IFES in Libya

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has worked in Libya since 2011, providing essential technical support to Libya’s High National Election Commission (HNEC), the Central Committee for Municipal Council Elections (CCMCE), the judiciary, and other government stakeholders to enhance the transparency, integrity, and management of the electoral process. IFES builds partners’ capacity to effectively manage and implement electoral and political processes perceived as being transparent and credible.

Beyond electoral support, IFES promotes conflict-mitigation efforts through voter education and conflict-sensitive reporting. IFES has recently partnered with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to create a new civic education curriculum for junior high, high school, and university students. IFES also cooperates with civil society to build civic awareness and understanding of Libya’s political transition and enhance citizens’ meaningful participation in electoral and political processes. Finally, IFES engages with local organizations to promote women’s leadership, conduct youth advocacy, and enhance access and participation for persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. This enables these groups to integrate their voices into decision-making processes such that their views and interests are incorporated into Libyan governing and legislative processes.

Program Highlights

**Electoral Management Advisory Services**
IFES provides technical support and advice to the HNEC and the CCMCE – including support for electoral operations, strategic communication and planning, election dispute resolution (EDR), public outreach, voter registration, capacity development, and development of regulations and procedures.

**Voter Education and Civic Engagement**
IFES increases public awareness and understanding of processes related to Libya’s political transition by supporting effective and credible official and unofficial outreach by government and civil society using traditional and nontraditional media.

IFES is building HNEC’s strategic communications capacity to build trust and create a positive image of HNEC as a nascent Libyan institution. IFES worked closely with the HNEC to support the planning, implementation, and operation of three media centers that served as focal points for all HNEC communications during the past three elections.

**Strengthening the Electoral Legal Framework**
IFES works to ensure a unified legislative framework for elections and electoral processes and provide technical support and advice to the judiciary on the legal framework for elections and EDR. IFES has recently completed a comprehensive study of Libya’s electoral legal framework.

**Election Dispute Resolution**
IFES provides advisory support to the judiciary and the HNEC to increase institutional knowledge about different electoral systems and processes to resolve electoral disputes. This assistance – which includes building collaborative and consultative relationships between institutions that work on EDR – helps define the judiciary’s roles and responsibilities during the electoral process.

**Inclusive Political Participation**
IFES is working with civil society to bolster an inclusive, effective transition to sustainable democracy in Libya by promoting women’s empowerment and building their leadership and advocacy skills. This will help them gain professional experience and increase their inclusion in the political process.
Improving Electoral Access
IFES supports the efforts of disabled persons organizations to advocate for increased access for peoples with disabilities to electoral and political processes. IFES trained journalists to effectively conduct outreach to stakeholders, including government ministries, and engage with the media. With guidance from IFES, HNEC has adopted several measures to facilitate electoral access for persons with disabilities. This included making 10 percent of polling stations for the House of Representatives elections accessible and publishing election-related information in braille.

Democracy Resource Centers
IFES launched the Democracy Resource Centers (DRCs) to enhance civic engagement and promote the public’s understanding of Libya’s political transition. Operating in all regions and managed locally by Libyan civil society organizations, these community-based centers for dialogue and activism are venues for citizens to meet and discuss key electoral issues and strengthen the capacity of local organizations to implement democracy and election-related activities. The DRCs coordinate with HNEC and other government entities to disseminate information and conduct public outreach on elections, Libya’s political transition, inclusion of marginalized populations, and issues of local importance.

Program Achievements

- In 2017-18, supported and facilitated the first voter registration update in Libya since the 2014 HoR elections, which resulted in the inclusion of approximately 1 million more voters in the register
- Supported HNEC to manage the national voter registration system and the CCMCE in establishing a new IT infrastructure for the voter registration update
- Supported the establishment of the first gender unit within the HNEC secretariat, which is mandated to mainstream gender in all HNEC activities and internal processes
- Supported the production of outreach materials and electoral awareness campaigns for the 2019 municipal council elections
- Supported the capacity building and professionalization of CCMCE staff, branch committees, and polling staff, and provided operational support to facilitate municipal council elections across Libya, which. So far, this has included elections in 22 municipalities in 2019
- Supported HNEC in drafting regulations governing implementation of the law on the referendum on the permanent Constitution, specifically related to EDR and judicial oversight of the referendum
- Collaborated with HNEC to train women from across Libya to serve as Outreach Ambassadors, who will conduct activities aiming to increase women’s participation in future elections
- Launched the “Rights Unite” campaign with disability sensitivity workshops led by persons with disabilities, which reached more than 500 journalists and activists, and held seminars at 14 schools in nine cities reaching more than 800 students
- Created a 300-word Arabic sign language lexicon on electoral terms and trained 21 interpreters to carry out trainings in Libya to teach and disseminate the lexicon
- Conducted two nationwide surveys to examine citizens’ intentions to vote and engage in political events and presented the report to the HNEC and the donor community
- Developed a nationwide civic education curriculum for grades four through nine and trained over 100 teachers on the curriculum and participatory teaching methodologies in collaboration with the MoE; IFES is expanding the curriculum to grades 10 through12 and is also supporting the MoE and Libyan universities to develop civic education courses for university students