



UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
“Strengthening Parliamentary Governance in Moldova”
project

PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

January – September 2020

September 2020

Table of Contents

Summary	2
Progress review.....	3
Output 3. Improved capacity to engage with CSOs, media and citizens.....	3
Information management system.....	3
Lessons learned.....	4
Conclusions and Way Forward.....	4
Annex 1 - Financial Overview	5

Summary

Reporting Period	January – September 2020
Donor	Government of Sweden, Parliament of RM
Country	Republic of Moldova
Project Title	Strengthening Parliamentary Governance in Moldova
Project ID	00094901
Output ID	00088088
Implementing Partner	Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Project Start Date	July, 2016
Project End Date	September, 2020
Annual Budget 2020	USD \$ 367.011
Total Project Budget	USD \$ 4,300.000
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Progress review

As the project had achieved the planned targets, but the target related to the e-Parliament system, by December 2019, it was extended through September 2020 with the objective to have the e-Parliament system developed and accepted by the Parliament. Therefore, the Progress Report describes the UNDP's strategy and approach in completing the work related to the implementation of the e-Parliament system and the planned work for the remaining implementation period.

Output 3. Improved capacity to engage with CSOs, media and citizens

Information management system

After the system components' configuration was notified as completed, the installation of the Document Management System (DMS), of the e-voting system and of the web portal started in September 2019. The installation of the system components was organised gradually and was completed in March 2020, when all three system components became available on the Parliament Production environment.

To ensure that the feedback of the PRM Working Group on e-Parliament is properly collected during configuration stage, at the end of 2019 the e-Parliament system implementation process entered the validation process (part of the Phase II: Installation, configuration and acceptance) of the system.

Thus, the system components, configured in line with the Detailed Functional Specifications (DFS) document, became available for validation of workflows by the PRM staffers in December 2019.

The PRM Working Group alongside with the team of the system contractor embarked into the process of verifying the functionalities of the system components, aiming to capture the comments of the beneficiary related to the workflows set up in the system,

The verification was organised initially through on-line meetings during which parliamentary staffers guided by the Nextsense team analysed the configurations in the e-Parliament, to check whether those meet the requirements of the Parliament Rules of Procedure and Parliament internal Regulations. The offline meetings were followed by two on site validation missions of the Nextsense and Scytl teams, in December 2019 and February 2020.

Throughout the meetings and during working sessions part of the validation missions, the feedback collection process was recorded in validation matrixes which ensured traceability of the issues notified by the beneficiary and the remedies proposed by the contractor as well as statute of addressing the received feedback.

In addition to the functional review of the system, the three components of the e-Parliament have been subjected to the first iteration of the non-functional testing, namely, security, performance and load stress testing, as well as functional analysis of selected workflows. These have been conducted by the third-party Quality Assurance company. The two tiers verification of the system was closely coordinated amongst the participants to ensure that no interferences occur in the process that could affect any of the testing processes.

The users' manuals addressing parliamentary staffers, MPs and system administrators, have been developed and presented for review of the PRM Working Group on e-Parliament. Given that the workflows of the system undergone periodic adjustments, it was agreed that the manuals will undergo a full review and adjustment after the validation of the system is completed.

The already complex and lengthy validation process was perturbed by the COVID-19 pandemic, as starting with March 2020, in person meetings could no longer be organised and parliamentary staffers, as member of the PRM Working Group on e-Parliament, had special working arrangements which impeded access to the system installed on the Parliament production environment. Thus, the verification process was brought to a halt.

This affected considerably the process of validation and lead to the delay in completing e-Parliament project. Following the agreement of the Donor, the Project was extended until September 30th, 2020.

Having entered into second extension of the Strengthening Parliamentary Governance in Moldova, the project stakeholders took necessary measures to ensure remote access to the system and continue with the review of the workflows.

During the reported period, UNDP focused on activities and support which could be provided remotely, facilitating the planning, coordination and communication amongst project stakeholders, as well as the translation of the system components in Romanian and Russian and adjustment of the notions in the system label to the parliamentary language.

The complex process of review of the system functionalities resumed in May was accompanied by periodic updates to the system being conducted by the Nextsense and Scytl and repeated verifications by the parliamentary staffers to check whether the workflows are adjusted according to the beneficiary needs. Despite the efforts of all parties, the validation process could not be brought to a faster pace and the review by the PRM Working Group on e-Parliament reached only the state of the first reading in the law-making process by June 2020 and partial review of the e-voting functionalities, once the tablets for use in the plenary rooms for session management and voting, have been delivered and installed.

In the months of the second extension, the PRM Working Group on e-Parliament was in constant communication with e-Parliament contractor, both parties making sure that all issues are recorded accordingly and subsequently addressed through system updates. The works carried out by the licensor after project extension also addressed the findings of second iteration of the security testing, which was conducted during the reported period.

A repeated mission of the Nextsense team was organised in August 2020 with the initial goal to close the validation process. Since the mission concluded with a review of a number of workflows and more comments from the Parliament Working Group, the conclusion that more time is necessary for the PRM Working Group on e-Parliament to go through the complex workflows and for the contractor to ensure that the system is fully operational and in line with the beneficiary needs became evident.

It should be noted that the second iteration of the performance, load and stress testing have been completed, pointing out at the areas which require attention and improvement from the contractor side, to ensure that the system functions within the parameters set in the technical specifications. At this point it is envisaged that another round of testing would be required to validate the changes to the system.

Despite the combined efforts of the parties to verify the system components by the end of the extension period on 30th September 2020, it is inevitable in the context above described, that the closure of validation and acceptance phases will go beyond September 2020, given the complexity of the system and associated performance and security testing.

In terms of remaining steps to complete the e-Parliament project, based on discussions with the project beneficiary, it is expected that following the notification by the contractor that the e-Parliament system is fully operational and all feedback received from PRM up to now through the matrixes is addressed, the Parliament will verify the system independently, and subsequently, a presentation of the system by the contractor to the Parliament will be conducted to close the acceptance.

The selected indicators for IT projects relate to the implemented e-Parliament system and will be measured once the system is fully operationalized.

Indicators		
3.1	% of staff actively using the e-parliament system	<i>target: 0 actual: 0</i>
3.2	% of MPs actively using the e-parliament system	<i>target: 0 actual:</i>

Lessons learned

- **E-Parliament** – The e-Parliament system implementation is a very complex process, which has proven to be a lengthy process in multiple parliaments which requires coordination with multiple stakeholders. The planning of processes related to various stages in implementation of a such a system is key to the positive outcome, in particular when there is a dependence relationship between closure of a process and start of a next one. However, the most important has proven to be the coordinated collection of comments and notification of issues in the process of verification of the system functionalities, as traceability and possibility to return back to raised issues, offers a good tool for tracking the progress. Ensuring a transparent process of feedback collection and problems remedy allows all stakeholders to observe the progress and have a clear picture of the standing point.

Conclusions and Way Forward

Based on the positive decision on the project extension through December 2020, in the following 3 months the project will work towards finalising the ongoing activities related to the completion of the e-Parliament system.