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MIDTERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION LIBYA ELECTIONS AND LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING ACTIVITY (LELSA)

FEBRUARY 3, 2021

This publication was produced for review by the United States for International Development (USAID). It was prepared by International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc. (IBTCI), under AID-280-TO-17

MONITORING & EVALUATION FOR TUNISIA AND LIBYA (METAL)

LIBYA ELECTIONS AND LEGISLATIVE STRENGTHENING ACTIVITY (LELSA)

MIDTERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

FEBRUARY 4, 2021

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AID-280-TO-17-00001

Front Cover: Photo display during the gallery walk at the Libya Implementing Partners' Meeting held in March 2019. It presents the characters that the High National Election Commission used on social awareness campaigns to promote election. IFES supported the social awareness initiative (*Hroof Media on behalf of IBTCI, March 2019*)

DISCLAIMER

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods midterm performance evaluation evaluates the first two years of the Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity (LELSA), implemented by the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS). The evaluation questions are: 1. To what extent did LELSA contribute to the mission objective of supporting institutions of governance to be more accountable to and better represent the interests of citizens? 2. How did the shifting political and security environment in Libya hinder LELSA's operations and programs, and how did LELSA adjust its operational and programmatic approach in response? 3. To what extent can lessons learned from LELSA inform the design and implementation of other democracy and governance strengthening activities in limited-permissibility environments?

The evaluation concluded that LELSA provided important support to the national election commission and to local elections, effectively promoted civic education aimed at youth, provided necessary training to civil society organizations and facilitated their advocacy, and successfully supported language programs and advocacy by indigenous groups. Legislative strengthening activities were not effective due to the establishment of rival legislatures in the West and East; however, talks brokered by the United Nations have set elections for December 2021, which may provide an opportunity for LELSA to reengage with parliament. The shifting political and security environment hindered implementation of LELSA's original programming, so implementers established new activities to continue democracy and governance strengthening.

The report concludes with ten recommendations for future programming; notably, that USAID should facilitate engagement in political talks by civil society and indigenous groups and should re-engage with parliament and support political parties and candidates in the run-up to elections.

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ACRONYMS

AAOR	Alternate Agreement Officer's Representative
ABA/ROLI	American Bar Association/Rule of Law Initiative
ABWA	Al Ber Wa Al Taqwa
ACOR	Alternate Contracting Officer's Representative
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
CCMCE	Central Committee for Municipal Council Elections
CEPPS	Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DG	Democracy and Governance
DO	Development Objectives
DRC	Democracy Resource Center
EQ	Evaluation Question
ET	Evaluation Team
FCR	Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GNA	Government of National Accord
GNC	General National Congress
GOL	Government of Libya
HNEC	High National Election Commission
HOR	House of Representatives
HSC	High State Council
IBTCI	International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc.
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IT	Information Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
LEGS	Libya Election and Governance Support
LELSA	Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity
LEO	Libya External Office
LNA	Libya National Army
LNDD	Libya Network for Democracy Development
LPDF	Libya Political Dialogue Forum

METAL	Monitoring and Evaluation for Tunisia and Libya
MP	Member of Parliament
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
Q	Quarter
SOW	Scope of Work
TL	Team Leader
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya
URG	Underrepresented Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I.1 Background

The Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity (LELSA) aims to increase confidence and trust in political and electoral institutions, incorporate civil society into policy- and decision-making processes, and increase active participation of all segments of Libyan society. The activity began in October 2018 and runs through March 2022, with a ceiling of \$30 million. It is implemented by the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS), whose partners in Libya are the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

I.2 Methodology

The evaluation was conducted from August 20 to November 30, 2020. Qualitative methods included a document review and 57 remote interviews; quantitative analysis relied on monitoring data.

I.3 Evaluation Purpose and Questions

This midterm performance evaluation is to inform USAID/Libya about possible mid-course corrections and future orientation of LELSA. Results will inform future activity designs. Evaluation questions are:

1. To what extent did LELSA contribute to the mission's objective of supporting institutions of governance to be more accountable to better represent the interest of citizens?
2. How did the shifting political and security environment in Libya hinder LELSA's operations and programs, and how did LELSA adjust its operational and programmatic approach in response?
3. To what extent can lessons learned from LELSA inform the design and implementation of other democracy and governance strengthening activities in limited-permissibility environments?

I.4 Findings and Conclusions

Evaluation Question I

- A. Although planned national elections did not take place due to the conflict in 2019 and 2020, LELSA implementers found several ways to support the High National Election Commission (HNEC). Interventions as well as ongoing consultations on a variety of administrative matters added to the capacity and long-term sustainability and self-sufficiency of the HNEC. While HNEC performance has not yet been tested, its leadership is confident in its ability to carry out elections next year.
- B. IFES provided support for local elections in nine municipalities in March 2019 and in six municipalities in late 2020. Observers judged these elections to be transparent, credible, and successful. Domestic election observers trained by NDI are viewed as effective and trustworthy.
- C. IFES and NDI engaged in civic education initiatives focused on youth and chose effective Libyan partners. A partnership with the Ministry of Education provided a national scale and distribution mechanism that helps ensure that high-quality civic education materials become standard.
- D. NDI supported advocacy by 40 civil society organizations (CSOs) representing women, persons with disabilities (PWD), and ethnic minorities. Despite challenges, several collaborative efforts expanded and/or yielded tangible results. LELSA implementing partners can do more to facilitate the engagement of civil society in the Libya Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) process, building on online meetings organized by IFES. Many CSOs are using alternate advocacy approaches and need support with organizational and administrative training.

- E. NDI's work with indigenous populations expanded educational opportunities for Tamazigh and Tudaga speakers. NDI provided training programs on advocacy and outreach to the international community and facilitated meetings with U.S., European Union (EU), and UN officials.
- F. LELSA's parliamentary work has not been effective because it was halted in 2019 due to the political split in the HOR and political direction from USAID. However, stakeholders are optimistic that the current political dialogue will lead to parliamentary elections by the end of 2021. LELSA could work with parliamentary staff over the next 18 months to build their capacity to support members of parliament (MPs) and to orient new MPs in the next parliament.
- G. Working with political parties and candidates will be possible if the political dialogue leads to parliamentary elections, building on NDI's previous support to parties. LELSA could expand its work with women, youth, and indigenous groups without a significant change in scope. Using LELSA's civic education and civic engagement programs to promote acceptance of a political settlement would enable USAID to leverage its investment to support the political process.

Evaluation Question 2

LELSA was unable to gain traction in the HOR due to changing direction from USAID and the split into two bodies in 2019. The political situation also halted progress toward new national elections, leaving an elections program without elections to support. The security situation restricted mobility and operations in Libya. CEPPS demonstrated adaptability in the face of political constraints and found new activities to promote democracy and governance; however, those activities shifted the project from its initial focus. The LPDF may lead to a reconsideration of whether the original program goals are feasible.

Evaluation Question 3

Adaptation and flexibility are critical to successful democracy and governance work in limited-permissibility environments. Coordinating with implementing partners, diplomats, and local partners is essential to building synergies and reducing duplication. Success is a long-term undertaking, relying on staff and beneficiaries who are supported by the implementer and who themselves believe in the project.

1.5 Recommendations

1. **Increase civil society engagement with the UN:** USAID should explore engagement with the UN to increase civil society engagement in UN dialogues and human rights processes.
2. **Increase collaboration between components:** USAID should encourage implementing partners to explore collaboration in voter education and combating disinformation.
3. **Build CSO organizational capacity:** USAID should support foundational work with CSOs that focuses on the fundamentals of managing and administering a sound organization.
4. **Expand youth programming:** USAID should consider expanding youth programs to include the creation of a youth parliament or other youth-oriented programs.
5. **Improve performance monitoring of civic education:** USAID should direct IFES to collect interim measures of effectiveness of the civic-education curricula that have been launched.
6. **Expand support to indigenous groups:** USAID should encourage LELSA to continue to provide groups representing indigenous communities with training and development.
7. **Resume parliamentary engagement:** LELSA should resume engagement with parliament, building staff capacity and identifying priorities in the run-up to the election of new MPs.
8. **Ensure parties and candidates are supported:** USAID should coordinate with LELSA and other donors to ensure there is training for political parties and parliamentary candidates.
9. **Remain flexible:** USAID should continue to support the flexible approach of CEPPS in responding to current and potential new challenges.
10. **Disseminate lessons learned:** USAID should review lessons learned and determine which are most useful for LELSA and the design and implementation of other DG activities.

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

2.1 Evaluation Purpose

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Libya requested that the Monitoring and Evaluation for Tunisia and Libya (METAL) project of International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc. (IBTCI), design and conduct an independent midterm evaluation of the Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity (LELSA), implemented by the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS). The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) are the two CEPPS partners implementing LELSA activities being evaluated in this report. The Scope of Work (SOW) is incorporated as Annex A.

The purpose of this midterm performance evaluation is to inform USAID/Libya about possible mid-course corrections and the future program orientation of LELSA (whose objective is to increase confidence and trust in political and electoral institutions), incorporate civil society into policy- and decision-making processes, and increase active participation of all segments of Libyan society, including persons with disabilities (PWD), women, youth, and traditionally marginalized populations. The results will also inform future activity designs, including a new stabilization follow-on program and any eventual successor activity to LELSA.

2.2 Evaluation Questions

This midterm evaluation focused on the Evaluation Questions (EQs) below:

1. To what extent did LELSA contribute to the mission's objective supporting institutions of governance to be more accountable to and better represent the interest of citizens? Specific program areas of interest include the following:
 - a. Have the capacity, performance, and sustainability of the High National Election Commission (HNEC) as an independent entity improved as a result of LELSA support?
 - b. How effective has LELSA's programming on local elections been?
 - c. What is the perception of Libyan stakeholders of how effective LELSA's civic education efforts have been?
 - d. How effective has LELSA's advocacy work with civil society organizations (CSOs) and coalitions been, and how can LELSA support those organizations to go beyond issue advocacy and contribute to the broader political dialogue?
 - e. How effective has LELSA's work with indigenous populations been, and are there opportunities for expansion in this area?
 - f. How effective has LELSA's engagement been with members and staff of the House of Representatives (HOR) and should LELSA continue to support the HOR given the current political and security environment?
 - g. Are there additional Libyan stakeholders or thematic areas with which USAID could engage to broaden or deepen the impact of democracy and governance programming in Libya?
2. How did the shifting political and security environment in Libya hinder LELSA's operations and programs, and how did LELSA adjust its operational and programmatic approach in response?
3. To what extent can lessons learned from LELSA inform the design and implementation of other democracy and governance strengthening activities in limited-permissibility environments?

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Country Context

Muammar Al Gaddafi, the deposed leader of Libya, was captured and killed in October 2011. This marked the end of the dictatorship that ruled Libya and the beginning of a road to building democracy. A National Transitional Council was set up to manage this transition. That council implemented the first government elections, and the first elected government by popular vote, the General National Congress (GNC) came to power in July 2012.

The GNC was composed of 200 members, of whom 80 were elected through a party list system of proportional representation and 120 were elected as independents in multi-member districts. Its main responsibility was to form a constituent assembly to write Libya's permanent constitution, for approval by a referendum.

In March 2014, the GNC voted to replace itself with a new House of Representatives. The 2014 Libyan parliamentary elections took place, and with an 18 percent turnout, the HOR was voted in. The new legislature allocated 30 seats for women and had 200 seats overall, with individuals able to run as members of political parties. Libyans of foreign nationalities were allowed to run for office. While elections were held and lawmakers took office, the former GNC rejected the results and reconvened in opposition to the new parliament. Simultaneously a second civil war broke out in 2014. As a consequence, the HOR relocated to Tobruk and was known as the Tobruk Government.

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) led an initiative called the Libyan Political Agreement, unanimously endorsed by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in December 2015. This initiative formed an interim government called the Government of National Accord (GNA), with an executive Presidency Council that was recognized internationally as the sole legitimate executive authority in Libya. That agreement also established the High State Council (HSC) as an advisory body to advise the GNA and the HOR and express binding opinions on these bodies. The HSC is based in the old headquarters of the GNC in Tripoli and comprises elected members of the former GNC.

By 2016, there were three rival governments within the Libyan political arena: the GNA (backed and recognized by the UN), the GNC, and the HOR. Throughout 2016, there was a struggle for domestic power and international recognition. By April 2016, the GNC announced its own dissolution, leaving the split between the HOR based in Tobruk and the GNA based in Tripoli.

The split was further exacerbated with the formation of the Libyan National Army (LNA), backed and funded by the HOR in Tobruk. Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, a Gaddafi-era military leader, was appointed commander of the LNA in March 2015. As a consequence of this, the GNA further distanced itself from the HOR.

In September 2015, the LNA gained control of the Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG), the key security entity of National Oil Corporation (NOC) assets, and took over several key oil facilities. This further threatened the GNA interests, because the NOC, based in Tripoli, did not have control over the key oil and gas facilities in the east. The United Nations requested Haftar to engage in peace talks between the east and west in 2017. During this period a number of bilateral meetings between President Sarraj and Haftar were conducted; during a meeting hosted by the president of France in July 2017, they both agreed on an issuance of declaration calling for a ceasefire.¹

¹ United Nations Security Council (2017) *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya*, page 2, point 9: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1725784.pdf>.

By mid-2017, the international community focused its efforts on the peace process to try to unify Libya. Conferences were held in Paris, Skhirat, Palermo, Geneva, Berlin, and Tunis over two years, bringing both sides together to come up with an agreement. By 2019 both sides had agreed on supporting the efforts for elections and a final conference was set to take place in Ghadames during 2019; however, this was postponed when Haftar launched a military campaign on Tripoli in April 2019, ten days before the National Conference. This signaled the breakdown in the peace talks. In May 2019, about 40 members of the HOR based in Tripoli who remained loyal to the GNA broke from the Tobruk-based HOR and began meeting separately in Tripoli as a parallel body, with the backing of the Presidential Council and the HSC.

This has been the third civil war to occur in Libya. The LNA forces reached the outskirts of Tripoli, with an objective to oust the GNA completely from power. In addition to this, Haftar utilized his control over the PFG to close down all oil production and oil exports from Libya and starve the GNA of revenue. After 12 months of heavy fighting in the outskirts of the capital, the GNA, with support from an agreement made with Turkey in November 2019, was able to repel the LNA. In June 2020, the LNA was pushed back to Sirte, where the front line is currently being held. As a part of the peace talks after the end of the fighting, Haftar agreed to reopen the oil ports and resume oil exports. Another ceasefire was negotiated in August 2020.

During January 2020 at the invitation of Chancellor Angela Merkel, the Berlin Conference gathered representatives of 12 governments, high representatives of the United Nations (including the UN Secretary General and his Special Representative for Libya) the African Union, the European Union, and the League of Arab States. The Conference's main objectives were to forge a consensus among concerned member states on the Libyan crisis and pave the way for and secure an international umbrella to protect intra-Libyan discussions over the future of the country.

The Berlin Conference concluded and reiterated the commitment to refrain from interference in the armed conflict, recognizing the central role of the UN in facilitating an inclusive, intra-Libyan political and reconciliation process. All participants confirmed their support for a ceasefire and the arms embargo established by the UNSC. In addition, all supported the Libyan Political Agreement as a viable framework and called for a return to the political process. The participants also called for security sector reform, establishing a unified national security, with police and military forces under a central, civilian authority.

In addition to this, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) attempted to resume the Geneva political dialogue in February 2020. However, prior to this meeting, the UN backed ceasefire between the LNA and GNA was broken; however, despite this the UN pushed on with the dialogue. A joint statement released by the embassies of France, Germany, Italy, UK and the US all welcomed the dialogue towards a lasting ceasefire in Libya. The political dialogue was boycotted by a number of Libyan representatives.

During October 2020, the United Nations virtually initiated the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF), aimed at fast-tracking efforts to hold Libyan elections and to re-establish the democratic legitimacy of Libyan institutions. Sub-tracks with outreach to women, youth, and mayors were established. The first face-to-face meeting took place in November 2020, where the Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Libya, Stephanie Williams, met in Tunis with 75 representatives, aiming at wide inclusion of social and political groups. As of this writing, the initial outcome of the LPDF talks was a November 2020 agreement to hold national elections on December 24, 2021.²

² <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/libyan-political-dialogue-forum>

3.2 Activity

Table 1: Activity Summary Information

Summary Information

Activity Name	Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity (LELSA)
Implementer	Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening
Cooperative Agreement/ Contract #	72067018LA00001
Total Estimated Ceiling of the Evaluated Activity	\$30 million
Life of Activity	October 2018–March 2022
Active Geographic Regions	Tripoli, Benghazi, and Sebha
Development Objective(s) (DOs)	Institutions of governance are more accountable to and better represent the interests of citizens
USAID Office	USAID/Libya

LELSA aims to increase confidence and trust in political and electoral institutions, incorporate civil society into policy- and decision-making processes, and increase active participation of all segments of Libyan society, including persons with disabilities, women, youth, and traditionally marginalized populations.

Activity Background

USAID’s democracy and governance partners have been working in Libya since 2012, first under the \$34.8 million Libya Election and Governance Support Activity (LEGS), implemented from 2012-19, and today under LELSA. Both activities have been implemented by CEPPS partners: LEGS was implemented by IFES, NDI, and the International Republican Institute (IRI), while LELSA is implemented by IFES and NDI. The two activities overlapped: LELSA began in October 2018, and LEGS was extended twice and ended in October 2019.

The core of their work has been to support a democratic political transition in Libya. They have done this through support to the HNEC to build its capacity as an independent and capable institution that can carry out credible electoral processes. The programs have also worked closely with the members and staff of the HOR. Finally, they have supported key CSOs on issues such as voter education and outreach, the role of a constitution, and advocacy to increase the political participation of underrepresented groups such as women, youth, PWD, and indigenous populations. There has also been an increase in hate speech and disinformation from political actors, which is being addressed since September 2020 by a new component of LELSA, implemented by the American Bar Association (ABA).

Theory of Change

The program was designed under the following overarching theory of change:

- If the HNEC, the Central Commission of Municipal Council Elections (CCMCE), and institutions with election-related responsibilities institutionalize best practices in the areas of professional development, operational and internal management systems, and electoral administration, AND

political parties, legislators, and government officials improve and reform policy- and decision-making practices and integrate all parts of Libyan society, including women, youth, and marginalized groups into those processes, THEN a political culture of transparency, accountability, and citizen trust inclusive of all Libyans, including women, PWD, and other marginalized groups, will be strengthened.

- If targeted civil society actors work actively to engage citizens to stimulate civic and electoral participation, AND the HNEC, CCMCE, and Ministry of Interior are capable of implementing effective election security measures, THEN candidates will be able to safely and securely conduct campaigns AND citizens will be able to freely express their preferences for political candidates.
- If Libyan civil society is well informed on its role in monitoring and reporting on political activities and mitigating conflict AND are able to serve in an organized and effective oversight role, THEN electoral processes can be fairer and citizen confidence will be strengthened.
- If Libyan legislative bodies have enhanced their ability to conduct day-to-day operations AND Libyan legislators carry out legislative functions through skills building AND legislative bodies increase public outreach and incorporate feedback mechanisms, THEN Libyans will gain confidence regarding the credibility and viability of the Government of Libya's legislative bodies.

Each element of this theory of change has been affected by the ongoing conflict, political fracture, and growing external influence in Libya. Some activities have been delayed, counterparts have shifted, and some activities have halted while new opportunities have emerged. This report evaluates LELSA programming within a complex framework of challenges that stretch far beyond USAID's manageable interest.

Results Framework

Table 2: Original October 2018-September 2020 LELSA Results Framework

<p>Objective 1: Public and stakeholder confidence in the integrity of elections as a vehicle for peacefully and democratically selecting leaders</p>	<p>Objective 2: Good precedents for effective governance, including stakeholder engagement, by legislative bodies</p>
<p>Sub-Objective 1.1: Increase capacity of government institutions with election-related responsibilities to deliver credible electoral processes through increased professionalism and transparency at all levels of government.</p> <p>Sub-Objective 1.2: Ensure Libyan ministries, legislative authorities, and electoral process stakeholders are able to deliver adequate support for the preparation and administration of credible elections.</p> <p>Sub-Objective 1.3: Enhance oversight of all phases of the electoral cycle.</p> <p>Sub-Objective 1.4: Enhance civic engagement and understanding of civic rights and voter education through increasing civil society’s and government stakeholders’ professional capacity.</p>	<p>Sub-Objective 2.1: Empower and enable Libyan legislators and staff to implement a legislative agenda, conduct legislative drafting, and pass key legislation.</p> <p>Sub-Objective 2.2: Libyan legislators are more responsive to citizens through direct citizen engagement.</p> <p>Sub-Objective 2.3: Civil society organizations are an avenue for advocacy and hold Government of Libya legislative bodies accountable to the citizenry, including minorities, women, and PWD.</p>

Table 3: Realigned September 2020-March 2022 LELSA Results Framework³

<p>Objective 1: Inclusive Civic Processes Strengthened</p>	<p>Objective 2: Long-term Foundations for Democratic Transitions Bolstered</p>
<p>Sub-Objective 1.1: CSO oversight of political processes advanced</p> <p>Sub-Objective 1.2: Enhanced civic and voter engagement and understanding of rights</p> <p>Sub-Objective 1.3: Strengthened community cohesion and resilience to contribute to political security and economic processes</p>	<p>Sub-Objective 2.1: Institutions with electoral responsibilities are able to deliver more credible elections</p> <p>Sub-Objective 2.2: Political and legislative bodies more responsive to their constituents</p>

³ A new Objective 3, Corrosive Influences Countered, is not part of this evaluation. The American Bar Association is implementing a 15-month, \$1.5 million component to counter hate speech and disinformation from July 2020 to October 2021, and programming began in September 2020.

4. METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

Methodology

The evaluation was conducted from August 20, 2020 to November 30, 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic period with security and travel restrictions, making it impossible for U.S. evaluators to travel to Libya and for the evaluation team (ET) to conduct face-to-face interviews. In this context, the ET designed this evaluation using a mixed methods approach, comprising remotely collected qualitative and quantitative data. Due to the pandemic, security situation, and curfew, KIIs were conducted by telephone, internet-based communications software like WhatsApp and Viber, or web-based meeting platforms like Microsoft Teams and Google Meet. Most interviews were with individuals, though some group interviews were conducted utilizing the web-based meeting platforms.

Qualitative methods included document review and 57 remote key informant interviews (KIIs) and group discussions. This information was supplemented with quantitative data available from activity monitoring data through September 30, 2020, but no primary quantitative data were collected. This evaluation also relied on the review of activity documentation (e.g., program description, work plan, monthly reports, semiannual reports, technical reports, and activity website) and outside analytical documents, including the Libya Gender Analysis. The EQs were mapped against data sources, collection methods, and analysis methods, as shown in Annex G.

These approaches allowed the ET adequate information to address the EQs. A more detailed description of the evaluation design and methodology, including limitations, is found in Annex B. Interviews were conducted between September 28 and November 6, 2020. The ET reviewed LELSA semiannual and monthly activity reports through October 31, 2020. The 57 key informants are divided as follows:

Table 4: Number of KIIs and FGDs by Stakeholder Group

STAKEHOLDER	KIIs
USAID/Libya External Office (LEO)	6
CEPPS	12
Electoral officials	6
HOR members and staff	3
CSOs	13 ⁴
Indigenous groups	3 ⁵
Other donors and implementers	14
TOTAL KIIs	57

Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

Remote interviews: Due to the security situation in Libya, the COVID-19 pandemic, and a dusk-to-dawn curfew in the West, the evaluation team could not conduct face-to-face interviews or focus groups. To

⁴ Thirteen interviews were conducted with 14 individuals (7 men, 7 women).

⁵ Three men were interviewed; one each from the Amazigh, Tebu and Tuareg ethnic groups.

mitigate this challenge, the ET conducted all interviews remotely, using an online meeting platform (such as Google Meet), secure communications technology (such as WhatsApp), or cellular telephone calls.

Communication difficulties: Due to power cuts in Libya and their impact on cellular and internet connectivity, the ET encountered serious difficulties in conducting interviews with Libyan key informants. A planned FGD could not be conducted due to technical problems. Some interviews were cut off, and some interviews were conducted with patchy connections, impeding understanding. The ET was unable to conduct synchronous data analysis meetings, necessitating that team members work separately and share their findings, conclusions and recommendations asynchronously via e-mail and shared documents.

Reluctant interlocutors: Some targeted individuals ignored or declined initial interview requests. The ET mitigated this problem in advance by securing a letter of introduction from USAID to share with invited interviewees. As noted above, the ET asked LELSA assistance to help arrange some interviews. Fieldwork was extended by two weeks as a result of the communication difficulties and reluctant interlocutors.

5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Evaluation Question I

To what extent did LELSA contribute to the mission's objective to support institutions of governance to be more accountable and to better represent the interests of citizens?

Sub-question A

Have the capacity, performance, and sustainability of the HNEC as an independent entity improved as a result of LELSA support?

Findings

Although planned national elections did not take place due to the conflict in 2019 and 2020, LELSA implementers found several ways to support the HNEC, according to LELSA reports and interviews with Libyan elections officials, CEPPS personnel, other donors, and U.S. officials. These include the following:

- IFES procured a backup server and an international training partner for the HNEC so that it will have an internal ability to house, maintain, and update the national voter registry and no longer depend on international contractors and external security arrangements for the safe storage of the voter registry.
- IFES conducted cybersecurity audits for the HNEC and procured training expertise to enable the HNEC to conduct its own cybersecurity audits in the future, making it less dependent on donors or outside vendors.
- IFES helped transform the HNEC from a body that initially viewed civic engagement as something to be controlled to one that welcomes civic engagement openly to increase public engagement in the electoral process, according to CEPPS and international officials. One international observer said this is a massive and positive shift in a traditionally closed society like Libya.
- IFES's design and development of a media center will greatly enhance the communications capabilities of the HNEC and should assist in promoting the transparency of the process, according to HNEC and UN officials.

- IFES is working with the HNEC on an electoral dispute resolution study focusing on legal challenges to election results under current Libyan law to inform future trainings for the HNEC and CCMCE.
- HNEC officials said procurement assistance provided by CEPPS/IFES has been a critical financial lifeline for the HNEC because its annual budget allocation from the Libyan government continues to be delayed.
- HNEC officials said IFES is a trusted partner of HNEC leadership and staff, with one official remarking that HNEC gets more support from IFES than it does from the UN or the Libyan Government.
- HNEC requested IFES assistance to improve internal administrative matters related to human resources, recruiting, staff orientation, and operational efficiency.
- However, while HNEC beneficiaries value the support they receive, they also complained of CEPPS procurement processes they viewed as overly bureaucratic and time-consuming.

Conclusions

The above interventions as well as ongoing consultations on a variety of administrative matters have added to the capacity and long-term sustainability and self-sufficiency of the HNEC and contributed to LELSA Objective 2 (Institutions with electoral responsibilities are able to deliver more credible elections) in several important ways:

- **Capacity:** The procurement support, trainings, and consultations have helped make public engagement by the HNEC leadership and staff more data-driven and responsive. IFES's design and development of a media center should help the body improve outreach and is much prized by HNEC staff. Cybersecurity audits conducted by IFES and the cybersecurity training for the HNEC staff allow the body to independently manage its network security in the future.
- **Sustainability:** The HNEC no longer has to depend on international contractors for server space and safe storage of its voter register thanks to the training and equipment procured by IFES. LELSA interventions have helped reinforce a culture of independence and integrity at the HNEC that is valued and respected by staff and leadership, who view independence and integrity as their "brand" identity that must be protected.

While the performance of the HNEC has not yet been tested (due to the postponement of national elections), the confidence expressed by the leadership and staff of their ability to carry out elections in such a fluid and dangerous environment is itself a positive indicator, as is the high rate of confidence expressed by citizens in polling conducted in early 2018.⁶ IFES's continued support is a critical component of that confidence and will become even more important should the ongoing political dialogue result in a consensus-based electoral framework and calendar requiring national elections within a 12-month time frame. Without this ongoing investment by LELSA, the HNEC would be hard-pressed to meet its electoral obligations, especially since it still has not received its 2020 budget allocation.

⁶ https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes_2018_survey_on_voters_intent_libya.pdf

Sub-question B

How effective has LELSA's programming on local elections been?

Findings

According to LELSA reports, IFES provided support for local elections in nine municipalities in March 2019, just prior to the fighting that took place from April 2019 to June 2020. In 2020, 38 municipal elections were to be conducted initially, with an additional 56 elections scheduled to take place in 2021, according to LELSA reports. Although the internal conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the calendar, the CCMCE did carry out elections in Misrata, Kikla, Elqatron, Sharqia, Tragen, and Ghat in August, September, and October 2020, with support from LELSA implementers, LELSA reports state. As perceived by electoral observers, the UN⁷ reported these elections to be transparent, credible, and successful.

According to LELSA reports and key informant interviews, support to local elections includes the following:

- IFES's work with the CCMCE supported training of poll workers, voter education, civic outreach, tabulation, and cybersecurity. IFES also provided legal advice to the CCMCE.
- At the request of the CCMCE, IFES provided critical legal analysis that was used to create a legal framework for the municipal elections to take place in 2020 and is being used as a defense to the administrative law challenges to the elections. No other implementer, even the UN, has this capability in Libya, key informants said, and CCMCE officials credited IFES with providing a legal foundation for the elections to take place.
- IFES conducted polling station accessibility audit trainings for CCMCE staff and planned to assist them in creating a database of polling stations that meet accessibility standards for PWD (many polling stations are located in schools), sharing the data with the HNEC and Ministry of Education.
- As COVID-19 infection rates increased in Libya, IFES worked with the CCMCE to develop and distribute public information materials related to both the public health responsibilities of local councils, as well as social distancing precautions and their impact on the voting process. The videos were aired on several Libyan TV channels.
- NDI worked with the CCMCE to provide election monitoring training to staff and poll workers. Indirectly, NDI provided Libyan nongovernmental organizations and voter and civic education partners with training material assistance.
- NDI trained 157 domestic monitors and deployed 127 monitors to 120 polling stations. These monitors issued 14 observation reports publicly and made subsequent recommendations to the CCMCE in roundtable discussions.
- CSO officials said NDI has positive and constructive relationships with its election monitoring partners, although CSO partners said NDI administrative procedures are too bureaucratic.
- NDI's primary election monitoring partners are two CSOs, Libyan Network for Democracy Development (LNDD), and H2O. NDI provided election monitoring training to more than 157 monitors and coordinators, and these monitors found the elections in Misrata, Kikla, Elqatron,

⁷ <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/unsmil-congratulates-people-misrata-successful-municipal-elections>

Sharqia, Tragen, and Ghat to be “transparent and credible,” according to reports, which were corroborated by interviews with CEPPS and CSO officials.

- NDI voter education partners conducted candidate forums to allow voters to talk to candidates about issues prior to casting ballots. These forums were valued by candidates, communities, and the CCMCE, according to interviews with CCMCE and CSO officials.
- NDI’s civic organizing partners from the Tebu and Tuareg communities, including the Tebu Cultural Association, Berket Youth Organization, and Ghat Youth Organization, conducted nonpartisan get-out-the-vote campaigns to encourage voter participation, especially in areas with high numbers of ethnic minorities, according to LELSA reports and interviews with the CSOs.
- CCMCE officials said IFES is a trusted partner, but they related that work with CCMCE in the eastern half of Libya is constrained by grant language.
- CSO officials engaged in voter education and election monitoring said they have a trusted relationship with NDI, and many of those CSOs said they desire continued engagement beyond elections.
- CSO and CCMCE officials praised the voter education efforts of both NDI and IFES, although those officials viewed NDI’s development process as more collaborative and culturally relevant.

Conclusions

LELSA implementers provide critical support to the safe and transparent conduct of municipal elections through work with the CCMCE as well as civic groups in Libya. IFES provided critical support to the CCMCE enabling it to carry out six municipal elections in an incredibly challenging environment marked by conflict, widespread electricity shortages, financial disruptions, and a global pandemic. NDI-trained domestic election observers are viewed as effective and trustworthy by Libyan electoral management bodies, CSOs, and the media, and their reports are valued by diplomats, the UN, the CCMCE, and CSOs.

Sub-question C

What is the perception of Libyan stakeholders of how effective LELSA’s civic education efforts have been?

Findings

IFES and NDI both engaged in civic education initiatives focused on youth, according to LELSA Reports. According to UNICEF, 43 percent of the population in Libya is under the age of 25 and largely unrepresented in decision-making.

CEPPS/IFES partnered with the Ministry of Education to create a civic education curriculum complete with student guides and teachers’ manuals for grades 4–12, according to LELSA reports.

- Under a previous USAID grant, in April 2018, IFES conducted a successful pilot program, training teachers in 25 schools in 14 cities across Libya to use its civic education curriculum. According to reports during the pilot, IFES followed up with the teachers and monitored their implementation of the curriculum to answer questions raised by the teachers and to solicit feedback to improve the curriculum.

- The Ministry of Education agreed to expand IFES-supported civic education to high school and university students and rolled out a curriculum for grades 4–9; however, the Ministry of Education refused overt messages related to women’s empowerment, sexual harassment, and ethnic minorities, CEPPS officials said.
- According to IFES, its civic education curricula have been taught to an estimated 375,000 of more than 800,000 possible students.
- IFES is also supporting the Ministry of Education and Libyan universities to develop an official civic education curriculum for university students.
- The ET was unable to interview individuals at the Ministry of Education to determine what metrics are being kept and whether or not they will meet the needs of USAID program evaluation.

NDI-supported university and high school debate programs seek to provide training to more than 500 youth on critical thinking, communication, research, teamwork, and other skills crucial to the maintenance of a democracy, CEPPS officials said. NDI provided a training-of-trainers to key members of each club and coached them through a series of educational briefings for students at universities in their regions.

- NDI officials estimated they have trained approximately 400 university students on debate skills through debate clubs located in Tripoli, Zawia, Sebha, and Jufra, several of which include significant participation of ethnic minorities. However, officials said there are still some issues that are too sensitive to debate, such as religion and the East/West political divisions.
- Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, the clubs had been preparing to participate in a national tournament in Tripoli, originally scheduled for early June, according to LELSA reports. Each region held a qualifying tournament to select two representatives to compete for the national title. Due to the pandemic, NDI and its partners adjusted the program to fit virtual platforms and began holding debates online. Clubs posted videos of the debates on their Facebook pages, allowing other club members and the public to watch and comment on the proceedings.
- The NDI-sponsored online debate challenge engaged youth on issues related to the national political dialogue. The final debate, between two teams from the University of Tripoli, was held on June 25. The topic of the debate was whether a national referendum could unite the country and solve the ongoing political crisis. The two semifinal debates and the final were live-streamed on partners’ Facebook pages. In its first week, the final debate had been viewed more than 40,000 times, according to the NDI website and LELSA reports.
- NDI also partnered with community organizing youth groups that used their organizing experience to assist the government in the distribution of public health messaging about the importance of social distancing and mask wearing to prevent the spread of COVID-19, according to LELSA reports and interviews with CEPPS and CSO officials. These groups also engaged in a number of local initiatives designed to involve youth in developing solutions to challenges faced by their communities.

Conclusions

LELSA implementers chose effective Libyan partners for their youth-focused civic education efforts. NDI’s partnerships with university and high school debate clubs throughout Libya provide the program with near national representation and opportunity for growth. The skills that students develop in preparing arguments on policy topics, in presenting those arguments, and in judging the effectiveness of arguments

put forward by others are critical for constructive civic engagement and introduce young people to democratic ideas.

IFES's partnership with the Ministry of Education provides it with a national scale and a distribution mechanism that ensures that high-quality, accurate civic education materials become a standard in the national education infrastructure throughout Libya. It is too early to conclude whether civic education curricula in Libyan schools contribute to higher voter turnout during elections. However, interim measures of effectiveness for both curricula have been deployed, and their delivery mechanisms and teachers' guides can and should be measured for both comprehension and effectiveness.

Sub-question D

How effective has LELSA's advocacy work with CSOs and coalitions been, and how can LELSA support those organizations to go beyond issue advocacy and contribute to the broader political dialogue?

Findings

NDI supported the advocacy activities of 25 CSOs representing women, 13 CSOs representing persons with disabilities, and two organizations representing ethnic minorities, according to LELSA reports. Despite challenges, several collaborative efforts expanded and/or yielded tangible results:

- **“30% Quota Campaign”**
 - Persuaded the Minister of Culture to require 30 percent women's representation in the Ministry. Recruiting and hiring has begun.
 - Convinced two HOR members to support 30 percent women's quotas in all government agencies.
 - Minister of Displaced Persons promised to issue a decree in support of a 30 percent quota for women's representation and to encourage other ministers to do the same.
- **“Not Before 18” Campaign**, in lieu of a national legislative advocacy strategy, conducted targeted outreach to judges to privately advocate for narrower circumstances under which marriage licenses are issued to young girls. While more time-consuming and labor-intensive, this approach allowed the coalition groups to avoid conflict with religious leaders. They met with and garnered support from the Libyan Association of Judicial Bodies and conducted outreach to judges in Sebha, Albawanees, Brak Alshati, and Al Zawiya.
- **Access Campaign** lobbied an advisor to the Minister of Education as a follow-up to his promise to issue a decree obligating higher education institutions to facilitate access for persons with disabilities. The decree was finally issued in July 2020.

CSO officials said they viewed NDI as a trusted partner, in part because the groups are not “steered” to advocate on specific issues but, rather, facilitated through a collaborative process that allows them to determine among themselves the issues on which they will advocate, facilitating the development and growth of advocacy coalitions that survived the changing political divides in Libya. Advocacy topics are determined by the participating organizations and consensus-based. CSO officials said NDI's technical assistance provided them with international expertise that they found relevant and culturally appropriate, and that informed their advocacy strategies.

CEPPS and CSO officials said the conflict within Libya has been detrimental to CSO advocacy efforts, forcing many groups to recalibrate their strategies. One CSO official said the CSO received support from

parliament in passing a legal requirement to have at least 30 percent of the elected body in the Libyan government be female, and the CSO hired lawyers and consultants to develop a strategy to start implementing such an effort. However, the effort ended when the conflict began in early 2019.

Advocacy groups avoided many topics still perceived as taboo or dangerous, according to U.S. officials, CEPPS personnel, and CSO leaders, including religion, security, militias, corruption, sexual harassment, and even specific criticism of government service delivery.

Advocacy group leaders said NDI programs built their organizational capacity in a broad array of skills including message development, strategic planning, critical thinking, public relations, digital media, administration, and finance. They said the programs improved their ability to withstand the societal divisions and enabled recent successes.

International donor support to Libyan civil society organizations has been very project-oriented and not focused on their own internal organizational development, according to CSO leaders, CEPPS personnel, and other donors. They said there is a great need for funding support for fundamental development of civil society in Libya, as CSOs report this lack of internal development is having a negative impact on their effectiveness. They said few Libyan organizations have boards, staff, management structures, or internal financial oversight processes, and even simple building blocks like bank accounts, human resource policies, and basic financial management are lacking and hinder their ability to implement plans. Several CSO officials expressed their desire for longer-term mechanisms of financial and developmental support.

CSOs in the South and East of Libya require more attention and are often excluded from participation in programs due to the added logistical difficulties imposed by distance, poor cell service, lack of internet access, short time frames, or inadequate infrastructure, said CEPPS, USAID, and CSO officials.

CSOs and implementing partners said they see few existing opportunities for public dialogue on national issues, although all of those interviewed agreed that it is necessary. The willingness of the LELSA-sponsored university debate program to publicly debate the idea of a national constitutional referendum may indicate that there is growing space for dialogue.

A majority of all key informants interviewed across all groups said that the UN-brokered dialogue process is deliberately opaque and lacked the political will to bring meaningful engagement of civil society or ethnic minorities in Libya. None of the LELSA implementers reported having been asked to suggest possible participants in the LPDF, and they all said that they had Libyan partners who would add value to the discussions. In autumn 2020, several LELSA-supported initiatives began to engage the UN in relation to the LPDF directly, including the following:

- In October 2020, IFES began partnering with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) by facilitating online discussions with civil society organizations in preparation for the LPDF meetings taking place in Tunis in November 2020. In October 2020 IFES provided necessary information technology (IT) equipment and personal protective equipment, helping to create safe CSO-led communication hubs in Tripoli, Benghazi, Misrata, and Sabha, according to LELSA reports.
- In October, the 30% Quota Campaign sent a letter to the head of UNSMIL advocating for a return to the constitutional development process, according to a CSO official.
- In September, the Amazigh Supreme Council lobbied UNSMIL for greater representation in the LPDF and a return to electoral processes as the basis of negotiation, according to a CEPPS staffer.

Conclusions

LELSA implementing partners can do more to facilitate the engagement of civil society in the LPDF process. The online meetings organized by IFES beginning in October 2020 are an excellent start, as are the individual appeals to UNSMIL by LELSA-funded civic partners. There is room for more organized efforts to revisit and revise previous constitutional, electoral, and gender rights advocacy agendas that will prove educational to Libyan CSOs even if they do not result in policy changes.

Due to the absence of fully functioning democratic structures at the national level through which citizens can petition their government, many groups are using alternate advocacy approaches, such as direct engagement with judges, international organizations, and individual executive-branch ministries. Although challenging and more time-consuming in the short term, the groups are learning valuable lessons about a wide variety of advocacy tactics, the importance of persistence, and how to tailor messages and approaches to different audiences.

Libyan CSOs are struggling under the weight of intense political, operational, financial, organizational, and security challenges, and their willingness to continue their efforts is a strong statement about their commitment to democratic development in Libya. Many of the organizations provided with capacity-building support in the early years following the revolution are either no longer in existence, lacked absorptive capacity to internalize the learning, or have gone through such dramatic changes that capacity development needs to be refreshed. The absence of permanent structures, staff, written policies and procedures, formal decision-making processes, and predictable and reliable funding structures are all common features of Libyan CSOs. The absence of these healthy organizational attributes can be counterproductive to maintaining coalitions and sustaining organizations over the long term.

Sub-question E

How effective has LELSA's work with indigenous populations been, and are there opportunities for expansion in this area?

Findings

Indigenous language support

NDI's work with indigenous populations expanded educational opportunities for Tamazigh and Tudaga speakers in Libya, according to CEPPS and indigenous officials. NDI partnered with the Tebu National Assembly, Tebu teachers, CSOs, and activists to introduce textbooks and curricula in Tudaga, the language of the Tebu people and advocate for their usage in primary schools.

- According to LELSA reports, more than 6,000 textbooks and workbooks were produced with USAID funding and distributed throughout the Tebu regions in the south of Libya. NDI trained teachers using a training-of-trainers methodology, given infrastructure and connectivity challenges in the south of Libya.
- This work was informed by similar advocacy work with the Amazigh Supreme Council conducted under previous USAID-funded grants that secured the rights of Amazigh majority communities to teach their Tamazigh language in schools, USAID and CEPPS officials said.
- CEPPS officials said the cross-fertilization between the Amazigh and the Tebu communities served as a powerful validator among the Tebu and facilitated a deeper collaboration with NDI and the possibility of greater collaboration between the two groups on policy.

Community organizing

NDI assisted in the planning and preparations for the conduct of get-out-the-vote campaigns for municipal elections for five communities with significant numbers of Amazigh and Tebu residents. The trainings resulted in more than 10,000 individuals being reached through phone banks, social media posts, and radio spots in advance of the elections, according to LELSA reports.

Community organizing groups in areas with high numbers of indigenous populations translated, produced, and distributed in the Tamazight and Tudaga languages critical public health messaging to slow the spread of COVID-19, related to the importance of proper hygiene, mask usage, and social distancing, according to LELSA reports. Participants said they valued the collaboration, but expressed a desire for longer-term projects and plans for sustained engagement in their communities that would enable them to make a meaningful impact on the ground.

There are no gender-specific elements to the NDI work with indigenous communities, although several of the gender advocacy groups participating in the “30% Quota Campaign” and the “Not Before 18” campaign include significant representation from indigenous groups, according to implementers. All informants from the indigenous populations agreed that there should be more focus on indigenous women, who have a vital role in their local community that needs to be further strengthened.

Advocacy and outreach

NDI designed and facilitated a training program to enhance the advocacy and communication skills of indigenous groups to assist them in reaching their local population more effectively. NDI provided a training program for indigenous groups on advocacy and outreach to the international community, through direct meetings with different international actors and with training on preparing newsletters to be disseminated to the international community, CEPPS officials said.

The newsletters’ content varies between cultural topics to more focus on indigenous population rights violations. The newsletters were prepared in English and disseminated only to the international community due to the sensitivity of the content related to the violations as well as the demands for more rights and freedom. There were no clear advocacy goals or plans with specific priorities and stakeholders in place.

The indigenous groups had several direct meetings with international delegations to Libya like the U.S. Embassy and EU Delegation, and they also met with the former UN Secretary General’s Special Representative (SRSG) and with the current acting SRSG to amplify their concerns and demands. The LPDF has four representatives from the Amazigh population, and others from Tebu and Tuareg; however, none of those representatives are leaders of the indigenous population or are directly working on indigenous rights.

Although UNSMIL organized several consultative tracks to support the peace talks, there has been no consultation with the indigenous populations to ensure their agenda is included in the next phase from the political transition. Although the indigenous population considers constitutional rights one of their main demands, they are not part of the ongoing political talks, leaders said.

Further needs

In addition to the challenge of working in a fragile security situation in the rural areas, the CSOs have institutional challenges, such as a lack of operational capacity and finances, which limit their impact, said informants from underrepresented groups (URGs).

CSO officials said more has to be done to reach out to the local communities, as well as to the decision makers to be able to gain support for their causes. The Amazigh and Tebu shared their interest in more openness and visibility to their activities and work; however, Tuareg representatives were more cautious about open communication with other local populations.

U.S. government, CEPPS, and CSO officials said there is a critical need for human rights-based education in Libya. They said ethnic minority groups face the same challenges that others face in Libya, but they also suffer from bigotry, stigma, and marginalization in society.

CSOs representing indigenous groups, particularly those in the South, said they are often excluded from development programs due to the added logistical, financial, and communication challenges they face. Their engagement in the political future and policy choices in Libya is critical, donors and implementers said.

Conclusions

LELSA's primary intervention with the leaders of the URGs has been limited to training and strengthening their relations with the international community. The support could be extended to focus on building more trust and support from other larger communities. It is vital for URGs to be included in the current national political discourse to amplify their demands. Because there was no gender component, the URG program did not reach indigenous women or CSOs working on indigenous women rights, limiting the effectiveness of the program for women.

LELSA's intervention with the Central Government to incorporate the Tudaga language in first-grade language instruction was successful. LELSA's sustained advocacy work assisting indigenous groups in securing the right to be educated in the language they speak at home is a significant achievement, especially in light of the historical prohibition of minority language use in educational settings.

The promising collaboration between the Amazigh Supreme Council and the Tebu, as well as the positive reaction to the Tudaga curriculum in ethnically diverse areas such as Sebha and Obari that have previously been hot-spots for ethnic conflict, is extremely encouraging and an indication of other areas of possible collaboration, such as advocacy of human rights education that would help combat stigma and discrimination directed at indigenous groups and celebrate diversity.

Sub-question F

How effective has LELSA's engagement been with members and staff of the House of Representatives, and should LELSA continue to support the HOR given the current political and security environment?

Findings

Effectiveness of engagement

In the program description and FY 2019 work plan, CEPPS planned to undertake a parliamentary needs assessment mission, engage parliamentary leadership, and jointly create an institutional development plan, which did not occur. CEPPS engagement with the HOR was severely impacted by the split in the HOR in May 2019 between the internationally recognized parliament in Tobruk that supported the Libyan National Army and a breakaway body in Tripoli that supported the Government of National Accord. CEPPS officials wrote in the September 2019 semiannual report that they suspended parliamentary support in order to avoid the perception that they were favoring any faction in the conflict, but CEPPS and U.S. government officials said in interviews that the decision came at the direction of USAID. One U.S. official stated that

it was common knowledge by that point the parliament was “beyond ineffectual,” and a colleague said the decision to stop parliamentary programming was “the right call at the time.”

As a result, LELSA engagement with parliament has been limited to four interventions:

- A March 2019 workshop on the political party law for the HOR Legislative Committee
- An October 2019 training in Tunis for 21 staffers from the Tobruk-based HOR secretariat (known as the Diwan) on the roles and responsibilities of committees and committee staff, including a mock committee inquiry
- Distribution of a toolkit developed by NDI headquarters to assist politicians and their staff in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, disseminated in May 2020 to 12 members of the consultative HSC, 16 members of the HSC Diwan, 23 members of the HOR in the West, 22 HOR members in the East, one member of the HOR Diwan, and seven political parties
- A June 2020 meeting between the 30% Quota Campaign and the HOR Committee for Rights and Freedoms to seek the committee’s assistance in documenting human rights violations perpetrated in Tripoli during the conflict (the committee and advocacy group agreed on a joint work plan to document war crimes)

Acute political divisions rendered the work with the HOR unsuccessful, other than sharing materials with members of parliament a LELSA staffer said. A source in the HOR described legislative support as a “total failure,” due to a lack of training early in the program.

HOR members and staff said the interventions did little to support the HOR as an institution. A participant in the March 2019 training described the four-day workshop as “not very in-depth and very generic,” because it was not relevant to the Libyan context. Referring to the COVID-19 toolkit, one HOR source said parliament is more interested in political issues and political dialogue than to addressing the pandemic and said the response of the representatives has been “very slow.” Another interlocutor in the HOR said cooperation was with individuals, rather than with the HOR as an institution, which did not benefit. A civil society activist, however, credited NDI with facilitating contact with parliament.

Decision on Whether to Continue Support

Interviewees from the U.S. government, CEPPS, and other donors unanimously agreed that the progress being made in late 2020 toward new parliamentary elections may require a reassessment of the decision to pull back. They noted that the HOR has been perceived as “more constructive” since fighting subsided in June 2020, enabling work with staff, leadership and/or MPs. A U.S. official in late 2020 said parliamentary assistance would not be seen as “taking sides” as it would have a year earlier.

A UN official said the potential elections in 2021 represent an opportunity to elect a parliament with a legitimate mandate to replace current MPs whose terms have expired. A donor country official summarized the situation: “The stars are aligned. It’s an opportunity we cannot afford to screw up.”

U.S. Government officials, both from USAID and the State Department, said LELSA engagement with parliament not only strengthens the legislature, but also supports U.S. diplomacy. A LELSA official said more LELSA contact with U.S. Embassy officials, including the U.S. Ambassador, was needed to enable implementers to better share their insights.

CEPPS personnel and officials from other donors and implementing partners recommended that re-engagement with the HOR focus on staff, rather than members, contrasting permanent legislative staff with MPs, who can be voted out of office. A LELSA staffer recommended limiting training for members of

the current parliament to the minimum needed to ensure that parliamentary leadership would agree to re-engage.

CEPPS personnel suggested that the run-up to elections to be held potentially at the end of 2021 provides an opportunity to prepare an orientation program for newly elected MPs in early 2022 (the activity ends in March 2022). “I would be working with the most senior Diwan officials, so they have a program with the new members from Day One,” a LELSA official said.

While parliament is fully staffed, including staff for the Diwan and committees, CEPPS officials said that most staff do not know how to work in a legislature or how to support members, which results in members who do not receive sufficient staff support to do their jobs. An MP cited administrative and communication failures within the HOR as a cause of its failings.

In 2014 LEGS produced a White Paper⁸ that drew on the experience of the outgoing General National Congress (GNC) and identified lessons to apply to support the HOR. That document identified an expansive 15-point plan for parliamentary development that appears to be beyond the scope of LELSA in its remaining 16 months of operation. LELSA officials who spoke to the ET agreed that strengthening committees and transparency (including session broadcasts) should be priorities. More immediately, LELSA and international implementers noted that the current HOR may need to pass electoral legislation, depending on how that issue is addressed in the LPDF.

A 2015 analysis for USAID of 30 legislative strengthening programs found that committee strengthening, and institutional development are key components of successful legislative strengthening programs. Components that encourage consultation with civil society on legislation and oversight are generally more successful than constituent outreach, as are public information components aimed at promoting transparency and informing citizens about the work of parliament. Surprisingly, that study found that constituent outreach programs generally are not successful in the early years of a program, though they are more successful in programs that operate for 10 years or more. Constituent outreach is more successful in multi-member districts than in single-member districts or with national party-list systems.⁹

Conclusions

LELSA’s parliamentary work has not been effective because that work was halted in 2019 due to the political split in the HOR and political direction from USAID. Working with the current members of the HOR is unlikely to be effective as they are viewed as ineffective and illegitimate by the Libyan people and international donors. However, stakeholders are optimistic that the current political dialogue could lead to parliamentary elections by the end of 2021. LELSA has a significant opportunity to lay the groundwork to build an effective parliamentary staff in that time frame. LELSA could work with the current parliamentary staff over the next 18 months to build their capacity to support members and to orient new MPs in the next parliament. An update of the 2014 White Paper is needed, and strengthening committees, administration, and transparency appear to be among the most pressing needs today.

Sub-question G

⁸ National Democratic Institute, Building a More Effective and Representative Parliament in Post-Revolution Libya: Lessons from the Experience of the General National Congress (Tripoli: NDI, June 2014).

⁹ John Lis and Gabrielle Plotkin, Legislative Strengthening Evaluations and Their Implications for Future Programs (Washington: USAID, September 2015), pp. 13–21.

Are there additional Libyan stakeholders or thematic areas with which USAID could engage to broaden or deepen the impact of democracy and governance programming in Libya?

Findings

USAID officials were skeptical about the capacity of CEPPS to broaden its portfolio, expressing concerns that the implementers are stretching themselves too thin. USAID already has added a component to LELSA focusing on countering hate speech and disinformation, implemented by the ABA as a subcontractor. That 15-month, \$1.5 million component has four main pillars: (1) public awareness on hate speech and disinformation, (2) youth digital and media literacy, (3) developing a charter and code of conduct for broadcasters, and (4) researching and monitoring sources of hate speech and disinformation.

USAID and several other donors are also working in the local governance field. USAID's Taqarib project is being implemented by Development Alternatives International (DAI). Implementers said local governance is a bright spot in Libya's democratic development, but it has become oversaturated with donors.

Creative Associates implemented an elections security program funded by the State Department that ended in November 2020. That program worked mainly with the Ministry of the Interior and coordinated with HNEC and CCMCE. An implementer said security is one of the major challenges facing the upcoming national election, noting that while CCMCE has built capacity to handle security issues for municipal elections, assistance is still needed for building security capacity for larger-scale events.

The U.S. Institute for Peace is implementing a rule-of-law program that focuses on the prison system.

Political Parties and Candidates

NDI worked to support political parties in Libya for two years (April 2018–March 2020) outside of LELSA, with funding from the United Kingdom. That program entailed six months of mapping the political party landscape, followed by 18 months of training and mentoring for parties, focusing on internal processes, strategy, and communications. With no prospect for elections on the horizon in early 2020, the program was not renewed.

With the prospect of national elections being held in December 2021, the United Kingdom (UK) is considering renewed funding for political party development in the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2021, a British embassy official said, depending upon progress in the political dialogue. A potential British-funded political party program would not necessarily be implemented by NDI, an official said.

LELSA officials said the timeline being discussed, with elections in December 2021, would make renewed political party support feasible, as such support would require about 12 months' lead time. A LELSA official said that one issue that would confront a political party program is that the Justice and Construction Party, affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, is the only organized party in Libya. USAID would be faced with a decision: fund support to all political parties, including Justice and Construction, "or don't engage with parties and leave the Muslim Brotherhood as the only functioning organization," the LELSA official added. Related to support for political parties is the potential for CEPPS to offer training to candidates in the national elections under discussion. Candidate training could be offered to individuals, rather than through political parties. A LELSA staffer said the activity is looking at reactivating candidate training, including youth involvement.

Anti-corruption

A range of key informants, including CEPPS officials, other USAID implementing partners, Libyan civil society, and underrepresented groups said that corruption is a major challenge for Libyan society. However, they said that powerful militias derive economic benefits from the status quo and would oppose any efforts to root out corruption, rendering any anti-corruption program quixotic and destined to fail.

“The biggest challenge is the militias, especially in Tripoli,” one USAID implementer said. “They all have their criminal networks, and they do not want to let that go. Even if someone at the ministry level wants to do something, they’re not going to let that happen. It’s a massive, massive challenge.” Another implementer said, “The power of the illicit economy to bring together competing factions is incalculable.”

Human Rights

Key informants from the U.S. Government and LELSA said the U.S. Government should consider funding work on human rights, both to educate Libyans about human rights and to work with UN human rights efforts. They added that the U.S. Embassy (which is based in Tunis) should support the Commission of Inquiry on Libya, recently created by the UN Officer of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR). Because Libyans may not have access to the Tunis-based embassy, this official suggested that LELSA implementers in Libya could assist with such outreach. U.S. and LELSA officials suggested that human rights and respect for diversity should be part of LELSA’s civic education efforts.

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) of the Department of State in 2020 advertised two notices of funding opportunity: 1. February 2020 announcement of grants for preventing and addressing gender-based violence (18-24 months, \$500,000-\$1.2 million); and 2. December 2020 announcement of grants for supporting human rights defenders (2-5 years, \$750,000-\$1.5 million). The ET was unable to determine the extent to which these grants have been awarded and implemented.

Other Stakeholders

Officials from both USAID and the State Department said LELSA should increase its outreach to women, youth, and ethnic minorities in its remaining 16 months. A LELSA official also suggested using the civic education curriculum and LELSA’s civic engagement partners to build support for a new political compact that may come out of the LPDF

Conclusions

Working with political parties and candidates will be needed if the political dialogue leads to parliamentary elections. NDI has already worked with political parties, so USAID could include party strengthening and/or candidate training in LELSA in the run-up to elections, in coordination with the UK or another donor that may fund a political party program in 2021.

As for other potential thematic areas, anti-corruption work is a significant need, but the political and security obstacles appear to be too formidable for such a program to succeed. Human rights programming also merits consideration; however, the ET did not collect enough evidence to draw a firm conclusion.

LELSA could expand its work with women, youth, and indigenous groups without a significant change in scope. Using LELSA’s civic education and civic engagement programs to promote acceptance of a political settlement would enable USAID to leverage its investment to support the political process. Expansion of local election support to eastern Libya may require a minor agreement modification.

5.2 Evaluation Question 2

How did the shifting political and security environment in Libya hinder LELSA's operations and programs, and how did LELSA adjust its operational and programmatic approach in response?

Findings

Political Environment

Hindrances

The program was designed in June 2018 in response to the 2018 Paris summit, when USAID thought elections would be held in December 2018 and the legislative strengthening component would be with newly elected HOR members. However, as described in the Background section, the first two years of LELSA were impacted by a political split between the East and West that led to full-blown military conflict between April 2019 and June 2020. The split in the House of Representatives between bodies based in Tobruk and Tripoli led USAID to recommend that LELSA suspend its support for the HOR, and national elections were not held as planned in late 2018 or early 2019. U.S. Government, LELSA and UN officials confirmed that the ongoing political divisions were a major hindrance to their programs.

Along with the shifting political environment came shifting direction from USAID to LELSA, according to U.S. Government and LELSA officials. Given the program's focus on political transition, the USG provided direction to implementing partners based on the political context. When there were political windows of opportunity, USAID would ask partners to capitalize on those; for example, work with the Ministry of Education on civic education.

LELSA officials said the result of the shifting political environment was a program that was flexible, adaptable and innovative, but consequently was reactive and improvisational, lacking a long-term strategy. "Libya was the most challenging, mind-boggling project I have worked on," said a LELSA official.

The political situation manifested itself in additional ways that hindered LELSA programming, according to LELSA officials and their Libyan partners. Continuity in elections programming proved difficult because of a high rate of staff turnover at HNEC, due to low morale stemming from funding interruptions, a lack of domestic political support, and frustration with elections not being scheduled.

Adjustments

In order to adjust to changes in the operating environment, LELSA's annual work plans include a variety of scenarios and activities that could be undertaken, depending on which scenarios come to pass. For example, the work plan for FY 2020 outlined scenarios in which a constitutional referendum was held; a political settlement was reached, leading to elections; or fighting continued. U.S. officials praised the flexibility of the program, both proactive and reactive.

USAID and LELSA officials said the CEPPS partners were effective at finding new areas of democracy and governance support when the initial focus on legislative strengthening and national elections proved to be unworkable. These included expanding the civic education component to include school curricula, adding youth programming like the work with university debate clubs, and building Democracy Resource Centers (local CSO sub-grantees that partner with IFES to expand public awareness and understanding of electoral issues) around the country.

The result was an ad hoc program that responded to changing U.S. foreign policy priorities, but as a result looked different from the one envisioned in the program description because it pivoted, adapted and changed in response to requests from USAID and the U.S. Embassy.

In an example of how LELSA overcame the challenge of working with rival western and eastern government institutions, a LELSA staffer noted that the civic education component held organizing/planning and teacher training meetings in Tunis so ministry staff from the East could be active participants. At the time, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was easier for residents of eastern Libya to travel to Tunis than to Tripoli.

Security environment

Hindrances

Key informants from every respondent group said the security situation in Libya has severely impacted LELSA programming. As documented in the Background section, widespread insecurity in the form of armed militias, roadblocks, and credible threats of violence evolved into armed conflict in April 2019 lasted into June 2020.

U.S. Government and CEPPS officials said the CEPPS partners have not been able to have a resident country director, other expatriate staff, or international trainers in Libya due to the security situation. As a result, the activity is managed from Tunis, which made it difficult to manage the program without people on the ground, a LELSA official said. Additional hindrances from the security situation include shelling, attacks on the HNEC (with IFES staff inside), and the May 2020 fire at a CCMCE warehouse in Mitiga sparked by LNA shelling, periodic curfews and lockdowns, and movement restrictions. “I had staff with anxiety issues because their neighborhoods were being shelled,” a CEPPS official said.

The impact on LELSA has been significant, including the following results:

- Challenges in organizing training, with international trainers unable to enter the country and Libyan trainers having their movement restricted
- An inability to conduct oversight of CSO grantees due to movement restrictions
- Difficulty in interacting with high-level Libyan officials, who expect in-person contact from resident country directors rather than local staff
- A reliance on local staff to carry out programming

Security concerns have also affected Libyan partners. A dozen Libyan government and CSO officials provided examples of how their work has been affected. One election observer described how her team traveled from Tripoli to the western mountains for a training, but they turned around when they encountered a hostile checkpoint. In addition, nine Libyan CSO officials said there were additional security threats to women, including threats of violence from armed groups opposed to women playing a role in public life.

Adjustments

To counter the inability of international trainers to enter Libya, the CEPPS partners brought beneficiaries to Tunis for international training programs. Participants were required to sign waivers when they traveled. The CEPPS partners have also hired a security team to support their staff in Tripoli and were able to conduct an in-person training in Misrata, but that required a security clearance “and 24/7 close-protection security,” an official said. To reduce travel risks, the CEPPS partners have hired staff outside of Tripoli, including in the Nafusa Mountains, Ubari, and Jufraa.

Another security adjustment is a move to online training, an initiative accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with development of a learning platform to provide a more secure environment. For example, the Misrata training was captured in a video that will be used to train others. However, live online training is difficult, due to limited bandwidth and regular power outages in Libya. A CEPPS official said implementers switched to online delivery of trainings using Zoom and are still assessing the impact in terms of delivery and comprehension. That official said the shift to online learning negatively impacted the timeline in a number of ways, as the trainings had to be redesigned for remote delivery, adding that training will need to be delivered in smaller chunks, with more distractions likely. The security environment has necessitated some unforeseen programming. For example, IFES provided counseling for HNEC and IFES staff to help deal with the trauma of the attack on HNEC headquarters.

Other challenges and adjustments

Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has impeded implementation of LELSA programs. One CSO partner said tasks that would take a week to accomplish previously were now taking months to complete. As noted above, LELSA has attempted to move to online training to continue its activities. For example, LELSA also has supported its partners in responding to the challenges of the pandemic by helping elections officials devise strategies to hold elections safely and by sharing information on COVID response with government officials and legislators.

Five implementers and 10 Libyan stakeholders cited the communications, electricity, and fuel shortages in Libya as a major impediment to carrying out programming, a problem made more acute by the increased reliance on remote communications in an environment where connectivity is difficult.

CEPPS officials and other donors said the lack of a functional banking system has had an impact on their work in Libya, a point shared by a dozen Libyan stakeholders. Implementers and beneficiaries said it is difficult to set up a bank account in Libya, difficult to transfer money to Libya, and difficult to withdraw money. To compensate, the CEPPS partners had employees carry cash into Libya when they traveled. A particular challenge is reimbursing CSO partners for their expenditures; individual CSO officials said they have to pay expenses personally and wait for reimbursement.

A half-dozen Libyan beneficiaries also said that NDI and IFES are too bureaucratic in their operations, needing to get signoff from their home offices for decisions, which beneficiaries said affects the operation of programs adversely. This results in Libyan beneficiaries working under short timelines and under pressure, they said. CSOs also cited communication in English as an impediment and suggested implementers hire more Arabic speakers.

Conclusions

The political environment hindered LELSA in several ways. LELSA was unable to gain traction in the HOR due to changing direction from USAID and the split into two bodies in 2019. The political situation also halted progress toward new national elections and a new HOR, leaving an elections and legislative strengthening program without elections or a new legislature to support. Political uncertainty has also affected beneficiaries: HNEC has lost staff, while CSOs have faced registration challenges.

The security situation, particularly the increase in violence beginning in early 2019, restricted mobility and operations in Libya for implementers, consultants, CSO partners, and beneficiaries. The logistical challenges restricted movement of implementer staff and trainers to Libya and made it more difficult for Libyans to travel to Tunis. Women in particular are targeted if they attempt to travel and are subject to intimidation because of their gender.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the need for CEPPS to work remotely, but the lack of reliable communications has made remote management and training more difficult than in other places. Constant electricity cuts and interruptions in communications severely impacted CEPPS's ability to communicate with and deliver remote training to beneficiaries. The lack of a functional banking system in Libya made routine money transfers impossible and particularly impacted CEPPS's ability to timely reimburse CSO partners. Government budget issues affected beneficiaries like HNEC and contributed to loss of staff.

CEPPS demonstrated great adaptability in the face of political constraints and found new activities to promote democracy and governance in Libya when the original program plans were blocked. However, these new activities have understandably shifted the project away from its initial focus – in particular, away from legislative strengthening – leading to the adoption of a new results framework in September 2020. Developments in the political dialogue in the past several months may lead to a reconsideration of whether the original program goals are again feasible.

5.3 Evaluation Question 3

To what extent can lessons learned from LELSA inform the design and implementation of other democracy and governance strengthening activities in limited-permissibility environments?

Findings

Key informants suggested lessons for other DG activities in limited-permissibility environments that can be learned from the implementation of LELSA, including the following:

- **LELSA adapted programming when necessary.** USAID and implementers said that by adapting programming to new realities when needed, programs can maintain the space and relationships needed for full implementation when the political and/or security environment improves. Among the specific tools used by LELSA were quarterly workplans and scenario-based planning. For example, the workplan for FY 2020 listed activities to be carried out regardless of scenario, followed by additional activities that could be carried out if any of three scenarios came to pass: 1. Political settlement and constitutional referendum; 2. Political settlement with presidential and parliamentary elections and a delayed referendum; 3. Municipal elections held without a political settlement. Operational flexibility also enables democracy and governance (DG) success when the original anticipated activities no longer make sense; for example, USAID revised the results framework for LELSA in September 2020 because the activity had changed significantly in response to events. Key informants said USAID should be extremely flexible with DG projects in limited-permissibility environments, utilizing rapid-response funds and crisis-modifier clauses. “The Mission understands that there are so many external disruptors that they allow us to make the necessary adjustments to the program and planned approaches,” an implementer said.
- **Encourage strong implementer coordination.** USAID and implementers said greater coordination among implementing partners, both within a project and across USAID's country portfolio, could generate synergies, prevent overlap, and ensure gaps are filled. They cited a desire for more cohesion as a team, rather than implementers working in “silos.” Implementers said USAID should facilitate cooperation among implementers. A USAID official said there could be more collaboration among partners, specifically citing the potential for greater cooperation between LELSA and DAI's local governance program to help build connections between national and local CSOs.

- **Coordinate diplomacy and development.** USAID and embassy officials said that when the U.S. Embassy disregards reports and analyses from a USAID DG project, it can lead to a “disconnect between diplomacy and development” that prevents the embassy from making full use of the insights available to it in country. Building contacts with local officials and political leaders through a DG program holds tremendous value not only for the project and the USAID mission, but for the embassy as well, U.S. officials said. Particularly in limited-permissibility environments where the U.S. government has restricted or no mobility, implementing partners can serve as the eyes and ears for diplomats and provide “critical ground-truthing.”
- **Choose good partners.** Implementer and CSO partners said LELSA chose good partners, which led to good partnerships and is key to success. Working together in an open, transparent, and respectful manner fostered trust and a closer and more honest collaboration, which implementers said was a key factor of success when unexpected challenges arise. They added that strong partnerships help implementers and CSO partners realistically manage expectations of one another over the life of the partnership because each is clear about the goals and the constraints of engagement. Choosing diverse partners who represent the country as a whole helps protect implementers from perceptions of bias or accidentally delivering a biased program, and a strong network of local partners is needed to do anything in Libya. CSO leaders said a CSO based in the capital can team up with a local CSO and gain acceptance from local elders to ensure that local approval does not become a challenge.
- **Collaborate with partners.** Donors, implementers, and CSOs said collaborative engagement with local partners – encouraging them to take the lead in selecting advocacy issues – results in greater ownership of the activity. They suggested starting small and following their partners’ lead because they understand the landscape better, which can lead implementers in important and promising directions. Implementers said activities should focus on what the CSOs themselves want to work on and CSO partners should be collaboratively involved in the planning process and setting their advocacy agenda, rather than carrying out the agenda of the activity’s implementing partner.
- **Support participants, partners and staff.** An implementer said people are important, and difficult environments like Libya mean participants, partners, and implementers need extra personal support to overcome hardships. Another implementer noted, “I’m always amazed at the resilience of both staff and partners to continue the work regardless of how hard it gets. Just when you are certain that this new obstacle will be the straw that breaks the camel’s back, they push right through and surprise you.”
- **Deliver quality.** Implementers said that providing quality programs that staff and partners see as adding value encourages resilience and enables success in the face of obstacles. Staff and partners will work hard to overcome challenges if they believe strongly in what they are doing. “If we are giving them quality program offerings that they see as adding value to their efforts, partners will overcome almost any obstacle to participate,” an implementer said. “If they think it is too theoretical or don’t believe in the value of the underlying goal, they will not.”
- **Build organizational capacity.** Donors, implementers, and CSOs said organizational training for CSOs is a necessary first step toward building a strong civil society that can advocate effectively. The focus should be more on Libyans and on building local capacity. Many good

organizations doing good work are suffering because they lack the basic training on how to run an effective organization or to fundraise so that they can hire the staff needed to function at a professional level, an implementer said.

- **Plan CSO programming for the long term.** Donors and beneficiaries said longer term programming for CSOs is more effective and can better earn the trust of Libyan beneficiaries, a CSO leader said, suggesting that programs last for 12 months rather than three months. Longer programs, CSO officials said, can achieve results in making effective changes to a culture that is “deep-rooted.” A donor official concurred that a multi-year program is needed to provide continuity and longevity in an environment where progress is not achieved quickly.
- **Tackle the operational issues up front.** An implementer said operational challenges, such as opening a bank account, should be addressed at the very beginning of a project to avert an administrative “absolute nightmare.”

Conclusions

Adaptation and flexibility are critical to successful democracy and governance work in limited-permissibility environments where the political and security environment is frequently changing. Coordinating with implementing partners, diplomats, and local partners is essential to building synergies and reducing duplication, enabling the U.S. Government and the host country to benefit to the greatest extent possible. Success is a long-term undertaking, relying on staff and beneficiaries who are supported by the implementer and who themselves believe in the project.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Increase civil society engagement with the UN.

USAID/LEO should explore engagement with the UN to increase the amount of civil society engagement – especially for women, youth, and ethnic minorities – in UN-sponsored dialogues and human rights processes. The engagement of CSOs will likely require the active facilitation of the U.S. Government, due to difficulties in travel to Tunis during the pandemic. LELSA implementers should assist outreach as appropriate. (EQs ID and IE)

Recommendation 2: Increase collaboration between components.

USAID should encourage LELSA implementing partners to explore collaboration in voter education and combating disinformation, building on NDI’s relationships with CSOs and IFES’s trusted relationship with electoral management bodies. Another area of collaboration might include the Access Campaign, where data collection about access to polling stations could add value to advocacy for permanent access to educational opportunities for persons with disabilities since the majority of polling stations are located in schools. (EQs IC and IG)

Recommendation 3: Build CSO organizational capacity.

USAID should consider supporting foundational work with Libyan CSOs that focuses on the fundamentals of managing and administering a sound civil society organization and meets minimum standards for democratic governance. (EQ ID)

Recommendation 4: Expand youth programming.

USAID should continue planned work of NDI's youth debate programs and IFES' civic education program to include the creation of a youth parliament or other youth-oriented programs. These will enable young people, effectively closed off from current decision-making and policy development processes in Libya, to engage one another on forward-focused policy challenges that Libya is likely to face 20 or 30 years forward in the future. (EQ 1C)

Recommendation 5: Improve civic education performance monitoring.

USAID should direct IFES to collect interim measures of effectiveness of both of the civic-education curricula that have been launched, measuring the effectiveness of teachers' guides and participant learning. This process should provide important baseline assessments for both comprehension and attitudes on civic engagement and voting prior to implementation of the curricula to determine whether the material is having the desired impact or whether program adjustments need to be made. (EQ 1C)

Recommendation 6: Expand support to indigenous groups.

USAID should encourage LELSA to continue to provide groups representing indigenous communities with training and development, including advocacy, communication, media, and strategic planning, with a focus on youth and women. More consultations should include international experts who can share experiences with indigenous issues from other countries, such as Canada. NDI should explore the development of an indigenous people joint advocacy agenda and trainings as part of a long-term sustained program of support. (EQ 1E)

Recommendation 7: Resume parliamentary engagement.

USAID should direct LELSA to resume its engagement with parliament, with an eye to building staff capacity and identifying priorities in the run-up to the election of new MPs. LELSA should work with Diwan to build staff capacity, particularly in administration, committees, rules of procedure, outreach (including broadcasting), and consultation. Support to current members should be the minimum needed to obtain political buy-in for staff training. In 2021 LELSA should undertake a revision of the 2014 White Paper assessing the parliament's needs and should work with the Diwan to prepare an orientation program for new members in early 2022. (EQ 1F)

Recommendation 8: Ensure parties and candidates are supported.

USAID should coordinate with LELSA and other donors to ensure that a training program is in place for political parties and parliamentary candidates in the run-up to the possible December 2021 elections. Such support should continue the work that NDI undertook with political parties under British auspices between 2018 and 2020, as well as provide training to all candidates, including independents. (EQ 1G)

Recommendation 9: Remain flexible.

USAID should continue to support the flexible approach of CEPPS in responding to current and potential new challenges. USAID should revisit whether the original program goals for supporting national elections and legislative strengthening can be realized if the political dialogue proves successful. (EQ2)

Recommendation 10: Disseminate lessons learned.

USAID should review the lessons learned from LELSA and determine which lessons are most useful for the design and implementation of other democracy and governance strengthening activities in limited-permissibility environments. USAID should disseminate those lessons learned to its missions operating DG programs in such environments. (EQ3)

7. ANNEXES

ANNEX A: SCOPE OF WORK

Purpose of the Evaluation

This statement of work (SOW) for the *Monitoring and Evaluation for Tunisia and Libya* contract (METAL) outlines USAID/Libya’s need for a mid-term evaluation of the Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity (LELSA) to inform the USAID Democracy and Governance team as well as members of the Political Section on how the USG can best support a democratic political transition in the midst of conflict and growing external influence. Recommendations will inform the team to make tweaks to the existing program so we can be as effective as possible given the challenging environment. The results will also be used to inform future designs, including the new stabilization follow-on program and any eventual successor to LELSA.

The main audience is the USAID/Libya Democracy and Governance (DG) team and the broader USAID/Libya team, though the reports may also be shared in full or in part with the Libya External Office (LEO) and USAID implementing partners.

Summary Information

Strategy/Project/Activity Name	Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity (LELSA)
USAID Office	USAID/Libya
Implementer(s)	National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) as the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS)
Cooperative Agreement/Contract #	72067018LA00001
Total Estimated Ceiling of the Evaluated Project/Activity (TEC)	\$30 million
Life of Strategy/Project/Activity	October 2018 - March 2022
Active Geographic Regions	Main areas where LELSA has worked, including Tripoli, Benghazi and Sebha at a minimum.
Development Objective(s) (DOs)	Institutions of governance are more accountable to and better represent the interests of citizens.
Required evaluation?	Yes
External or internal evaluation?	External

Background

The Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity (LELSA) aims to increase confidence and trust in political and electoral institutions, incorporate civil society into policy and decision-making processes, and increase active participation of all segments of Libyan society, including persons with disabilities, women, youth, and traditionally marginalized populations.

Description of the Problem and Context

USAD's democracy and governance partners have been working in Libya since 2012, first under the 2012-2018 Libya Election and Governance Support Activity (LEGS) and today under LELSA. Both activities have been implemented by CEPPS partners: LEGS was implemented by IFES, NDI and IRI, while LELSA is implemented by IFES and NDI.

The core of their work has been to support a democratic political transition in Libya. They have done this through support to the High National Elections Commission (HNEC) to build its capacity as an independent and capable institution that can carry out credible electoral processes. The programs have also worked closely with the members and staff of the House of Representatives (HOR). Finally, they have supported key civil society organizations on issues such as voter education and outreach, the role of a constitution, and advocacy to increase the political participation of underrepresented groups such as women, youth, persons with disabilities (PwD) and indigenous populations.

The environment in Libya is very complex and has become even more difficult since the Libya National Army's (LNA) military campaign in April 2019 and the cancellation of the planned United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)-facilitated National Conference. In addition, the HOR has further fractured with a new branch in Tripoli. This has made assisting the HOR very difficult. There is also an increase in hate speech and disinformation from political actors, which will be addressed by a new component of LELSA.

Description of the Intervention to be Evaluated and Theory of Change

The program was designed under the overarching theory of change that:

If the HNEC, Central Commission of Municipal Council Elections (CCMCE), and institutions with election-related responsibilities institutionalize best practices in the areas of professional development, operational and internal management systems, and electoral administration, AND political parties, legislators, and government officials improve and reform policy- and decision-making practices and integrate all parts of Libyan society, including women, youth, and marginalized groups into those processes, THEN a political culture of transparency, accountability, and citizen trust inclusive of all Libyans, including women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups, will be strengthened.

If targeted civil society actors work actively to engage citizens to stimulate civic and electoral participation, AND the HNEC, CCMCE, and Ministry of Interior are capable of implementing effective election security measures, THEN candidates will be able to safely and securely conduct campaigns AND citizens will be able to freely express their preferences for political candidates.

If Libyan civil society is well informed on their role in monitoring and reporting on political activities and mitigating conflict AND are able to serve in an organized and effective oversight role, THEN electoral processes can be fairer and citizen confidence will be strengthened.

If Libyan legislative bodies have enhanced ability to conduct day-to-day operations AND Libyan legislators carry out legislative functions through skills building AND legislative bodies increase public outreach and incorporate feedback mechanisms, THEN Libyans will gain confidence regarding the credibility and viability of the GOL's legislative bodies.

Each element of this theory of change has been affected by the ongoing conflict, political fracture, and growing external influence in Libya. Some activities have been delayed, counterparts have shifted, and some activities have halted while new opportunities have emerged. It will be imperative for this report to evaluate LELSA programming within a complex framework of challenges that stretch far beyond USAID's manageable interest.

Evaluation Questions

Evaluators will review and finalize questions in collaboration with USAID prior to finalizing the evaluation design.

1. To what extent did LELSA contribute to the mission's objective supporting institutions of governance to be more accountable to and better represent the interest of citizens? Specific program areas of interest include:
 - a. Have the capacity, performance and sustainability of the HNEC as an independent entity improved as a result of LELSA support?
 - b. How effective has LELSA's programming on local elections been?
 - c. What is the perception of Libyan stakeholders of how effective LELSA's civic education efforts have been?
 - d. How effective has LELSA's advocacy work with civil society organizations and coalitions been, and how can LELSA support those organizations to go beyond issue advocacy and contribute to the broader political discourse?
 - e. How effective has LELSA's work with indigenous populations been, and are there opportunities for expansion in this area?
 - f. How effective has LELSA's engagement been with members and staff of the House of Representatives, and should LELSA continue to support the HOR given the current political and security environment?
 - g. Are there additional Libyan stakeholders or thematic areas with which USAID could engage to broaden or deepen the impact of democracy and governance programming in Libya?
2. How did LELSA adjust its operational and programmatic approach in response to the perpetually shifting political and security environment in Libya, including the announced August 22, 2020, cease fire? To what extent was LELSA able to provide agreed-upon deliverables amid adjustments made due to the political and security situation?
3. To what extent can lessons learned from LELSA inform the design and implementation of other democracy and governance strengthening activities in limited-permissibility environments?

Evaluation Design and Methodology

USAID expects that, at a minimum, the evaluation team will:

- Upon award, familiarize themselves with documentation about the LELSA activity and USAID's current assistance in the Democracy and Governance area in Libya and the region.
- Review and assess the existing performance and effectiveness information or data;
- Conduct site visits for field testing survey instruments (when applicable and feasible);

- Meet and interview USAID project beneficiaries, partners, and host government counterparts at appropriate levels; and
- Interview USAID staff and a representative number of experts working in the sector

The desk review includes at a minimum:

- USAID Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity SOW;
- LELSA materials: Annual and Quarterly Reports, Annual Work Plan, MEL Plans, sector assessments, trip reports, performance reports, gender analyses, relevant sections of the Project Appraisal Document, and miscellaneous thematic reports from other sources.
- LEGS Final Evaluation

The contractor will submit the preliminary evaluation design by September 15, 2020, for review by USAID. The evaluation Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) will approve the finalized evaluation design prior to the team's start of data collection.

Deliverables and Reporting Requirements

1. Kickoff call

The evaluation team, METAL personnel, and USAID personnel participated in a kickoff call on September 4, 2020, for introductions and to discuss the team's understanding of the assignment, initial assumptions, evaluation questions, methodology and work plan, and to adjust the SOW. This revised SOW incorporates revisions agreed during the kickoff call.

2. Evaluation Work Plan/Evaluation Design/Inception report

No later than September 15, 2020, the lead evaluator shall complete and present a combined draft work plan, evaluation design and inception report for the evaluation to the COR.

In the inception report, the evaluation team will present findings from the desk review and examination of data to date and will identify information gaps to be addressed in fieldwork. These will inform the evaluation design.

The work plan/evaluation design will include:

1. Draft schedule and logistical arrangements;
2. Members of the evaluation team, delineated by roles and responsibilities;
3. Evaluation milestones;
4. Anticipated schedule of evaluation team data collection efforts;
5. Proposed evaluation methodology including selection criteria for comparison groups, if applicable; and
6. Evaluation Report outline (if different from the attached template).
7. Detailed evaluation design matrix that links the Evaluation Questions from the SOW (in their finalized form) to data sources, methods, and the data analysis plan;
8. Draft questionnaires and other data collection instruments or their main features;
9. List of potential interviewees and proposed selection criteria and/or sampling plan (must include sampling methodology and methods, including a justification of sample size and any applicable calculations);
10. Limitations to the evaluation design; and

11. Dissemination plan (designed in collaboration with USAID).

The contractor will update the lists of interviewees, survey participants, and schedule as necessary, and submit the updated version to the COR on a biweekly basis.

Unless exempted from doing so by the COR, the evaluation design will be shared with partner country stakeholders as well as with the implementing partners for comment before being finalized.

The data analysis plan should clearly describe the evaluation team's approach for analyzing quantitative and qualitative data (as applicable), including proposed sample sizes, specific data analysis tools, and any software proposed to be used, with an explanation of how/why these selections will be useful in answering the evaluation questions for this task. Qualitative data should be coded as part of the analysis approach, and the coding used should be included in the appendix of the final report. Gender, geographic, and role (beneficiary, implementer, government official, NGO, etc.) disaggregation must be included in the data analysis where applicable.

All dissemination plans should be developed with USAID and include information on audiences, activities, and deliverables, including any data visualizations, multimedia products, or events to help communicate evaluation [*findings/conclusions/recommendations*]. See the [Evaluation Toolkit](#) for guidance on [Developing an Evaluation Dissemination Plan](#).

If applicable based on the [Disclosure of Conflict of Interests Forms](#) submitted with the awardee's proposal, the evaluation design will include a conflict of interest mitigation plan.

USAID offices and relevant stakeholders will take up to seven working days to review and consolidate comments through the COR, who will provide them to the evaluation team by September 25, 2020. Once the evaluation team receives the consolidated comments on the initial evaluation design and work plan, they are expected to return with a revised evaluation design and work plan prior to commencing fieldwork.

3. *In-briefing*

Given travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation team will conduct a virtual in-briefing with USAID/Libya officers to review the inception report/evaluation design prior to commencing fieldwork. The in-briefing will take place on or about September 28, 2020.

4. *Work Plan updates*

During fieldwork, the evaluation team will provide updates to relevant USAID/Libya team members on the status of the evaluation, including potential challenges and emerging opportunities. As noted above, the team will provide updates to the evaluation work plan on a biweekly basis.

5. *Out-briefing*

Approximately one week after the conclusion of fieldwork, the evaluation team will hold an out-briefing to discuss preliminary findings with relevant USAID officials. This presentation will utilize virtual conferencing software. It will be scheduled as agreed upon during the in-briefing and is expected to take place on or about October 23, 2020.

6. Draft Evaluation Report

The draft evaluation report should be consistent with the guidance provided in Section IX, Final Report Format. The report will address each of the questions identified in the SOW and any other issues the team considers have a bearing on the objectives of the evaluation. Any such issues can be included in the report only after consultation with USAID. The submission date for the draft evaluation report will be determined in the evaluation work plan. Once the initial draft evaluation report is submitted, the USAID/Libya team will endeavor to review and comment on the initial draft within five working days, after which point the COR will submit the consolidated comments to the evaluation team. Unforeseen events may result in a longer USAID review period.

7. Final Evaluation Report

The evaluation team will be asked to take no more than five working days to respond to and incorporate the final draft evaluation report and presentation comments from the USAID/Libya team. The evaluation team lead will then submit the final report to the COR. Holidays or a longer-than-anticipated USAID review period may result in a longer revision period, to be agreed with USAID.

8. Other Evaluation Deliverables

- a) Two-page Executive Summary
- b) One-page Summary Recommendations Sheet

9. Final Presentation

The evaluation team is expected to hold a final presentation by virtual conferencing software to discuss the summary of findings and conclusions (and recommendations, if applicable) with USAID. This presentation will be scheduled as agreed upon during the in-briefing.

10. Submission of Dataset(s) to the Development Data Library

Per USAID's Open Data policy (see [ADS 579, USAID Development Data](#)) the contractor must also submit to the COR and the Development Data Library (DDL), at www.usaid.gov/data, in a machine-readable, non-proprietary format, a copy of any dataset created or obtained in performance of this award, if applicable. The dataset should be organized and documented for use by those not fully familiar with the intervention or evaluation.

Please review [ADS 579.3.2.2 Types of Data To Be Submitted to the DDL](#) to determine applicability.

11. Submission of Final Evaluation Report to the Development Experience Clearinghouse

Per USAID policy ([ADS 201.3.5.18](#)) the contractor must submit the evaluation final report and its summary or summaries to the [Development Experience Clearinghouse](#) (DEC) within three months of final approval by USAID.

Evaluation Team Composition

The four-member evaluation team was approved by the COR on July 27, 2020. Per [ADS 201.3.5.14](#), all team members must provide to USAID a signed statement attesting to a lack of conflict of interest or

describing an existing conflict of interest relative to the project or activity being evaluated (i.e., a conflict-of-interest form).

Required qualifications and skills:

1. Experience in evaluation design, methods, management, and implementation;
2. Technical subject matter expertise;
3. Background in USAID’s cross-cutting program priorities, such as gender equality and women’s empowerment, youth, etc.;
4. Experience in Libya and/or MENA region; and
5. Arabic language skills.

EVALUATION SCHEDULE

The below evaluation schedule is illustrative and will be updated in collaboration with USAID prior to finalization of the work plan.

Performance Evaluation Schedule

Duration	Proposed Activities	Important Considerations
10 days	Preparation of the work plan, evaluation design and inception report	Local holidays, season/weather, transport availability
10 days	USAID review of the work plan and evaluation design	Availability in the Mission or OU
1 day	In-briefing	Availability in the Mission or OU
3 weeks	Data collection	Number of sites, methods, sectors, etc.
1 week	Data analysis	Amount and type of data
2 weeks	Report writing	Length of time to meet report requirements and any additional requests/products
1 week	USAID review of draft report	Length of time for all relevant stakeholders to read and provide feedback
1 week	Incorporate USAID comments and prepare final report	Length of time to reconcile feedback from varying stakeholders and comply with formatting requirements
	Submit dataset(s) to Development Data Library	Length of time to convert data to machine-readable format
	Submit final report to Development Experience Clearinghouse	Length of time for final review and approval by COR

Final Report Format

The body of the report should be no more than 30 pages, excluding abstract, executive summary and annexes. The outline is as follows:

1. Abstract
2. Executive Summary
3. Evaluation Purpose
4. Background on the Context and the Strategies/Projects/Activities being Evaluated
5. Evaluation Questions
6. Methodology
7. Limitations to the Evaluation
8. Findings, Conclusions, and (If Applicable) Recommendations
9. Annexes

See the [Evaluation Toolkit](#) for the [How-To Note on Preparing Evaluation Reports](#) and [ADS 201mah, USAID Evaluation Report Requirements](#). An optional [Evaluation Report Template](#) is also available in the Evaluation Toolkit.

The evaluation **abstract of no more than 250 words** should describe what was evaluated, evaluation questions, methods, and key findings or conclusions. The **executive summary should be 2 pages** and summarize the purpose, background of the project being evaluated, main evaluation questions, methods, findings, and conclusions (plus recommendations and lessons learned, if applicable). The evaluation methodology shall be explained in the report in detail. Limitations to the evaluation shall be disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methods (e.g., in sampling; data availability; measurement; analysis; any potential bias such as sampling/selection, measurement, interviewer, response, etc.) and their implications for conclusions drawn from the evaluation findings.

Annexes to the report must include:

- Evaluation SOW (updated, not the original, if there were any modifications);
- Evaluation methods;
- All data collection and analysis tools used in conducting the evaluation, such as questionnaires, checklists, and discussion guides;
- All sources of information or data, identified and listed;
- Statements of difference regarding significant unresolved differences of opinion by funders, implementers, and/or members of the evaluation team, if applicable;
- [Signed disclosure of conflict of interest forms](#) for all evaluation team members, either attesting to a lack of or describing existing conflicts of interest; and
- Summary information about evaluation team members, including qualifications, experience, and role on the team.

Criteria to Ensure the Quality of the Evaluation Report

Per [ADS 201mah, Criteria to Ensure the Quality of the Evaluation Report](#), draft and final evaluation reports will be evaluated against the following criteria to ensure quality.

- Evaluation reports should represent a thoughtful, well-researched, and well-organized effort to objectively evaluate the strategy, project, or activity;
- Evaluation reports should be readily understood and should identify key points clearly, distinctly, and succinctly;
- The Executive Summary should present a concise and accurate statement of the most critical elements of the report;
- Evaluation reports should adequately address all evaluation questions included in the SOW, or the evaluation questions subsequently revised and documented in consultation and agreement with USAID;
- Evaluation methodology should be explained in detail and sources of information or data properly identified;
- Limitations to the evaluation should be disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparator groups, etc.);
- Evaluation findings should be presented as analyzed facts, evidence, and data and not based on anecdotes, hearsay, or simply the compilation of people's opinions;
- Conclusions should be specific, concise, and include an assessment of quality and strength of evidence to support them supported by strong quantitative and/or qualitative evidence;
- If evaluation findings assess person-level outcomes or impact, they should also be separately assessed for both males and females; and
- If recommendations are included, they should be supported by a specific set of findings and should be action-oriented, practical, and specific.

See [ADS 201mah, USAID Evaluation Report Requirements](#) and the [Evaluation Report Checklist and Review Template](#) from the [Evaluation Toolkit](#) for additional guidance.

Other Requirements

All modifications to the required elements of the SOW of the contract/agreement, whether in evaluation questions, design and methodology, deliverables and reporting, evaluation team composition, schedule, and/or other requirements will be agreed upon in writing by the COR. Any revisions made will be noted in the SOW annexed to the final Evaluation Report.

ANNEX B: METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

Methodology

The ET conducted this evaluation from August 20 to November 30, 2020. The period comprised approximately five weeks for a desk review of LELSA documents and drafting the Inception Report and evaluation methodology, including the development of data collection protocols and other planning for mobilization (the period includes 10 days for USAID review). The evaluation period also included six weeks for data collections and five weeks for data analysis and writing and reviewing this draft.

Phase One Planning and Preparation

This independent midterm evaluation began when USAID/Libya sent a draft scope of work to the METAL office, which shared the SOW and project documents with the ET. Following document review, the ET held an internal team meeting on September 3, 2020, followed by client kickoff meeting on September 4, during which the ET, METAL representatives in the United States and Tunisia, and evaluation Contracting Officer's Representative (COR), and USAID/Libya personnel who manage LELSA discussed evaluation use and reviewed the EQs. During the planning phase, the ET reviewed and discussed the LELSA evaluation SOW, clarified team members' roles and responsibilities, reviewed LELSA documents, prepared the Inception Report, and formulated the evaluation design.

Phase Two Data Collection

The ET used a qualitative evaluation design consisting of document review and key informant interviews (KIIs). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the security situation in Libya the ET did all KIIs remotely. The ET attempted to conduct one focus group of LELSA beneficiaries, but only one person joined the call, in effect, turning it into a KII.

The data collection protocols to guide fieldwork are in Annex 4. The purpose of the protocols was to (1) ensure the ET addresses all key issues during data collection; (2) elicit rich, sometimes unanticipated, information from respondents; (3) help organize information in a form that the ET can efficiently analyze; and, (4) ensure that the ET collects sex-disaggregated data, and that the ET had information to assess the extent to which LELSA effectively addressed the specific concerns of both male and female stakeholders.

The protocols consist of questions that address and derive from the EQs, as well as from the ET's document review, its initial discussions with USAID, and its evaluation design knowledge.

Data Collection Methods

Document Review

The ET conducted a review of LELSA documents to better understand the Activity design and implementation, extract findings relevant to the EQs, and inform data collection protocol development so that instruments appropriately supplement or cross-check information in the background documents. The ET lists the following document categories, which it fully describes in Annex 3:

- LELSA semiannual and monthly reports
- LELSA annual and quarterly work plans
- LELSA monitoring and evaluation plans
- Activity descriptions and modifications
- Outside analyses and studies, including the Libya Gender Analysis

Key Informant Interviews

Due to the pandemic, security situation, and curfew, KIIs were conducted by telephone, internet-based communications software like WhatsApp and Viber, or web-based meeting platforms like Microsoft Teams and Google Meet.

Two Libyan evaluation team members conducted fieldwork in Libya, and two U.S. team members remained in the United States. Interviews with USAID and CEPPS personnel were conducted in English

by all ET members. Interviews with other donors and implementers of other USAID programs were interviewed in English by the U.S. evaluators, with transcribed notes in English shared with their Libyan colleagues. Interviews with Libyan interlocutors were conducted in Arabic by the two Libyan team members. They shared typed and translated interview notes in English with the U.S. team members in a timely fashion during fieldwork.

The ET conducted KIIs with key stakeholder groups, including officials from election committees, legislative officers and staff, key CEPPS partners, and representatives of minority groups. Findings from KIIs contributed to the ET's responses to all EQs.

Phase Three Data Analysis

The team leader (TL) oversaw and managed the systematic analysis of qualitative data. The ET's data analysis approach utilized data triangulation to cross-check results, and it applied several analysis methods to provide evidence for the evaluation's findings and conclusions.

Data Analysis Processes

ET members took detailed notes of KIIs, cleaning and sharing electronic summaries on a rolling basis throughout fieldwork. Team members discussed via e-mail their progress and any adjustments that may be needed in the evaluation schedule. Team members reviewed one another's notes throughout the fieldwork process and shared ideas via e-mail, due to connectivity issues in Libya that hampered real-time conversations.

The TL captured preliminary findings, conclusions, and recommendations (FCR) in a matrix that categorized analysis by EQ. This enabled the ET to look for trends within and across sub-groups, including trends by sex. The matrix ensures that the ET prepares a systematic and thorough response to each EQ, verified that preliminary analysis accounts for gender and social dimensions, identified any gaps where the ET needed additional clarification or analysis, and served as the basis for developing the evaluation report.

Data Analysis Methods

The ET employed several data analysis methods to identify key findings from the collected data, as well as to draw conclusions and make recommendations for LELSA in the final two years of the activity. The type of analyses depended on the specific data being assessed (e.g., content analysis for qualitative KII and FGD data). Analysis methods included:

1. **Content Analysis** – Content analysis entailed the ET's intensive review of KII data to identify and highlight notable examples of LELSA successes (or lack of successes) that contributed to the (or inhibited) achievement of its objectives.
2. **Trend Analysis** – Trend analysis enabled the ET to examine different LELSA indicators over time to identify patterns of convergence (or divergence) of outputs and outcomes toward the stated objectives.
3. **Gap Analysis** – Gap analyses by the ET examined which aspects of LELSA, if any, fell short of anticipated performance, and the factors contributing to these gaps.
4. **Comparative Analysis** – The ET undertook comparisons of LELSA results across stakeholder groups to assess either convergence or divergence in perspectives.
5. **Gender Analysis** – All data the ET collected through KIIs was disaggregated by sex and analyzed

Data Triangulation

The ET employed analytical triangulation approaches to developing the findings and conclusions. Triangulation enabled the ET to cross-verify and cross-validate the findings that emerge from using the above data collection methods (KIIs and FGDs) and data sources to validate responses and identify correlations among findings to determine LELSA's overall effectiveness.

The ET designed data collection protocols with the same or similar questions across its KIIs (for various stakeholder groups) and FGDs. This facilitated data triangulation because each method/stakeholder group

addresses subsets of the same EQs, and their testimony validated or refuted that of the other techniques/stakeholders. This approach also enabled the ET to strengthen the potential linkages and accuracy of its data if the results obtained through one method or from one stakeholder group are less conclusive than those obtained through another method or stakeholder group.

Phase Four Dissemination and Utilization

Following fieldwork and data analysis, the ET will present the FCR during a remote out-briefing to USAID/Libya tentatively scheduled for October 23, 2020.

IBTCI will submit a draft evaluation report answering all of the EQs on November 6, 2020. The ET will revise the draft report to address USAID comments (and CEPPS comments, if USAID so requests). IBTCI will submit the final evaluation report within five business days of receiving feedback from reviewers. A final evaluation to present the final report may be scheduled with USAID/Libya, implementing partners, and other stakeholders that USAID may invite.

USAID/Libya will disseminate the final evaluation report. Upon final approval, METAL will upload the report to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC).

SAMPLING APPROACH/STRATEGY

Annex 3 includes the list of key informants the ET interviewed. Table 3 shows the distribution and number of KIIs and FGDs (participants in parentheses).

Table 4: Number of KIIs, and FGDs by Stakeholder Group

STAKEHOLDER	TOTAL
USAID/LEO	6
CEPPS	12
Electoral officials	6
HOR members and staff	3
CSOs	13
Indigenous groups	3
Other donors and implementers	14
TOTAL KIIs	57

The ET collected data on the perspectives and experiences of key stakeholders involved in LELSA using a purposeful sampling technique. Considering the time limitation of this evaluation, this approach enabled the team to prioritize interviewees with the most information, balanced by the representativeness of the interviewees where population sizes are larger. The ET identified stakeholders involved in activity oversight and implementation, as well as stakeholders that received LELSA services and participated in its capacity-building efforts. The ET supplemented purposeful sampling with snowball sampling to enable the ET to identify additional key informants and fill gaps in its list of key stakeholders. The main categories of stakeholders the ET interviewed include the following:

- USAID: LELSA COR, Alternate COR and Washington Desk Officer
- Libya External Office representatives
- LELSA personnel and consultants
- Other USAID/Libya implementing partners
- United Nations and other donors

- Electoral committee officials
- House of Representatives members and staff
- Civil society organizations
- Representatives of indigenous populations

LIMITATIONS

Biases

The ET is aware of several noteworthy bias risks in data collection and analysis:

1. **Recall Bias:** Recall bias is a common challenge in evaluations. LELSA recipients may not recall or respond to the ET's questions with answers that blend their experiences into a composite memory if, for example, they have received training or services from multiple sources. The overlap between the 2012-2019 LEGS program and the 2018-2022 LELSA program, both including IFES and NDI as implementers, resulted in several interlocutors providing information about LEGS programming. The ET conducted as many KIIs and FGDs as possible within the fieldwork period to triangulate responses as described above to increase the validity of the evaluation findings. It also probed respondents' answers to ensure accurate recollections.
2. **Response Bias:** Response bias is the risk that key informants may be motivated to provide responses that would be considered socially desirable or influential in obtaining donor support. For example, a beneficiary may provide positive remarks about LELSA because s/he would like his/her institution to receive similar support in the future or because s/he wants to please the interviewer or other participants in a group. The ET mitigated this risk by explaining the objectives and potential benefits associated with the evaluation exercise clearly at the beginning of each KII.
3. **Selection Bias:** Selection bias is an inherent risk when implementers help to facilitate contact with activity recipients. There is a risk that LELSA will refer the ET to the most active, responsive, or engaged stakeholders. To mitigate the risk of selection bias, the ET identified the individuals it interviewed using lists provided by the activity and USAID, and the ET endeavored to arrange meetings directly without assistance from the implementer. However, the ET did request assistance from NDI and IFES to arrange several interviews with unresponsive interlocutors, particularly with CCMCE, the HOR, and the Ministry of Education.

Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

Remote interviews: Due to the security situation in Libya, the COVID-19 pandemic, and a dusk-to-dawn curfew in the West, the evaluation team could not conduct face-to-face interviews or focus groups. To mitigate this challenge, the ET conducted all interviews remotely, using an online meeting platform (such as Google Meet), secure communications technology (such as WhatsApp), or cellular telephone calls.

Communication difficulties: Due to power cuts in Libya and their impact on cellular and internet connectivity, the ET encountered serious difficulties in conducting interviews with Libyan KIs. A planned FGD could not be conducted due to technical problems. Some interviews were cut off, and some interviews were conducted with patchy connections, impeding understanding. The ET was unable to conduct synchronous data analysis meetings, necessitating that team members work separately and share their findings, conclusions and recommendations asynchronously via e-mail and shared documents.

Reluctant interlocutors: Some targeted individuals ignored or declined initial interview requests. The ET mitigated this problem in advance by securing a letter of introduction from USAID to share with invited interviewees. As noted above, the ET asked LELSA assistance to help arrange some interviews. Fieldwork was extended by two weeks as a result of the communication difficulties and reluctant interlocutors.

ANNEX C: DATA COLLECTION TOOL

Informed Consent Agreement – KII

Purpose: Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. My name is [NAME]. I am a researcher from an organization called IBTCI, a company that is based in the United States. Our team is in Libya to conduct a study about the work of a USAID/Libya project known as the Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity, or LELSA for short. Implemented since 2018 by the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS), LELSA provides support to the justice sector in Libya. You have been asked to participate today so that we can learn more about the support your institution received from LELSA/your involvement in the implementation of the LELSA program/your experiences as a technical advisor. We are speaking with about 50 individuals who participated in the program either as implementers or recipients of program services. We would like your honest impressions, opinions and thoughts about various issues related to this Activity's implementation and outcomes. We are independent consultants who have no affiliation with those who implemented LELSA nor do we represent the Government of Libya.

Procedures: If you agree to participate, we ask you to discuss your experience and opinion of the activities and services implemented under the LELSA program. The interview will take about one hour of your time. Although we will publish our findings in a public report, all of your answers will be kept confidential. Nothing you tell us will be attributed to any individual person. Rather, the report will include only a composite of all of the answers received by all of the individuals we interview. Although we may use quotes, none of the individuals interviewed will be named in the report.

Risks/Benefits: There are no significant risks to your participation in this study. You will not receive any direct benefit or compensation for participating in this study. Although this study will not benefit you personally, we hope that our results will help improve potential future institutional capacity-building programs for government institutions in Libya.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You do not have to agree to be in this study. You are free to end the interview at any time or to decline to answer any question which you do not wish to answer. If you decline to participate in the interview, no one will be informed of this.

Do you have any questions at this time? [Interviewer should answer any questions]

Permission to Proceed: I understand the purpose of the interview as outlined above and understand that I can withdraw from the interview at any time and for any reason. I agree to participate in the interview (Evaluator records).

Yes No

Initials of evaluator to indicate receipt of verbal consent: _____

Date: _____

Informed Consent Agreement – FGD

Purpose: Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. My name is [NAME]. I am a researcher from an organization called IBTCI, a company that is based in the United States. Our team is in Libya to conduct a study about the work of a USAID/Libya project known as the Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity, or LELSA for short. Implemented since 2016 by the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening, LELSA provides support to the justice sector. You have been invited to participate in this discussion because you participated in at least one LELSA training event. We would like your opinions and thoughts about LELSA or interventions that you attended. We are independent consultants who have no affiliation with LELSA or the Government of Libya.

Procedures: If you agree to participate, we ask you to discuss your experience and opinion of the activities and services implemented under the LELSA program. The FGD will take up to two hours of your time. Although we will publish our findings in a public report, all of your answers will be kept confidential. Nothing you tell us will be attributed to any individual person. Although we may use quotes, none of the individuals interviewed will be named in the report. However, as this is a group setting, to preserve confidentiality, we ask you not to share anything we discuss here today with anyone outside of this group.

Ground Rules: While the ground rules will vary depending on the FGD, they will generally include:

- Everyone is encouraged to share their ideas, and the FGD is stronger if everyone participates.
- There are no wrong answers, and everyone’s perspective is equally valued.
- The ideas shared during the FGD should not be shared outside the FGD with non-participants in order to respect participants’ privacy.
- Disagreements about ideas can be valuable and productive, but personal attacks will not be tolerated.

After establishing these ground rules, the moderator should ask if there are any questions or concerns participants have, and these issues should be addressed as a group before moving on.

Risks/Benefits: There are no significant risks to your participation in this study. You will not receive any direct benefit or compensation for participating in this study. Although this study will not benefit you personally, we hope that our results will help improve potential future institutional capacity building programs for government institutions in Libya.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You do not have to agree to be in this study. You are free to leave the FGD at any time or to decline to answer any question which you do not wish to answer. If you decline to participate, no one will be informed of this. Do you have any questions at this time? [Interviewer should answer any questions]

Permission to Proceed: I understand the purpose of the interview as outlined above and understand that I can withdraw from the interview at any time and for any reason. I agree to participate in the interview (Evaluator records).

Yes No

Initials of evaluator to indicate receipt of verbal consent: _____

Date: _____

Questions for USAID/Department of State

1. Please describe your experience with the Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity (LELSA).
2. To what extent did LELSA contribute to the mission's objective of supporting institutions of governance to be more accountable and better represent the interests of citizens?
3. To what extent has LELSA support improved the capacity, performance, and sustainability of the High National Election Commission?
4. How effective has LELSA support to CCMCE been?
5. How effective has LELSA support to election observation been?
6. How effective has LELSA support for CSO advocacy been?
7. How could LELSA support CSOs to become part of the broader political discourse?
8. How effective has LELSA's work with indigenous populations been?
9. How could LELSA expand its work with indigenous populations?
10. How effective has LELSA's engagement with the House of Representatives been?
11. Was LELSA's decision to suspend work with the HOR correct, given the political situation?
12. How could LELSA contribute to legislative strengthening in the current political situation?
13. With which other stakeholders should LELSA consider working?
14. In which other DG thematic areas should LELSA consider working?
15. How did LELSA adjust its operational and programming approach in response to the shifting political and security environment?
16. To what extent was LELSA able to provide deliverables in this environment?
17. How could LELSA ensure that its activities benefit both western and eastern Libya?
18. What lessons learned from LELSA could inform similar DG activities in other limited-permissibility environments?

Questions for CEPPS

1. Please describe your experience with the Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity (LELSA).
2. To what extent did LELSA contribute to the mission's objective of supporting institutions of governance to be more accountable and better represent the interests of citizens?
3. To what extent has LELSA support improved the capacity, performance, and sustainability of the High National Election Commission?
4. How effective has LELSA support to CCMCE been?
5. How effective has LELSA support to election observation been?
6. How effective has LELSA support for CSO advocacy been?
7. How could LELSA support CSOs to become part of the broader political discourse?
8. How effective has LELSA's work with indigenous populations been?
9. How could LELSA expand its work with indigenous populations?
10. How effective has LELSA's engagement with the House of Representatives been?
11. Should LELSA seek to resume work with the HOR, given the current political situation?
12. How could LELSA contribute to legislative strengthening in the current political situation?
13. With which other stakeholders is LELSA considering working?
14. CEPPS programs in other countries usually include a component with political parties. Is CEPPS considering adding political party support to LELSA?
15. In which other DG thematic areas is LELSA considering working?
16. How did LELSA adjust its operational and programming approach in response to the shifting political and security environment?
17. How have recurring elect?
18. How could LELSA ensure that its activities benefit both western and eastern Libya?

19. What lessons learned from LELSA could inform similar DG activities in other limited-permissibility environments?

Questions for Libyan Elections Officials

1. Please describe your experience with the Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity (LELSA).
2. Are LELSA interventions relevant and useful to your commission?
3. To what extent has LELSA support improved the capacity of your commission?
4. To what extent has LELSA helped improve your commission's performance during elections?
5. Can your commission sustain these improvements when LELSA ends in 2022?
6. Does your commission have a sufficient budget to operate effectively?
7. How does your commission cooperate with election observers?
8. How effective are your commission's voter registration and voter education efforts?
9. How does your commission cooperate with civil society's voter education efforts?
10. What are the most challenging aspects you are facing from an operational perspective?
11. Given the lack of security, has there been any security risk mitigation implemented?
12. With new developments in the political situation in mind, how do you see the elections developing? Should LELSA change its focuses to accommodate the new developments?
13. Is your commission able to effectively administer nationwide elections, including eastern Libya?
14. What are the greatest challenges facing your commission in the future?
15. How can LELSA improve its programs in the future?

Questions for Legislative Members and Staff

1. Please describe your experience with the Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity (LELSA).
2. (For training participants): Did you gain new knowledge or skills from LELSA training, and if so, how do you use that knowledge or skills in your work?
3. What kind of support does your legislature need most?
4. What is the structure of the Secretariat, i.e., its directorates and offices?
5. Does parliament have an office or attorneys to support members with legislative drafting?
6. What is the role of your legislature today in debating and modifying legislation?
7. What are the internal and external resources available to committees to analyze legislation?
8. How do the public and civil society have input into the legislative and budget processes?
9. What is the role of parliament in the budget process?
10. How does parliament use its oversight powers?
11. How do the public and civil society have input into oversight?
12. How do members of Parliament interact with their constituents and with local officials in their constituencies?
13. How do parliamentary party blocs operate, and what role do they play?
14. How can LELSA support your legislature without being seen as politically biased?
15. How can LELSA programs improve in the future?

Questions for CSO Partners of CEPPS

1. Please describe your experience with IFES/NDI.
2. (For training participants): Did you gain new knowledge or skills from IFES/NDI training, and if so, how do you use that knowledge or skills in your work?
3. What aspects of the collaboration do you value the most? Why?
 - A. What about your members—what do you think they value the most?

- B. In what ways do you think the collaboration should grow, change, or improve?
4. Have you participated in remote training or workshops? Are they effective?
5. How easy or hard is it for civil society to operate in Libya these days?
6. What are the main operational challenges you face in conducting your advocacy, outreach, civic, or voter education activities?
7. How can civil society be a part of the broader political discourse?
8. Are there any specific challenges that women face?
9. In what areas of Libya does your organization work?
10. What difficulties do your members express most frequently participating in these programs?
11. Does your organization work with any national or local government agencies or departments?
 - A. How open are those agencies to working collaboratively with civil society?
 - B. What issues are easiest/less controversial to secure collaborative government engagement?
 - C. What issues does your organization want to work on, but avoid out of concern for security or safety?
 - D. What issues do you think you'll be working on in 2–3 years?
12. What do you think the long-term benefit of these programs being conducted today will be?
13. How can IFES/NDI expand its support to your organization?
14. How can IFES/NDI programs improve in the future?

Questions for Other Donors/Implementers

1. Could you please describe the support to Libyan elections and political processes that your organization is funding or implementing?
2. How have you collaborated with the Libya Elections and Legislative Strengthening Activity?
3. Are there ways in which that collaboration could have been improved?
4. How often do USAID and other international projects share information formally or informally about the working environment, security, or political situation in Libya?
5. How effective are LELSA's programs with election commission, legislatures and civil society?
6. Are there additional Libyan stakeholders with which LELSA could engage?
7. Are there additional democracy and governance thematic areas in which LELSA could engage?
8. How have democracy and governance implementers had to adjust programming in response to the political, security, and public health challenges in Libya today?

Questions for CSOs and Other Beneficiaries

1. Please describe your experience working with IFES/NDI.
2. (For training participants): Did you gain new knowledge or skills from IFES/NDI training, and if so, how do you use that knowledge or skills in your work?
3. How easy or hard is it for civil society to operate in Libya these days?
4. What are the main operational challenges you face in conducting your advocacy, outreach, civic, or voter education activities?
5. In what areas of Libya does your organization work?
6. What difficulties do your members express most frequently about participating in these programs?
7. How can civil society be a part of the broader political discourse?
8. Are there any specific challenges that women face?
9. Does your organization work with any government agencies or departments at a national or local level?
 - A. How open are those agencies to working collaboratively with civil society?
 - B. What issues are easiest/less controversial to secure collaborative government engagement?

- C. What issues does your organization want to work on, but avoid out of concern for security or safety?
 - D. What issues do you think you'll be working on in 2–3 years?
10. What do you think the long-term benefit of these programs being conducted today will be?
 11. How can IFES/NDI expand its support to your organization?
 12. How can IFES/NDI programs improve in the future?

ANNEX D: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Semi-Annual Reports, LELSA Background Documents

USAID/Libya. CEPPS Semi-Annual Progress Reports: October 2018-March 2019, April-September 2019, October 2019-March 2020, and April-September 2020.

Monthly Reports, LELSA Background Documents

USAID/Libya. CEPPS Libya Monthly Reports: April, May, June, July, August, September and October 2020.

Annual Workplans, LELSA Background Documents

USAID/Libya. CEPPS Annual Workplans for LELSA: FY 2019 and FY 2020.

Monitoring & Evaluation Plans, LELSA Background Documents

USAID/Libya. LELSA Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (AMELP). USAID, August 2019.

Program Description & Modifications, LELSA Background Documents

USAID/Libya. Associate Cooperative Agreement 72067018LA00001, Attachment B: Program Description, August 2018.

USAID/Libya. 72067018LA00001 Modification of Contract, December 2018.

Other Publications

Lis, John, and Gabrielle Plotkin, Legislative Strengthening Evaluations and Their Implications for Future Programs. Washington: USAID, September 2015

Monitoring and Evaluation for Tunisia and Libya (METAL) Activity. USAID Libya Gender Analysis. June 2020.

METAL Activity. Libya Quarterly Context Monitoring Report. July 2020.

METAL Activity. Libya Investment Landscape Analysis. July 2020.

METAL Activity. Libya Elections and Governance Support Activity and the Supporting Consensus Building for The National Dialogue, Constitution Drafting and Governing Process in Libya Activity Final Performance Evaluation Report. July 2018.

USAID/Libya. 2019 Libya Municipal Elections Observation Preliminary Report. March-April 2019.

USAID/Libya. DO I LELSA-IFES Fact Sheet. October 2018.

USAID/Libya. DO I LELSA-NDI Fact Sheet. October 2018.

ANNEX E: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED

Annex has been removed for public distribution.

ANNEX F: EVALUATION TEAM

Annex has been removed for public distribution.

ANNEX G: EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation Question	Data Source	Collection Method	Analysis Method
<p>EQ1: To what extent did LELSA contribute to the mission’s objective supporting institutions of governance to be more accountable and better represent the interests of citizens?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document Review • KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID COR and ACOR • Libya External Office • CEPPS staff • GOL officials • Training recipients • Other donors and implementers • Civil society organizations • LELSA reports and PMP data • Outside documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis • Trend analysis • Gap analysis • Comparative analysis • Gender analysis
<p>EQ2: How did the shifting political and security environment in Libya hinder LELSA’s operations and programs, and how did LELSA adjust its operational and programmatic approach in response?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document Review • KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID COR and ACOR • Libya External Office • CEPPS staff • GOL officials • Training recipients • Other donors and implementers • Civil society organizations • LELSA reports and PMP data • Outside documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis • Trend analysis • Gap analysis • Comparative analysis
<p>EQ3: To what extent can lessons learned from LELSA inform the design and implementation of other democracy and governance strengthening activities in limited-permissibility environments?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document Review • KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID COR and ACOR • Libya External Office • CEPPS staff • GOL officials • Training recipients • Other donors and implementers • Civil society organizations • LELSA reports and PMP data • Outside documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis • Trend analysis • Gap analysis • Comparative analysis