; Olevuga-Sandfly/Buena Vista; Leitongo - Sandfly/Buena Vista; Toga- Big Gella; Vura- Big Gella; Polomuhu- Big Gella; Boromole - Big Gella; Gairavu - Big Gella; Taroaniara- Big Gella; Aviavi-Big Gella; Halavo- Small Gella; Voloa-Small Gella; Bokolonga- Small Gella; Vunuha- Small Gella; Gumba- Small Gella; Dende- Small Gella; Vurenimala-Small Gella; Longapolo- Small Gella;</p>

				Vuturua- Small Gella; Salesapa- Small Gella; Kobe- Small Gella; Belaga- Small Gella; Tulagi- Central Provincial Head Qrt
Tawatana Community Conservation and Development Association (TCCDA)	-	-	East Makira and West Makira Constituencies (Makira province)	West Makira: Tawatana, Ubuna, Tetera, Heuru, Asimanioha, Borodao East Makira: Toraa, Tawaroga, Nahuhu, Maniate, Toroa, Ramah

ANNEX II: DISTRIBUTION OF VOTER AWARENESS MATERIALS

Items	Stickers	Brochure- Offence and Penalties	Brochure- about commission	Brochure- about election	Poster- Offence and Penalties	Poster- ballot paper sample	Poster- how to vote	Poster- value your voter	Voter education booklet
Polling Stations					2000	2000	2000	1500	12870
RO's	300	2500	2500	2500	1500	1500	1500	300	
CSOs	2000	8000	8000	8000	1200	1200	1200	80	10200
Market Awareness	300	1000	1000	1000	50	50	50	150	600
Church Group	0	1000	1000	1000					
Other Stakeholders	300	500	500	500					
Western/CSO group	900	900	900	900	90	90	90	900	2430
Youth group									200
Total	3800	13900	13900	13900	4840	4840	4840	2930	26300

