

**Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations for
Elections (CECOE)
FIVE-YEARS STRATEGIC PLAN
(2023-2027)**



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1.ABBREVIATIONS

ACSO- Agency of the Civil Society Organizations

CCRDA- Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Association

CECOE- Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society Organization for Election

CSO- Civil Society Organization

ED- Executive Director

ECES- European Center for Electoral Support

ICCPR - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

IDP-Internally Displaced People

MMU-Media Monitoring Unit

NEBE-National Electoral Board of Ethiopia

NDI- National Democratic Institution

PWD-People with Disabilities

TOT- Training of Trainers

UDHR- Universal Declaration of Human Rights

1 INTRODUCTION

The Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations for Election (CECOE) is a network of over 175 Ethiopian civil society organizations who came together to ensure civic participation is guaranteed in the sixth national and regional elections of Ethiopia. CECOE attained its legal status on February 4, 2020 and obtained its certificate of registration No.4748 from the Agency of the Civil Society Organizations (ACSO). CECOE is established with the objective of coordinating civic engagement and citizen participation not only in the sixth general election but also facilitating a long-term civil society engagement in the electoral process in a sustainable and systematic way.

When it comes to the legal framework within which the Sixth Ethiopian General Elections was conducted Article 21 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) laid down the foundations for the international normative framework for elections.

The national legal framework for elections comprises Articles 38 and 102 of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia(FDRE) Constitution, which recognizes the right to vote, to be elected and to take part in public affairs directly or through freely chosen representatives, and established the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia as an independent election management body respectively. Proclamation No. 1133/2019 which defines the powers and functions of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia, Proclamation No.1162/19 the Ethiopian Electoral, Political Parties Registration and Elections Code of Conduct as well as Proclamation No. 1113/2019 Organizations of Civil Societies Proclamation from the electoral legal framework.

CECOE developed and implemented its three-year Strategic Plan span from 2020-2022. Upon the invitation from the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE), CECOE mobilized and coordinated its members to observe the Sidama Referendum which was conducted on November 20, 2019. During the Sixth National and Regional Elections, CECOE recruited and deployed over 3,000 long-term and short-term observers to nine regional states and two city administrations which participated in the June and September 2021 General Elections. Furthermore, the Coalition implemented a media monitoring initiative which

monitored election related information on seven selected mass media outlets, 40 political party social media accounts and 40 CSOs. In addition, the Coalition also reached over 25 million online users and 40 million citizens using mainstream media outlets in its voter information and education program. CECOE also coordinated the financing of voter education campaigns implemented by its members securing over 1,200,000.00 Ethiopian Birr for voter activities in different regions.

Currently, CECOE is working on a wide array of short-term and long-term programs related to elections, good governance, dialogue and peacebuilding in Ethiopia. Based on the work it has done during the Sixth National and Regional Elections, CECOE has been engaging stakeholders in the public and CSO sector on several advocacy issues emerging from its findings via observation, media monitoring and voter education activities.

With the view to identifying strengths and weaknesses of CSOs performance (including CECOE) and identifying gaps in voter education activities, election observation, and the media providing information to electoral stakeholders and using the findings of the assessments for advocacy purposes. CECOE conducted Assessments including Election Observation of the Sixth General Elections of Ethiopia; Overview of the CECOE Voter Education during the Sixth General Elections of Ethiopia; CECOE Media Monitoring Unit (CECOE-MMU) Report on Media Outlets' Elections Coverage during the June and September 2021 Elections and Assessment of Voter Education Activities by Ethiopian Civil Society organizations During the Sixth Ethiopian General Elections. CECOE also conducted several assessments on the existing electoral laws, notably, Assessment on Ethiopia's Electoral System and Parliamentary Representation: Issues, Realities and Alternatives, An Assessment of the Special Voting Scheme in the Ethiopian Electoral System; Assessments of NEBE's Local Election Observers' Accreditation, Working Procedure and Code of Conduct Directive No. 5/2020 to use the findings to advocate for electoral laws reforms. Moreover CECOE, apart from sharing its election observation final report in hard copies and online, organized several workshops to disseminate its findings and recommendations and the focus of its future advocacy works to CECOE members, non-members and other stakeholders. In addition, CECOE also organized successive awareness raising workshops on the notion of national dialogue and the role of CSOs in the upcoming national dialogue. It

has also completed the preparation for launching conflict mitigation and peace building programs.

1.1 Objectives, Methodologies and Process of Strategic Plan

The objective of this strategic planning effort is to update CECOE's 2020-2022 Strategic Plan. The updated strategic plan outlines what is to be implemented in the next five years (2023-2027) and recommendations of appropriate structure for the Coalition. Methodology adopted included face to face discussions with the Executive Director (ED) and staff of CECOE, consultative workshops with member CSOs, literature review of laws and regulations related to CSOs and Election. In addition to this, Strategic Plan is a product of consultations workshops held with stakeholders of the CECOE. Consultation workshops were conducted in three locations- Addis Ababa, Hawasa and Bahirdar to gain the insight and inputs of members and key stakeholders for crafting the strategic plan. A validation workshop was also conducted at Addis Ababa on November 8/2022 with over 40 member organizations and other stakeholders participating to approve the strategic plan.

The process started with a review of the previous Strategic Plan 2020–2022, terminal evaluation report of comprehensive citizens' election observation project and assessing internal reports and studies. These assessments produced a wealth of information concerning the CECOE's past performance, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), which were considered in the formulation of this Strategic Plan.

The Strategy is to set direction primarily meant for the CECOE's and its members' use. The Strategy is a living document that will continue to evolve, sharpen and adjust as it is applied to the work of CECOE. It will benefit from the ongoing dialogue with various partners and lessons learnt from the strategic plan implementation.

1.2 The Structure of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is arranged in five chapters. Chapter One - Introduction - provides the legal framework for election. It articulates the mandate of CECOE. Chapter two presents the situational analysis of the internal and external operational environments of the CECOE.

The Third chapter presents the Vision, Mission, Goals, Values and Objectives, theory of change which cumulatively defines the strategic direction of the Organization. Chapter Four contains implementation and the institutional framework for implementation including the organization structure, Monitoring Framework and assumptions.

2 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Situational Analysis or Environmental analysis forms the fundamental first step in the strategic planning process. A situational analysis helps in defining where the organization is standing currently and provides context and knowledge for planning thereby answering the question of “where are we now”. When approached well, answers to the subtle question of “How did we get here in the first place” begin to emerge very early in the planning phase. Typically, it comprises the four dimensions of CECOE namely:

- a. Review past strategic period performance
- b. External analysis
- c. Sector analysis
- d. Internal analysis

2.1 Review of past strategic plan performance

CECOE has formulated a strategic plan to be implemented from 2020-2022. The strategic plan mainly focuses on four strategic themes:

- a) Civic and voter’s education;
- b) Election monitoring and observation;
- c) Advocacy and stakeholders engagement; and
- d) Research and capacity building.

The achievements on each of these thematic areas and challenges faced during the past strategic period are discussed below, CECOE had crafted a project named “Comprehensive Citizens Election Observation” funded by National Democratic Institute (NDI). The main objective of the project was to mobilize nonpartisan, independent, and impartial observers and prevent manipulation, harassment, intimidation, and suspected electoral malpractices

during elections. It has focused on observing the three phases of the 6th national election; the pre-election period, election/voting day, and post-election period. It has planned doing so, via rapidly and effectively discovering flaws in the electoral process and reporting any electoral irregularities to NEBE to take prompt action.

A) Civic and Voter Education

The objective of this thematic area is to undertake voter and civic education awareness, and increase/ encourage voter participation in the electoral processes and to make citizens aware about their rights and obligations as well as to enable them to make an informed decision.

CECOE and its partners established “I-Vote” which is a digital source of voter education in four languages; with the objective of educating citizens on the importance and process of voting and mobilizing citizens to exercise their right to vote by encouraging voter participation throughout the election phase. Through the I-Vote program, CECOE reached over 25 million online users and 40 million citizens using mainstream media outlets in its voter information and education program. The CECOE also coordinated the financing of voter education campaigns implemented by its members and raised over ETB 1,200,000.00 for activities in different regions.

The CECOE’s Media Monitoring Unit (MMU) in Addis Ababa monitored the media landscape, misinformation, and hate speech in five local languages. The Coalition undertook a media monitoring initiative that monitored election related information on seven selected mass media outlets, 40 political party social media accounts, and 40 CSOs.

B) Election Monitoring and Observation

This thematic area aimed to enhance the capacity of domestic observers to enable them to provide objective observation across electoral processes and political frameworks to detect and deter voter fraud, election malpractice, and identify, investigate, and reduce election-related violence.

In the 6th national election; CECOE has prepared different training manuals and established regulations for specific missions, such as reporting checklists and providing training. Following the completion of preparing the manuals and checklists, CECOE has moved on conducting numerous trainings for observers and other project actors. These trainings were delivered in two thematic areas: ethical training, which aimed to equip observers with ethical behaviors to be maintained throughout observation, and technical training, which aimed observers with technical methods of observing elections.

Five trainings in three locations- Addis Ababa, Hawasa and Dire Dawa- were conducted to 146 voter registration observers drawn from the country. Election Day training was provided to 3,710 observers. Similarly post-election training was offered for 148 post-election observers. A total of 4,052 observers were trained. Training was also offered to 10 regional focal persons, and seven deck officers.

CECOE deployed pre-election, Election Day and post-election observers drawn from member CSOs. Accordingly, 144 voter registration observers were recruited by CECOE and accredited by NEBE. It has also organized 2,050 Stationary & 150 Mobile Observers and 942 Stationary, 30 Mobile, and seven internal displaced people observers in June and September elections respectively. In making the election observation comprehensive, 97 and 50 post-election observers were recruited and deployed for the June and September election respectively.

CECOE has applied the first of its kind election observation technology, "Apollo" application to reduce communication interruptions during the reporting of the observations. As it is evident, the main objective of recruiting and deploying election observers was to collect reports on a certain circumstance, mainly errors and manipulations throughout the election process. As a result, a total of 17,649 reports were collected throughout the election process. These all were reported to NEBE, and most of the identified errors were solved by the prompt actions taken by NEBE. These reports as well as the public/media

briefings conducted by the CECOE have contributed a lot towards ensuring transparency and democratization in the country.

In addition to June and September elections observations, the CECOE was the first civil society coalition to observe the 2019 Sidama Referendum.

C) Advocacy & Stakeholder Engagement

This strategic theme was set to address the following issues:

- To improve the promotion of sustained civic education, election observation and implementation of the existing electoral laws
- To advocate towards an enabling environment for an improved electoral process;
- To represent the interests of member organizations with key stakeholders, such as NEBE, other government bodies, development partners/donors, and other relevant electoral stakeholders.

In realizing this thematic objective, CECOE has undertaken several activities by participating and organizing in workshops and events. Some of these include the following:

- a) CECOE held three consecutive validation workshops on April 5, 7 and 8, 2022 on assessments it conducted on Voter Education, NEBE's directives and CECOE's comprehensive citizen's election observation project. Nearly 150 participants who came from different parts of the country attended the workshops. The purposes of the workshops were to share CECOE's assessments findings with the participants and receive their comments.
- b) CECOE has participated in the event of the Second Ethiopian CSO week which was held from 30 June-2 July 2022 under the theme "Proactive CSOs for Peace, Democracy and Development". The CECOE at the exhibition showcased elections' reports, Media Monitoring Unit, Apollo System (election observation data management software), Voter education report, I-Vote (digital voter education), and other publications. High dignitaries, including H.E Dr. GedionTimotiwos, FDRE Attorney General and H.E. Dr. ErgogeTesfaye, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs,

visited CECOE's booth and applauded the coalition's works and efforts. At the event, more than 85 CSOs showcased their products, reports, research documents, projects, and public relations materials. Furthermore, there were four sideline panel discussions whereby key stakeholders deliberated on various topics i.e., localization of aid; gender; role of CSOs in peacebuilding and the enactment of the new CSOs proclamation.

- c) On March 10, 2022, CECOE in partnership with NDI organized a one-day consultative forum on "The Role of CSOs in National Dialogue". The objective of the forum was to raise the awareness of CSO actors on National Dialogue and actively engage them in the process.

D) Research and Capacity Building

The thrust of this thematic area is to improve the capacity of generating, capturing, documenting information and enhancing the knowledge environment and facilitate and support the development and strengthening of the institutional capacities of CECOE and its members. In achieving this thematic area and its objectives CECOE has made assessments, research and publication including the following:

- a) Assessments were made on the National Election Board of Ethiopia's Directive on Voter Education Accreditation and Code of Conduct Directive No. 4/2020. This assessment spelled out the legal and practical challenges of voter education and offered recommendations to the NEBE. The research report has been published and distributed to different stakeholders including NEBE.
- b) Research was conducted on NEBE's Local Election Observers' Accreditation, Working Procedure and Code of Conduct Directive No. 5/2020. The research findings provided insights on the components of the NEBE's Local Election Observers' Accreditation, Working Procedure, and Code of Conduct, Directive No. 5/2020. This research unpacked the legal and practical difficulties in implementing the NEBE's directive on Local Election Observers' Accreditation, Working Procedure, and Code of Conduct. Eventually, the research suggested various practical and legal recommendations for the NEBE and other stakeholders to consider.

c) Publications related to elections are uploaded and disseminated through its website.

The publications include:

- Final observation report-Six National and Regional Election of Ethiopia-May 2022-Amharic and English version,
- An Assessment Report on CECE's Comprehensive Citizens election observation CECOE's Voter education and Media monitoring assessment reports;
- Assessment on: NEBE's Directive on Voter Education & CSOs' voter education projects during the 6th National elections;
- I Vote report;
- Media Monitoring Unit Report;
- CECOE Preliminary Report on the September 30 Election with Amharic and English Versions;
- September 30 Election Midday Statement Amharic and English Versions;
- CECOE September 30 Pre-elections Observation Report in Amharic and English Versions;
- CECOE September 30 Pre-elections Observation Report;
- CECOE-Preliminary-Statement June 23 Amharic and English Versions;
- Election-2021-Preliminary-findings-Amharic and English Versions;
- CECOE 2021 VRO Report; and
- CSO Observations on Sidama Referendum final full report in Amharic and English versions.

With the aim of building the capacity of its staff and members of CECOE, an online Master of Electoral Policy and Administration (MEPA) education was offered. Eighty six (86) individuals drawn from member organizations benefited from this opportunity by enrolling up to 6 online courses that are offered by a University in Italy, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna (SSSA) in cooperation with United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), International IDEA and ECES. Of which, 16 students are pursuing their MEPA masters degrees.

E) Citizen's participation in political processes through dialogue, conflict mitigation and peace building and monitoring of political environment

The conduct of elections necessitates a suitable environment in terms of the existence of sustainable peace and respect and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms. The sixth-General Election of Ethiopia has evidenced that disruption of peace and violations of fundamental rights and freedoms are major impediments to elections. Due to a consistently deteriorating peace characterized by violent conflict, attacks on civilians and civilian objectives, the Sixth national election was held under the duress of serious human rights violations and perpetual conflict. As a result, the NEBE was forced to repeatedly change the electoral calendar, execute voting on two separate election days in some parts of the country and delays and suspend elections in Amhara, Oromia, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Afar region constituencies as well as in the entire Tigray regional state.

One of the key lessons that CECOE has gathered from its assessment of the sixth national election is the indispensability of durable peace and respect for fundamental rights of citizens for free, fair, inclusive and competitive elections with active participation of citizens in the electoral processes. Continuous monitoring of the political environment in between elections to track the actions of state and non-state actors exacerbating existing grievances, curbing citizen's political participation, and undermining fundamental rights and freedoms that could likely incite violent conflicts and share findings to alert concerned bodies to take preventive measures to circumvent violence or to take remedial measures.

Ethiopia has seen an unprecedented rise in ethnic violence in the past four years with thousands killed and millions uprooted from their lives. For various reasons CSOs involvement in mitigating predominantly ethnically motivated violent conflicts leaves much to be desired. Considering the pervasive violent conflicts engulfing the country and its ramifications, CECOE intends to shift the apathy to active engagement by equipping its members and other CSOs with relevant skills and knowledge on conflict mitigation and peace building and motivate them to contribute to creating durable peace in the country.

Dialogue is one way of addressing violent conflict. The National Dialogue Commission is about to launch the National Dialogue in the forcible future on selected issues that divided

the Ethiopian society. CECOE with the view to contributing to taming the culture of dialogue castigating violence has identified a couple of issues; namely Citizenship/Ethiopian Nationalism vs. Ethnic nationalism and competing narratives on Ethiopian History. While CECOE conducted dialogue on Citizenship/Ethiopian Nationalism vs. Ethnic nationalism recently and is preparing to organize a series of dialogues on the identified themes and other issues which have national impact in the coming years. Equally, CECOE also intends to organize region specific or intra-regional and inter-regional issues that have the potential of triggering violent conflicts that could disrupt peace across the country. CECOE will share the proceedings of the dialogues conducted to the National Dialogue Commissions and the concerned regional parties.

Challenges faced CECOE during the strategic period

CECOE has addressed its strategic plan objectives and registered the achievements listed above. However, the achievements of the results were not without challenges. The key external and internal challenge CECOE faced during the strategic period were:

- The war in the northern part of the country and security threats in some parts of the country making the election impossible and thereby impede and made the works of CECOE incomplete;
- Shifting Timelines of the Sixth National Elections and ineffective means of accreditation by the NEBE cause delays for timely assignment of observers and conducting voters education;
- Donors were reluctant to release fund to local CSOs because of doubts that the elections might not take place were hindrance to execute CECOE activities as per the plan;
- Lack of strong financial capacities and alternative funding avenues was a challenge to finance the election related initiatives;
- Electoral activities were highly limited to urban areas for several reasons, including COVID19, and security concerns;
- Volatile security situations and a shifting election schedule by NEBE created high inconveniences with CECOE plans and schedules;

- Lack of project management expertise to handle the election projects created inefficiencies and delay;
- Due to years of inactivity in election, complemented by lack of prior experience with having limited number of staff by CECOE, unable to design and deliver voter education and related election activities;
- Delay in processing and forwarding accreditation badges and misnomers by NEBE make hard to deploy observers on time;
- Unable to recruit and deploy proportionate number of observers due to security concern in some regions;
- Poor CECOE structure and weak capacity of focal persons at regional and zonal level hindered recruitment, training, and deployment of observers;
- Lack of commitment by some observers, consider observation duties as a means of getting lucrative per-diem and ignore their volunteering activities was predicament for election observation; and
- Availability of a limited number of staff at CECOE forced them to share financial disbursement services from CCRDA and ECES made delay in payment to observers and other actors.

2.2 External Analysis

In the current globalized world, everything is interrelated. The Russia-Ukraine war and the confrontation between US and China over Taiwan has ramifications on the operations of civil society organizations like CECOE by diminishing the financial resource from donors and partners found in western countries.

Nationally, the war in the northern part of the country between the Federal Government of Ethiopia and Tigray People Liberation Forces, the unabated political crises and ethnically motivated violence have adverse effects on the democratization process and CECOE operations.

The Operating Environment

In order to determine the most appropriate strategies, we sought from the outset to define the boundaries of the territory that CECOE plays in. The external factors that CECOE has to deal with contain the general environment and sector within which CECOE operates. Several dimensions define the Macro Environment within which CECOE operates and PESTEL analysis which outlines the Political, Economic, Socio-Cultural, Technological, Environmental and Legal dynamics was used to gain insights.

Political and Legal Environment

CECOE is governed by CSO rules and regulations. Following the 2018 reform in the country; a new proclamation 1113/2019 was issued to govern the affairs of CSO. The new Organizations of Civil Societies Proclamation opens the space for CSOs to carry out a vital role, particularly in the country's democratization process and human rights promotion by lifting the crippling rules of the previous law such as abolished the 10% rule on funding enabling CSOs to raise funds from any lawful source without requesting approval. The then, Ethiopian Civil Society Proclamation of 2009 restricted significantly the civil society sector, especially those organizations working on politically sensitive issues, human rights, and rule of law including activities such as gender, democracy and children's rights. While advocacy organizations were relatively active before the implementation of the law, hardly any organization was able to keep their focus on democracy and human rights after the implementation of the 2009 proclamation.

The law governing CSOs and the new proclamations governing election gave favorable conditions to establish and operate CSO in democracy, governance, human rights and election activities in the country. On the other hand recently problem that strained the relationship has cropped up between the Authority for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO) and some 35 CSOs after the latter "calling for peace in Ethiopia and an end to the ongoing militarized hostilities in parts of Tigray, Afar and Amhara regions, as well as other conflicts involving the federal and Oromia regional state forces on the one hand and the Oromo

Liberation Army (OLA), known by the government as “OLF Shene” on the other.”¹ The reaction of ACSO to the statement issued by these CSOs indicative of the deterioration of the relation between the two parties as the Authority vows it “would strengthen its works to make civil society organizations ‘working against Ethiopia’s sovereignty and the public interest’ accountable by law.”²

Economic Environment

According to World Bank 2022 reports, over the past 15 years, Ethiopia’s economy has been among the fastest growing in the world (at an average of 9.5 percent per year). Among other factors, growth was led by capital accumulation, in particular through public infrastructure investments. Ethiopia’s real gross domestic product (GDP) growth slowed down in FY 2019/20 and further in FY 2020/21 due to COVID-19, with growth in industry and services easing to single digits

Like the rest of the world, Ethiopia has been experiencing the unprecedented social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. While exports and foreign direct investment have rebounded in 2020/21 and jobs have been recovering, some lasting scars are likely to remain. Urban employment levels have not recovered fully, some households and firms continue to report income losses, and poverty is estimated to have increased.

Frequent severe weather events alongside long-term impacts of climate change undermine agriculture and pastoral livelihoods as well as food security. The incidence of conflict has increased, particularly in the North since November 2020, leading to substantial impacts on lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure.

Ethiopia’s Human Development Index is at a low 0.38 which means that a child born in Ethiopia today will be 38 percent as productive when s/he grows up as s/he could be if

¹Addis Standard
<https://addisstandard.com/news-authority-vows-to-hold-csos-working-against-sovereignty-public-interest-to-account/>

²Ibid

s/he enjoyed complete education and full health. This is lower than the average for the Sub-Saharan Africa region but slightly higher than the average for low-income countries. Learning poverty stands at 90 percent and 37 percent of children under-5-years of age are stunted.

Ethiopia has a fledgling private sector, whose growth and job-creation abilities have been hindered by constraints in the business climate and competitiveness. The country's growing workforce (at 2 million per year) puts pressure on absorption capacity of the labor market, necessitates improving current jobs, while creating sufficient new jobs.

In general, the high economic growth registered over the past years has not been able to create sufficient job opportunities, and failed to bring the desired increase in the standard of living for most citizens." When people remain idle and in their quest for survival, they engage in unethical practices, take up criminal activities and have provided fertile ground for radicalization and violent extremism. This shows unemployment is one of the challenges facing the country that could undermine peace and democracy.

Socio- Cultural Environment

With the emergence of information technology and social media, disseminating rumors, hate speeches and discrimination based on race are observed with expressions and thoughts which were once considered taboo by many Ethiopians.

Seventy percent of the Ethiopia population is composed of mainly under 30 years of age. Youths show hitherto unknown norms and cultures such as intolerance; unlawful migration; carelessness, hate speeches, ethnic based tensions and internal displacement are observed. The influence that religious fathers and opinion leaders used to exert on individuals is diminishing at alarming rates. People are becoming more individualistic. These undermine democracy and election.

Concerning basic education, the Ethiopian government has over the last decade or more embarked on an ambitious program of providing free access. Ethiopia is providing universal free basic education to its population. Ethiopia has made progress in improving

youth's education, especially regarding formal education attendance and literacy rates. According to the Ministry of Education Statistics, there are pre- primary School enrollment ratios in Ethiopia standing at 35.6 and 37.7 % for female and male respectively in 20/2021. The same data indicates that the Net Enrollment Rate for Grades 1-8 is 86.4%.NetEnrollment Rate for Grades 9-12 is 29.5%. There are a wide range of initiatives including non- formal and adult education and special needs education to open access to all categories of the Ethiopian population. The increase in the access of education may have a positive impact on the democratization process of the country.

Technology

Technology is currently serving both good and evil-minded groups in realizing their mission through creating virtual reach to the larger groups. Digital media like Telegram, Facebook, Instagram, twitter, YouTube and the increasing number of Television and radio channels are opportunities for CECOE in addressing its messages, thoughts, training and even for raising of resources through accessing limitless followers/audiences without time, space, geographical limitations.

According to data from Digital Ethiopia, there were 29.83 million internet users in Ethiopia in January 2022.Ethio Telecom provided a service 46.15 million mobile voice subscribers in 2019/2020 achieving an increase of 5.8 percent from the previous year. The Ethiopian government set a ten year plan in information technology; to increase access to mobile and internet services from 37.2% and 18.6%, respectively, to 100%.

The utilization of “APOLLO” software by CECOE in 2021 election observation is commendable and serves as lessons learned to use technology for election.While technological advances present new opportunities, spread of new technologies; it also poses new complex challenges in the election realm. Electoral stakeholders such as electoral management bodies, political parties, and civil society are increasingly turning to technology in an attempt to improve efficiency and accessibility and to prevent certain types of fraud. However, advances in technology have a darker side, since they can also be used to undermine the security and transparency of the process. Voters may not trust the

technologies, particularly in contexts where trust in state institutions is already low. Civil society organizations and political actors may be subject to electronic surveillance. Electronic voting and results transmission systems can be hacked unless robust security measures are in place. Internet connectivity may not exist in many parts of the country or, in more closed contexts, could be shut down around elections to dampen communications.

The global phenomenon of disinformation has been strongly linked to undermining electoral integrity, with a destabilizing impact that can also threaten national security. As the deliberate creation and dissemination of false information occurs in order to manipulate public opinion, disinformation is not a new phenomenon, yet it has reached a new level of intensity and impact as a result of the use of new technologies. It undermines the right to seek, receive, and impart information, because it purposefully deceives voters, creating confusion, exacerbating polarization, and undermining trust in the electoral process itself. Disinformation can tilt the electoral playing field when it targets one candidate or party disproportionately.

2.3 Sector Analysis

The CSO Sector in Ethiopia

Information from the Authority for Civil Society Organization states that Ethiopia has a long tradition of informal community-based organizations like the “idir” and “iqub” – self-help organizations that operate at a local level and offer mutual socio-economic support to their members. Formal civil society is a recent development in the late 1960s. In the final years of the Emperor, a growing number of modern CSOs were established; including trade unions, professional organizations and relief organizations. In the years 1960-1975, CSOs were named as Charities and Organizations and registered in the then government institution via the Ministry of Interior under the proclamation number 321/1967. As a result of the 1973-74 and 1984-1985 famines; many NGOs emerged with a focus on relief and humanitarian services. It was after the downfall of the Derg regime in 1987 that saw NGO numbers substantially increase. In February 2009 the Ethiopian Government passed a law relating to the registration and regulation of NGOs and numbers fell dramatically. They had risen to around 3,800 by 2009 but soon fell to 1,761 in 2011. Data from Civil Society

Organization Authority indicate that, since its establishment in 2019 G.C, the authority registered more than 2,700 new civil society organizations. Among those registered, more than 488 are foreign and the remaining are local CSOs.

As indicated in the ten-year development plan; one of the reform agendas of the government is promoting the development of civic societies. It aimed at creating a conducive environment for civic societies to play a significant role in the economic, social and political arena. Generally, CSOs in Ethiopia are faced with a number of challenges among them:

- a. Lack of funds which poses a major threat to the sustainability of their programs and the whole sector in general;
- b. Poor governance within the sector;
- c. Absence of strategic planning making it difficult to objectively quantify their impact;
- d. Poor networking which leads to duplication of efforts;
- e. Limited capacity at the technical and organizational levels;
- f. Developmental approaches based on hardware (the provision of infrastructure and services) rather than Software like democracy, governance, peace building and human rights which would focus more on empowering the people for sustainable impact.
- g. Civil society faces critical internal challenges that affect its credibility and legitimacy. In too many cases, civil society does not “walk the talk” when it comes to transparency, accountability, inclusion and diversity.
- h. Civil society is too often more accountable to donors than citizens, which can negatively impact public trust in CSOs and movements. Significant power imbalances exist in civil society when it comes to resources.

There is also a wide range of opportunities available to the CSOs locally and these include:

- a. Local networking with mutual learning, harmonizing approaches to development and pursuit of effective local advocacy;
- b. Regional CSO Networks presenting CSOs with opportunities to share Research, approaches, Resources and also work with government and the corporate sector;

- c. Enabling environment provided by the Government for CSOs;
- d. Large pool of potential volunteers in Ethiopia has a large supply of idealistic, young, energetic and educated graduates who are unemployed or under-employed. Many of them are searching for opportunities to serve the community and get work experience. There is also a potential for older experienced professionals willing to give their time to CSOs;
- e. ICT has brought the world into the palms of CSOs through the internet. Just by setting up simple websites, NGOs will build tangible and reliable Networks and profiles. It will be easy to share with others about ones works, approaches and impact;
- f. Selected International NGOs provide potential partnerships with the progressive ones looking to partner with local institutions as they provide financial, technical and institutional capacity building support. Some also support thematic and issue-based advocacy initiatives.

Challenges and opportunities related with Election

According to International Republican Institute (IRI) and National Democratic Institute (NDI) June 21 election report; the political space, participation, and competition were still acutely limited by the country's authoritarian legacy, widespread insecurity and open conflicts along long-standing ethno-linguistic and political power divides, imbalance in the electoral playing field, occurrences of backsliding on political expression, logistical challenges, and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were key challenges in the Ethiopian June election.³These institutions commended the June 2021 elections. Their observation report stated that the June election "showed important improvements over past elections, particularly regarding the establishment of the national electoral body, and facilitation of national election monitoring by the contestants and CSOs."⁴While the challenges have grown more complex, numerous opportunities and positive developments also exist that can be built upon in supporting credible elections globally. Some of these include:

³ International Republican Institute (IRI) and National Democratic Institute (NDI), Ethiopia June 21, 2021 National Elections Report

⁴Ibid p.2

- a) Consensus has emerged around global norms and standards for democratic elections, which are derived from public international law, including human rights treaties and instruments,
- b) A new generation of politicians and young leaders has emerged to challenge entrenched elites,
- c) Civil society has become well-established and vibrant. Global and regional civil society networks have emerged to bolster solidarity and exchange best practices across borders,
- d) Voters have higher expectations that their voice should matter, that elections should reflect their will, and that their governments should be accountable,
- e) Electoral Management Bodies have significantly increased their professionalism and capacity,
- f) The fields of nonpartisan international and domestic election observation have spread, evolved, and launched principles that define credible election observation.

2.4 Internal Analysis

Having analyzed the external environment within which CECOE operates, it is imperative that insights into the internal dynamics are gathered before strategies are made. To accomplish this, the McKinsey 7s model was employed. This is a tool that analyzes the CEOES by looking at 7 key internal elements in order to identify if they are effectively aligned and allow the organization to achieve its objectives. These elements are strategy, structure, systems, shared values, style, staff, and skills.

Strategy

A strategic plan determines where an organization is going over the next five years or so, how it is going to get there and how it will know whether it got there or not. CECOE has crafted its first strategic plan that served from 2020-2022. The strategic plan helps CECOE to achieve the following:

- a) **To achieve the mission of the Organization:** - Clearly define the purpose of the organization and to establish realistic goals consistent with the mission in a defined time frame for implementation.

- b) **To have shared direction:** - Address the questions and entertain the interests of the key stakeholders including the member CSOs, board members and employees, thereby developing a sense of ownership among its members to work towards achieving these objectives. However it is found that the involvement of member CSOs and board members is limited.
- c) **Efficient utilization of resources:** - Ensure the most effective use of CECOE's resources by focusing on the key priorities.
- d) **To measure results:** - Provide a base from which progress can be measured and establish a mechanism for informed change needed.
- e) **To serve as a guide for annual plans and action plans of the organization.**

Structure

This describes how CECOE is organized and includes roles, responsibilities and accountability relationships. As indicated in the bylaw, the CECOE is a coalition of individual non-governmental organizations (expressed their commitment to join the Coalition in writing) that have a focus on electoral support in Ethiopia. At the apex of the structure is the general assembly followed by the board, auditor and the secretariat.

The general assembly which embraces all members of the Coalition is the highest decision-making body. The Board consists of seven elected members vested with the power of providing strategic leadership through policy formulation and oversight of implementation of all programs and activities. The Auditor ensures the financial and property administration is carried out prudently; checks the bylaw of CECOE is compiled, and provides an annual report to the general assembly. The Coalition secretariat is established to manage and facilitate the day today operation of the Coalition keeps all the organs together by providing the 'glue' that ensures all plans are implemented through effective monitoring, resource mobilization, collaboration and strategic partnerships.

CECOE envisages having regional chapters. CECOE foresees implementing the strategic plan, more specifically its core programmatic activities through regional chapters. The structure at regional and lower levels is not well functioning as it has no clear formal

structure and competent staff to implement the objectives and targets set in the Strategic plan. Though the member CSOs of CECOE reach over 175, comprehensive mapping exercise has not been conducted. The Mandate, policies, governance and geographical areas covered and constituency of member CSOs are unknown. Data on member CSOs capacity as to technical, managerial, administrative and financial are unavailable. Member CSOs active participation is low reflected by even not beginning to contribute membership fee. Most of the tasks of CECOE are performed at the secretariat level and lower levels have limited roles. Thus, there is a felt need for proper structure at lower levels.

Systems

This represents the operating manuals and technical infrastructure that staff and members use on a day to day basis to accomplish their aims and goals. CECOE has put in place human resource, finance and accounting and procurement and property management manuals and standard of practice for its various program elements that guide staff in their implementation. The books of accounts are audited by external auditors. The 2021 audit report indicates that it is clean and complied with the organization of civil societies proclamation number 1113/2019.

Some donors release funds via other organizations rather than direct support to CECOE. The financial system needs to upkeep its strength to get donors direct support. There is no Monitoring & Evaluation system that supports generation of data for decision making.

Shared Values

This is the set of traits, behaviors and characteristics that the organization believes in and includes an organization's vision and mission. CECOE has a mission, vision and values should be shared by staff and member CSOs.

A critical examination of the Values, Mission and Vision revealed that these fundamental statements have been well-articulated. It is evident that the staff and volunteer members need to be aligned to the organizational values both in word and action. In seeking to

internalize these statements by staff and member CSOs, there is a need for orientation sessions.

Style

Style covers the behavioral elements the organizational leadership uses and the culture of interactions. Warm and cordial relationships and mutual respect exist among staff.

At secretariat level, staff meetings are planned to take place once a month, and take place irregularly due to workload. A management committee, responsible for making decisions, was established recently.

Skills

This is the ability to do an organization's work and it reflects on the performance of the organization.

CECOE heavily relies on project funding which in turn is dependent on the capability of staff to effectively and efficiently develop funding proposals and execute the projects with the set time, cost and quality. The capacity of staff to generate quality proposals needs to be enhanced. The capacity of staff for donor engagements and communication needs improvement.

Many of the activities of the CEOCE are implemented by the member CSOs. It is therefore essential to provide capacity building to the members in areas of civic education, election monitoring and observation, peace building, human rights and project management.

Staff

Staff refers to the number and qualification of employees available in the organization.

The turnover rate of staff at CECOCE is high. The organization experienced about half its total workforce voluntarily leaving the organization. Staff having experience and skill joined international NGOs seeking better remuneration. CECOCE needs to devise a staff retention strategy to reduce voluntary turnover.

2.5 Stakeholders Analysis

Stakeholder analysis is important to develop strategies to address the needs of key stakeholders as well as get the most effective support possible and reduce any obstacles to successful implementation of the strategic plan. In preparing the five-year strategic plan of CECOE, identifying the needs of its customers and other stakeholders, their degree of influence with the view of indicating the measures to be taken to satisfy the stakeholders' needs is a critical step. In analyzing stakeholders, the typical issues to be addressed are:

- Who are the key clients to be engaged?
- What are their needs?
- What is the favorable and unfavorable influence?

In order to fully meet its obligations, CECOE interacts with a wide variety of interested Individuals and groups that form the whole gamut of stakeholders. The major internal stakeholders are member CSOs, Board and staff while the external stakeholders comprises government regulatory bodies (Authority for Civil Society Organizations, and Ethiopian National Election Board of Ethiopia), political parties development partners and funding bodies, suppliers and the community. Table 1 indicates the stakeholders' analysis.

Table 1: Stakeholders' Analysis

S/n	Stakeholders	Stakeholders' Needs	Challenges faced by CECOE if it fails to satisfy their needs	SH's Degree of Influence
1.	Beneficiaries			
1.1	Member CSO	- Capacity building interims of training and technical support - Resources to run the activities of CECOE	- Reduced number of members in the coalition, - Reduced number of new entrants , - Unable to reach the community at grass root level	Very High
1.2	Media	Information On election cycle and CECOE activity	Limited information dissemination to citizens	Medium
2.	Board of Directors and Employees			
2.1	Board of Directors	- Achieving company mission & vision of the organization, - High performance as per the plan - Sustainable organization - Good employee relations - Respect to the law of the land	- Lack of commitment to the organization's mission, - Limited monitoring and overseeing the activities of the organization	High

2.2	Employees	• Salary, benefit and incentive system • Job security • Good working conditions & relationships	• Turnover • Low performance • Labor unrest	High
3. Partners/Stakeholders				
3.1	Funding Bodies/ Supporters / Sponsors	• Transparency and Accountability in CECOE operation • Existence of proper working systems and organizations, • Proper documentations and reporting, • Excelled project proposal, • Clean financial report	• Reduced/Lack of support in terms of finance, technical and materials, • Unable to realize the organization mission	Very high
3.2	Government	Engaging in lawful operations supporting the country in filling the gaps for democracy and election.	• Reduced supports, • Existence of the organization will be challenged.	Very high
4. Regulatory bodies				

4.1	Authority for Civil Society Organizations	• Respecting the CSO laws and regulations with adequate financial transparency • Operating as per the given mandates conferred by the Authority • Periodic physical and financial reporting,	• Rejecting the renewal of license to operate in the Country resulting in to closure of the organization	Very high
4.2	NEBE	• Respecting and operating as per the election and observation laws	• Withholding supports and licenses to operate in the country	Very High
4.3	Revenue Authority	• Complete financial statement • On time payment of tax, payroll deduction related payments	• Taking punitive measures, • Litigation/Creating legal liability	Medium

2.6 SWOT Summary

Strategies emerge out of a deep understanding of CECOIE place in its current and anticipated operating environment. The environmental analysis entails the strengths and weaknesses of the organization from its internal environment and opportunities and threats from its external environments. It is, therefore, important to summarize the SWOT of the organization to better identify the strategic issues on which it needs to concentrate in the coming strategic period. The analysis assists in promoting the strength and exploiting opportunities, avoids weaknesses and minimizes the threats. The following table summarizes the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from the above internal and external environmental analysis.

Table 2: SWOT Summary

Strengths	Weaknesses
● Presence of experienced leaders, ● Professional Secretariat: The Secretariat, set up to coordinate, facilitate, monitor and report on the activities of the CECOIE , has professional and committed staff ● Availability of digital media for execution of its mission, ● Capacity to networking and attracting CSO groups, ● CECOIE has an easily-grasped vision and mission that helps the network set priorities, build unity and give directions to its members	● Lack of proper functioning board that regularly meet and oversee the activities of the Secretariat ● No up to date database and system is available to know on the status of Member CSOs including mandate, capacity, constituency and geographical coverage ● Inadequate participation by member CSO including paying the membership fee ● Unrealistic expectations from members: Varying motives and expectations amongst CSO members, e.g. some expect to get funding from the secretariat others capacity, etc. ● Disparity in the capacity of member CSOs: there is disparity in the capacities of member organizations to undertake Democracy and governance, election and peace building issues ● Scarcity of physical and financial resources, ● Weak and undiversified resources base ● Gaps in institutional set up at regional and lower level ● Weak link and collaboration with similar sub-continental, continental and global coalitions and networks

Opportunities	Threats
• Conducive political environment for CSO, • CECOE has smooth working relations and reputation amongst policy and government decision makers such as Authority for Society Organizations Authority and NEBE • Availability of potential national and international development partners to work • Presence of possibilities to engage in income generating activities. • New communication tools, social media networks and others for information sharing: Ethiopians, particularly the youth, are moving towards web-based spaces such as Social Media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) platforms that are advocacy tools providing new ways to communicate policy issues and impact processes.	• Weak democratic political culture ; elites do not respect democratic values such as rule of law and human rights • Democratic process (voting etc) is held hostage by the ethnic sentiments and loyalties of political actors and voters • Conflict, internal displacement and lack of peace in some part of the country make democratic process challenging • Political intolerance may threaten democratic stability. • High competition for donor support

3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF CECOE

3.1 Vision

Vision is a statement of an organization's overarching aspirations of what it hopes to achieve or to become in a future successful state. It creates a mental image of the future state that the organization wishes to achieve. The vision statement of CECOE is **"Uphold democratic values to create a well-informed, empowered, responsive Ethiopian society."**

3.2 Mission

Mission is the purpose or the reason for its existence of an organization. It describes what the organization needs to do now to achieve the vision. An organization with no purpose is an organization knowing nothing about what to do. A well-conceived mission statement defines the fundamental, unique purpose that sets an organization apart from other institutions of its types and identifies the scope of the organization's operation in terms of products offered and beneficiaries served.

The mission statement of CECOE is **"To engage in voters' and civic education, peace building and dialogue ; election monitoring and election observations through the coordination of Ethiopian civil society organizations to promote free, fair, peaceful, and transparent elections that can contribute to democratization of the country."**

3.3 Values

Values are ethical principles that guide the day-to-day activities of the organization. The values statement reflects the organization's core principles and ethics.

The values of CECOE are:

- **Non-partisan:** Dedicated to impartiality in all aspects of activities, and not to support candidates and political parties
- **Inclusivity:** Committed to upholding the interests of all Ethiopian people, particularly those who have been traditionally marginalized.
- **Partnership:** Respect and collaborate with all stakeholders in order to create synergy in our activities

- **Transparency:** Strive to be open and accountable in all aspects of activities and approaches, internal and external.
- **Independence:** Maintain independence from influence of any external body
- **Professionalism:** Committed to being responsible, accountable, objective, and service minded.

3.4 Strategic Issues

A strategic issue is one that is related to a core problem; needs to be addressed if the organization or project is to be able to progress in its work; builds on the strengths of the organization or the opportunities available to it; addresses weaknesses in the organization and/or assists the organization to deal with threats to its work or existence. Strategic issues can be external or internal, to do with the organizational vision and mission or to do with the way in which the organization carries out its work.

Based on the strategic analysis conducted and the recommendations from key stakeholders in the consultative workshops conducted at Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar and Hawasa, the following strategic issues are identified for the organization.

a) Enhance and expand the programmatic strategic themes areas

So far CECOE provide services with its four thematic areas to its stakeholders; i.e. Civic and Voter Education, election monitoring and observation, advocacy and stakeholder's engagement, research and capacity building.

An electoral cycle is a crucial moment for a country and a society. It is not limited to the electoral campaign and the elections. It begins well before and continues between elections. A democratic process is based on a lasting dialogue between the population its representatives and other parties regarding political and social issues.

As per the election laws of the country, general election and local elections should be conducted every five years. During the strategic period a minimum of one general election and one local election are due. In addition to these, regional administration requests and

other issues to be in the agenda of the national dialogue commission may lead to referendums. Thus, the task of voter education and election cycle observation and monitoring is continuing to be a pivotal task of CECOE.

Effective voter education and communication programs are essential to democracy, and it will be difficult to achieve a free and fair democratic election, without these programs. A free and fair election is not only about the freedom to vote, but also about knowledge of: why to vote; how to cast a vote; where to vote; and when to vote. It is therefore important that the CECOE structures its civic voter education and communication strategies to ensure maximum voter participation during registration drives and on Election Day, with as few spoiled ballots as possible.

Citizen election monitoring and observation can help accurately and impartially assess electoral integrity; promote public confidence in electoral processes; bolster citizen participation and engagement; expose and deter fraud; and enhance governmental accountability during and beyond a given election cycle. These are some of the factors that provide guidance on how CECOE is going forward in the coming five years.

In addition, CECOE will expand and introduce new activities, which lay down the basis for peaceful and competitive political and citizen participation to be implemented in-between elections, including dialogue, conflict mitigation and peace building as well as monitoring the political environment to provide early conflict warning to relevant actors.

b) Capacity Building of Member CSOs

Many of the member CSOs are engaged in developmental activities and will reach to the beneficiaries. They lack skills and expertise in democracy, governance, peace building and human rights which would focus more on empowering the people for sustainable impact. Considering the pervasive violent conflicts engulfing the country, equipping CECOE members and other CSOs with relevant skills and knowledge on conflict mitigation and peace building has paramount importance to contribute to creating durable peace in the country. In addition to these the institutional set up of member CSOs are inadequate. They

need to have a proper system and manuals such as accounting and finance, human resource and long-term and short term plans to run the CSO in a sustainable manner. It is therefore essential to build the capacity of members to address the mission of CECOE. Equally important is to include more CSOs as members to reach the wider society throughout the country.

So far CECOE has no proper institutional setup at regional and zonal level. Many of the member CSOs operate at regional and zonal level. A body that coordinates and monitors the activities of these members is important to realize the mission and vision of CECOE. It is therefore important to strengthen the institutional setup and in place proper structure at regional and zonal level.

c) Resource mobilization and collaboration

Resource is among the vital requirements for an organization to step up to executing the mission it stands for. An organization needs to see all alternative resources, check the viability of each source through conducting detailed study and ensure its implementation. There are a number of resources mobilization tools including partnership development, donor funding; income generating activities and fundraising to mention a few.

CECOE interaction and collaboration with like- minded institutions in the sub-continent and beyond is limited. It is important to promote itself and establish linkage with these institutions to learn best practices as well as share its lessons. In addition to this, collaboration with these institutions serves as a means of securing technical and financial support.

Narrow resource base limits the scope of intervention. In consideration of this fact, CECOE identified improving resource mobilization and collaboration with institutions working on election and democracy as one of key strategic issues to be implemented over the coming strategic period. The revenue obtained from such diversified resource bases will be used for running the program activities of the organization and ensures its sustainability.

3.5 Strategic Goals and objectives

The following goals and objectives derived from the strategic issues to be focused over the coming five years. These goals and objectives are:

Goal 1: Promote civic and voter education in collaboration with members

- **Objective 1:** Improve skills and knowledge in civic and voters education
- **Objective 2:** Improve knowledge and skill on peace building, dialogue and democracy and conflict early warning, ,
- **Objective 3:** Increase the participation of women, youth, PWD, IDP and other marginalized groups in election

Goal 2: Enhance free, fair, transparent elections across the electoral cycle and referenda

- **Objective 1:** Improve knowledge and skill in election monitoring and observation
- **Objective 2:** Reduce election malpractices throughout the election cycle
- **Objective 3:** Decrease media related malpractices during the election cycle

Goal 3: Improve the electoral legal framework through research and advocacy

- **Objective 1:** Increase advocacy research to influence policy makers on election related issues
- **Objective 2:** Engage and collaborate with NEBE and other stakeholders on electoral issues

Goal 4: Strengthen CECOE and member CSOs capacity for effective delivery of its missions

- **Objective 1:** Improve the institutional capacity of CECOE
- **Objective 2:** Increase the Technical and Institutional capacity of member CSOs
- **Objective 3:** Strengthen and sustain the CEOE, Board and Member CSOs relationship
- **Objective 4:** Increase jointly run projects with member CSOs

Goal 5: Improve collaboration and resources mobilization

- **Objective 1:** Explore and Expand Collaboration with Election Management Bodies, International Electoral Associations and Electoral Support Organization
- **Objective 2:** Promote CECOE
- **Objective 2:** Diversify resource base

3.6 Theory of change

Theory of change explains how a given intervention or set of interventions are expected to lead to specific development change, drawing on a causal analysis based on available evidence. Accordingly, strategies designed by CECOE are expected to lead to the realization of the desired output which consequently contribute to the realization of the outcome, then to the impact and the ultimate vision the company desires. The change theory diagram stated on the next page depicts the relationship of the strategies, outputs, outcome and the desired impact in the course of reaching the vision set.

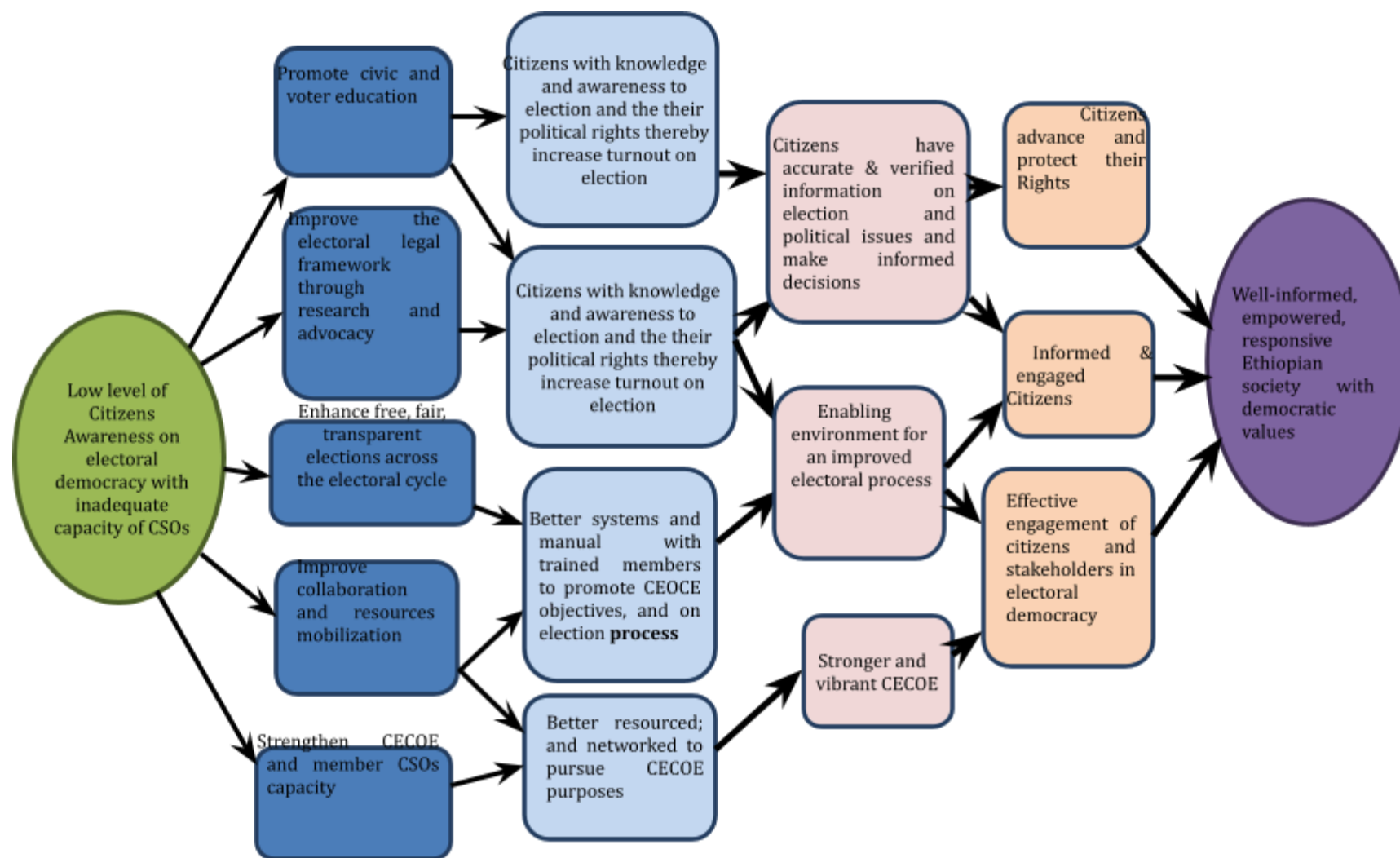


Table 2: Strategic Goals Indicators, measures and strategies

s.n	Objectives	Indicators	Measures	Strategies
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Goal 1: Promote civic and voter education in collaboration with members				
1.1	Improve skills and knowledge in civic and voters education	- Develop training module - Select and train - TOT and then the general public	- No. of manuals prepared - No trainees participated - No of informed citizens	- Review The manuals of NEBE - Create synergies among civic & voter education providers & other electoral stakeholders. - Use of targeted civic education for different categories of citizens
1.2	Improve knowledge and skill on peace building, dialogue and democracy and conflict early warning	Select and train Community leaders	- No trainees participated - No of informed citizens	- Develop training material - Deliver and evaluate training
1.3	Increase the participation of women, youth, PWD, IDP and other marginalized groups in election	Sensitize women, youth, PWS and IDP for participation	% of (Women, youth PWS and IDP participated)	- Raise awareness to participate as elected/ or elector and observer - Access electoral services - Stakeholder Engagement on Inclusivity of Women, Youth and PWDs in the Electoral Processes
Goal 2: Enhance free, fair, transparent elections across the electoral cycle and referenda				
2.1	Improve knowledge and skill in election monitoring and observation	- Prepare training material - Provide TOT and deliver training	- Number of manuals - Number of training participants	- Review& update the manuals of NEBE and other stakeholders - Provide TOT - develop training material - deliver and evaluate training
2.2	Reduce election malpractices throughout the election cycle	Registered monitors and observers	- Number of observers - No poll station covered - No and type of reports	Deploy election monitors and observers throughout the election cycle Get certification from NEBE
2.3	Decrease media related malpractices during the election Cycle	- Monitored media outlet - Technology utilized	No of mainstream and social medias monitored	- Monitor the media during the election cycle - Train and assign staff for media monitoring - Train the media on impartial, conflict sensitive reporting
Goal 3 Improve the electoral legal framework through research and advocacy				

3.1	Increase advocacy research to influence policy makers on election and related issues	- Conduct research on election and democracy - Publish research findings - Organize conferences, seminars and policy dialogue - Invite participants	- Number of advocacy research conducted - Number of research output disseminated - Number stakeholders received the research outcome - Action taken by stakeholders as a result of research finding - Number of conferences, seminars, policy dialogue conducted - Number of participants attended	- Identify research areas - Collaborate with research institutions - Publish through different channels - Identify and organize National/ International conferences, Seminars, and policy dialogues on election, peace and democracy
3.2	Engage and collaborate with NEBE and other stakeholders on electoral issues	Continuously Engage NEBE and other stakeholders	No of contacts made to NEBE and other stakeholders	Identifying, initiating, and collaborating with communities and relevant partners on analysis of laws, policies, and practices that impede election , democracy & peace
Goal 4: Strengthen CECOIE and member CSOs capacity for effective delivery of its missions				
4.1	Improve the institutional capacity of CECOIE	Review and update internal systems and manuals Build the capacity of Members	- No of manuals updated - No of new systems in placed	- Strengthening internal technical expertise in priority areas and issues. - Assess best practice in systems and procedures - Benchmark similar organization

4.2	Increase the Technical and Institutional capacity of member CSOs	• Provide technical assistance for sustaining the member CSOs • Identify coverage, of members CSOs to local community	• Type and No. of technical assistance provided • Number of CSOs mapped	• Map member CSOs with regard to: their mandate, policies and governance system; Constituency and external support and geographical coverage; Technical, managerial, administrative and financial capacity • Organize Capacity Building training seminars, workshops on electoral process to member CSOs • Provide Technical support to member CSOs • Establish member CSO database
4.3	Strengthen and sustain the CEOE, Board and Member CSOs relationship	Ensuring members of Board of CECOE Member CSOs have a clear understanding their roles	• Number of meetings held • Number of decisions passed • Number of joint evaluative meetings held	• Review and enforce the bylaws of the organization • Develop communication strategies among member CSOs.
4.4	Increase jointly run projects with member CSOs	Identify relevant project with CECOE mission	• Number of joint projects run with member CSO	• Identify thematic areas • Prepare project proposals
Goal 5: Improve collaboration and resources mobilization				
5.1	Explore and Expand Collaboration with Election Management Bodies, International Electoral Associations, and Electoral Support Organizations	Identify and engage domestic and external like-minded institutions for fund, technical assistance and experience sharing	• Number of collaboration established with domestic partners • Number of collaboration established with foreign partners • Amount of fund generated • Number of technical assistance secured • Number of experience shared	• Identify potential donors and development partners, • Promote CECOE on Social Media, Mass Media and physical Face-to-Face • •

5.2	Promote CECEO	Provide information CECOE activities, achievements to stakeholders	• Number of reports released • Number of newsletters issued • Number of stakeholders reached • Number of communication events	• Reporting • Upload newsletters • Develop communication strategy
5.3	Diversify resource base	Search and fetch an alternative resource base	• Number of proposals developed • Number of feasible income generating activities identified. • Amount of fund generated	• Design and implement resources mobilization strategies • Identifying feasible income generating activities • Activating member contribution fees

4 STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing the five year strategy requires three inputs stated hereunder.

- a) Developing annual/operational plan, action plan and prioritize the tasks be accomplished annually;
- b) Creating appropriate structure and
- c) Devising monitoring and evaluation.

4.1 Annual Operational Plan for the year 2023

The tentative annual operational plan of CECO E for the year 2023 is depicted in Annex I. As it is prepared by the consultants; the staff of CECO E are expected to revise and develop the annual plan and an action plan for each year and quarter.

4.2 Structure

The organization structure of CECOE comprises the General Assembly, the Board the secretariats and, Focal Point member CSOs.

The Board

The Board plays the lead role in providing strategic direction to CECOE. It had seven elected members from member CSOs.

The secretariat

This includes the Executive Director and full-time and part-time staff who ensure operational capacity and support to fulfill CECOE's goals, objectives, strategies and activities.

Focal Point Member CSOs

The focal point member CSO suggested it be established in certain towns across the country. Focal Points are expected to be leading CSO working on peace, democracy and governance or any other development activity , that bring together member CSOs and communities for unified support and advocacy action in addressing issues of mutual concern in the election process. Focal points Member CSO expected provide the essential links between members CSOs operate in the specific geographical location with the secretariat at country level.

The proposed structure with explanation is attached at Annex II.

4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

One of the essential components of any strategic plan is a monitoring and evaluation system. The M&E system provides a tool to follow progress in achieving planned targets, maintain the coherence and integration of the plan by each unit and take timely corrective measures when needed. The M&E outlines how the achievement of long term and short term goals and objectives are monitored and evaluated. At the end of the planning period it serves as an evaluation tool to determine the achievement of set goals and objectives.

Performance reports are important inputs for monitoring and evaluation. Performance reports are generated for each planning period like quarterly, semi-annually, annually etc. The performance reports of programs and the entire organization should include comparing performance with plan, strength and weakness observed; problems observed and action taken during the planning period. The monitoring and evaluation require having a system for gathering, processing data and generating information. The association so far has no such system. Research has shown that strategy Implementation suffers whenever the following three organizational aspects are compromised:

- a) Focus
 - b) Alignment
 - c) Execution
- **Focus:** requires a clear shared understanding of where the organization is going and how to get there. Lack of focus has and will lead to confusion and diluted efforts.
 - **Alignment:** on its part requires having all the people and systems working towards the shared focus. It is important that everyone pulls in the same direction as misalignments will invariably lead to fragmentation, sub optimization, competition for resources and dilution of efforts.
 - **Execution:** entails doing the right things and doing them well. Lack of execution means that the strategic plan is nothing but nice words on paper.

The following will need to happen to ensure attainment of Focus and Alignment:

- a. Ensuring that Mission, vision and key stakeholders' needs are part of all planning;
- b. Involving people in developing the work that achieves the focus;
- c. Actively involve people more and more in what the coalition is trying to focus on as, leadership is provided from the top;
- d. Getting more senior members of staff to talk about where the organization wants to be;
- e. Building a culture of "beginning with the end in mind" which will naturally align peoples to focus;
- f. Carry out surveys (this will breadth in perspectives);

- g. Hold individual and group meetings specially with focal CSOs (this will give depth in perspectives);
- h. Ensuring that Message of focus comes from the top echelons of the organization;
- i. Get Leaders of operations to speak like leaders of strategy

Execution will be assured by involving and supporting all people through:

- a. Institutionalizing two-way communication, building of consensus and carrying out timely training;
- b. Designing Constructive rewards and recognition;
- c. Getting Senior leaders to talk about strategy and not operations;
- d. Aligning all Initiatives, Budgets; Core processes and ensuring that all these, of necessity, capture strategy

To facilitate all these and support the implementation of the strategies, the administrative structure of CECOIE is organized with the indicated roles and responsibilities with regard to executing the monitoring and evaluation works.

At Board Level

In fulfilling their oversight role, the board's mandate does not just stop at approval of the Strategic Plan. It extends into Compliance and Resource Mobilization. As a standing item on the agenda of the regular quarterly meetings, the board shall deliberate on the quarterly evaluation report of implementation of the Strategic Plan. The nature and scope of reporting shall include:

- a. Progress made against plan;
- b. Causes of deviation from plan (if any); and
- c. Areas of difficulties and alternative solutions to issues that may adversely affect implementation.

At Management Level

The implementation framework of this plan has provided Key Performance Indicators at the strategic and operational levels with clear targets against each indicator. There shall be

monthly management meetings chaired by the Executive Director where the program directors shall report on the status of the strategic plan with the nature and scope of reporting following using the same format as that of the quarterly Board meetings. That is:

- a. Progress made against plan;
- b. Causes of deviations(positive/negative deviations) from plan (if any);
- c. Areas of difficulties and alternative solutions to issues that may adversely affect implementation.

At Departmental Performance Reviews

Each department shall develop its own operational plan within the framework of the Strategic Plan, which will be then reviewed quarterly and rolled forward to the next quarter. This will call for regular collection of data about the Plan's implementation, analysis of the data and compilation of reports for the Executive Director (ED) and then to the Board. The reports will provide empirical evidence of the implementation and provide a basis for corrective measures with regard to use of facilities, human and financial resources during the plan period. The following mechanisms will be used to monitor performance:

- a. Employee satisfaction surveys
- b. Staff and volunteers performance appraisal
- c. Mid and End term project evaluation reports
- d. Follow-up reports from program beneficiaries and community
- e. Feedback from Partners and focal member CSOs
- f. Quarterly milestone reports on implementation of the strategic plan by each unit
- g. Annual review of the strategic plan

Annual Evaluation Plan

There shall be an annual Evaluation of the Strategic Plan which shall take the following format:

- a. Develop the Evaluation Plan
- b. Determine roles and responsibilities
- c. Determine schedule and scope
- d. Analyze actual strategic results against planned results

- e. Review background assumptions
- f. Review performance results against targets
- g. Evaluate initiative results against expectations
- h. Make any necessary changes to strategic elements
- i. Review Vision, mission and Values
- j. Review Strategic Issues
- k. Review Goals and Objectives
- l. Review performance measures and targets
- m. Identify new initiatives

Assumptions

Another element in the planning parameters is assumptions. Assumptions are external conditions that an organization cannot control but which it assumes will exist and which are necessary to the success of the project. Development of this strategic plan considered the following basic assumptions when it was crafted.

Since the strategy is crafted for five years, changes in the environmental factors are inevitable. Major change in these assumptions requires modifying the strategy by the people on the helm.

- a. The national policy towards election and regulation of civil societies in Ethiopia is assumed to continue as it is or in better way,
- b. The number and the will of development partners ready to work on election and democracy will flourish further,
- c. The commitment of the leaders of the CECOE will further improve through incorporation of new blood, thoughts and capacities,
- d. The economic growth of the country will at least move with its current pace.

Assessment of risk and proposed risk management plan

The following risks and risk mitigating measures have been identified:

Table 5: Risk assessment and mitigation measures

S.n	Risk	Likelihood	Background to assessment of potential likelihood	Impact	Risk Mitigation measures
1	Lack of commitment from donors to support the Strategic Plan.	Medium	Difficulties in obtaining firm commitment from donors.	High	-Prepare resource mobilization strategy to fit current reality -Managerial staff will be trained in resource mobilization. -Careful budget monitoring to equilibrate resources with expenditures
2	Shrinking space for civil society	Medium	As an election year approach administration may draft restrictive legislation and shrinking space for CS	Medium	Opening spaces of engagement with parliamentarians and committees, as well as government.
3	Member CSO' resistance to adhering to strictly follow bylaws	Medium	Members have low consideration of the importance of the bylaws	Medium	Aware CSOs on the bylaws
4	Staff turnover and loss of institutional capacity	Low	10 % annual staff turnover, which should not increase	Medium	Ensure satisfactory working conditions, including devising staff retention strategy.

5 ANNEXES

5.1 Annex 1: Annual Action Plan for the Year 2023

Objectives	Activities	Measures	Target	Period				Means of Verifications	Responsible Body
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Improve skills and knowledge in civic and voters education	1. Review the manuals of NEBE 2. Develop training manuals 3. Soliciting resources for the training 4. Conduct ToT 5. Select Trainees 6. Deliver Training 7. Evaluate training	No. of manuals						Physical check for the presence of the manuals developed	- Secretariat at (Activity 1-4,8) - Member Focal CSO(Activity 6&7)
		No of trainees participated						Attendance of trainees,	
		% of trainees Satisfied by the training						- Training evaluation report - Training expenses	
Improve knowledge and skill on peace building, dialogue and democracy and conflict early warning	1. Review manuals 2. Develop training manuals 3. Soliciting resources for the training 4. Conduct ToT 5. Select Trainees 6. Deliver Training 7. Evaluate training	No. of manuals						Physical check for the presence of the manuals developed	- Secretariat at (Activity 1-4,8) - Member Focal CSO(Activity 6&7)
		No of trainees participated						Attendance of trainees,	
		% of trainees Satisfied by the training						- Training evaluation report - Training expenses	
Increase the participation of women, youth PWD, IDP and other marginalized groups in election	- Raise awareness to participate as elected/ or elector and observer - Access electoral services - Engage Stakeholders on Inclusivity of Women, Youth and PWDs in the Electoral Processes	% of Women, youth PWS and IDP participated in electoral process						- Comparing number of participants in previous election with the current, - Number of advocacy work to attract these groups to elections	Secretariat and member CSOs

Improve knowledge and skill in election monitoring and observation	1. Review manuals 2. Develop training manuals 3. Soliciting resources for the training 4. Conduct ToT 5. Select Trainees 6. Deliver Training 7. Evaluate training	No. of manuals						Physical check for the presence of the manuals developed	- Secretariat (Activity 1-4,8) - Member Focal CSO (Activity 6&7)
		No of trainees participated						Attendance of trainees,	
		% of trainees Satisfied by the training						- Training evaluation report - Training expenses	
Reduce election malpractices throughout the election cycle	1. Provide training to election monitors and observers 2. Deploy observers in all election cycle 3. Collect and forward report from observers to NEBE for action	No of observers trained						- Attendance of trainees, - Certification given by NEBE - Election cycle Field report on	- Secretariat (Activities 1&3) - Focal and Member CSOs (Activity 2)
		Number of observers deployed in election cycle						Field report	
		% of poll station covered						NEBE certification report	
		Number of electoral reports Produced at the election cycle						Field report	
		Number of reports accepted and rectification made by NEBE						NEBE report	

Decrease media related malpractices during the election Cycle	2. Monitor the media during the election cycle	No of mainstream and social medias monitored						Report	Secretariat
	3. Get certification from NEBE 4. Train and assign staff for media monitoring 5. Train the media on impartial, conflict sensitive reporting	No of malpractices reported and action taken						Report	
Increase advocacy research to influence policy makers on election and related issues	- Carry out election related advocacy researches - Publish and disseminate research outputs to stakeholders - Identify and organize National/ International conferences, Seminars, and policy dialogues	No of research						No. of researches conducted	Secretariat
		No of research output disseminated						Research output released on media	
		No of conferences, seminars, policy dialogue conducted						Minutes Proceedings Attendance sheets of participants	
		No of participants							
Engage and collaborate with NEBE and other stakeholders on electoral issues	Identifying, initiating, and collaborating with communities and relevant partners on analysis of laws, policies, and practices that impede election , democracy and peace	No of contacts made to NEBE and other stakeholders						- Schedules for engagement and collaboration, - Agenda of discussions, - List of stakeholders involved	Secretariat Management and board,
	- Identify training needs - Develop training material and agenda - Deliver and evaluate the training , seminar and workshop	No of training seminars, workshops on electoral process						- Training needs assessment report, - Training materials, Training report, - Attendances of trainings, - Training expenses	Secretariat
		No of CSOs participating in the training, seminar and workshops							

Improve the institutional capacity of CECOE	- Strengthening internal technical expertise priority areas and issues. - Assess best practice in systems and procedures - Benchmark similar organization	No of manuals updated						Physical check for the presence of the manuals developed	Board & secretariat
Increase the Technical and Institutional capacity of member CSOs	Provide Technical support to member CSOs	Type and No. of technical assistance provided						Type of technical assistance provided	Secretariat and Member CSO
	Organize Capacity Building training seminars, workshops on electoral process to member CSOs	No of training/ workshops conducted						Report	
	Assign staff for providing assistance	No of staff man days allocated						Report	
	Developing community-centered advocacy and information materials, methodologies, approaches and tools.	No and geographic areas of communities and beneficiaries reached by CSO						- Sample check for reaching of the community at each member CSO geographic scope - Evidence for using alternative media: radio, TV, Social media and physical/ person	Secretariat, Member CSOs
	Map & Establish member CSO database	No of CSOs mapped						Organized data base of member CSOs share at each member	Secretariat Member CSOs
Increase jointly run projects with member CSOs	- Identify project - Develop proposal - Implement project	No of projects proposals prepared							Secretariat and Member CSOs.
		No of joint projects implemented							

Strengthen and sustain the CEOE, Board and Member CSOs, relationship	Review and enforce the bylaws of the organization	No of meetings held						- Minutes of meeting, - Attendances, - Video of meeting	Board, secretariat Member CSOs
Explore and expand collaboration	- Promote CECOE on Social Media, Mass Media and physical Face-to-Face - Identify potential partners	% increase in the number of collaboration established with domestic and foreign partners						% increase in partners working with CECOE, - Fund agreement with partners, - Documented technical assistances and experiences shared	Secretariat
		Amount of fund generated							
		Number of technical assistance secured							
		Number Of experience shared							
Promote CEOE	- Produce and disseminate reports and activities promptly and regularly to stakeholders - Upload newsletters	Number of reports released						- Copies of reports, newsletters issued - List of stakeholders reached	Secretariat
		Number of newsletters issued							
		Number of stakeholders reached							
Diversify resource base	- Design and implement resources mobilization strategies - Identifying feasible income generating activities - Activating member contribution fees	Number of proposals developed						- List of proposals developed and communicated to partners/supporters/donors - No. business ideas identified and feasibility studies conducted, - Amount of income generated	Secretariat
		Number of feasible income generating activities identified							
		Amount of fund generated							

**the targets and quarters required to be reviewed by the CECOE secretariat.*

5.2 Annex II: Suggestions for structure of CEOCE at lower level in the hierarchy

One of the issues to be addressed in the Terms of Reference, is to recommend a structure appropriate for CEOCE activities and functions at Regional and zonal levels.

1. The What, Why and How of structure?

By structure, we mean the framework around which the group is organized, the underpinnings which keep the coalition functioning. It's the operating manual that tells members how the organization is put together and how it works. More specifically, structure describes how members are accepted, how leadership is chosen, and how decisions are made. Structure of an organization is required for the following reasons.

- **Structure supports the organization mandates and objectives:** any structure should support the strategy and mandates of the organization. An organization mandated to operate throughout a country may not have the same structure with the one operated in a given locality. The structure should also follow the strategy. Targets and activities set in the strategic plan need a responsible body for its implementation.
- **Structure gives members clear guidelines for how to proceed:** A clearly-established structure gives the group a means to maintain order and resolve disagreements,
- **Structure binds members together:** It gives meaning and identity to the people who join the group, as well as to the group itself,
- **Structure in any organization is inevitable:** an organization, *by definition*, implies a structure. Your group is going to have some structure whether it chooses to or not. It might as well be the structure which best matches up with what kind of organization you have, what kind of people are in it, and what you see yourself doing

While the need for structure is clear, the best structure for a particular coalition is harder to determine. The best structure for any organization will depend upon who its members are, what the setting is, and how far the organization has come in its development. Regardless of what type of structure your organization decides upon, three elements will always be there. They are inherent in the very idea of an organizational structure. These are:

Governance: The first element of structure is governance - some person or group has to make the decisions within the organization. CECOE has a general assembly and board to make important decisions.

Rules by which the organization operates: Another important part of structure is having rules by which the organization operates. CECOE has a bylaw that state the mandate, duties and responsibilities of different organs of the organization

Distribution of work: Inherent in any organizational structure also is a distribution of work. The distribution can be formal or informal, temporary or enduring, but every organization will have some type of division of labor. The division of work among the general assembly, the board, the secretariat and the auditor is stated in the bylaw. Furthermore the activities of the secretariat are divided into managers and staff indicated in the organizational chart of CECOE.

2. CECOE Mandate and Objectives

A structure is required to support mandates, strategies and goals of an organization. Therefore it is important to list the CECOE mandates goals and objectives.

The mandate of CECOE is to enhance the institutional capacity that enables civil society organizations to engage in voters and civic education and election monitoring and observations in collaboration with the NEBE, other government bodies and donors

Objectives: The objectives of the Coalition of Ethiopian Civil Society Organizations for Elections (CECOE) are as follows:

- i) **Coordination:** To support and coordinate member's involvement and participation in electoral processes, such as civic and voter education, election monitoring and observation, and advocacy and stakeholder engagement;
To support, facilitate, and coordinate information and experience sharing among the coalition members;
- ii) **Capacity Building:** To provide institutional capacity building support to members that enables them to implement various electoral activities;

- iii) **Awareness and Education:** To undertake voter and civic education awareness, and increases/ encourages voter participation in the electoral processes;
To make citizens aware about their rights and obligations as well as to enable them to make an informed decision;
- iv) **Election monitoring and observation:** To mobilize and provide the necessary support to members to actively participate in monitoring and observation of all electoral processes and referenda undertaken by NEBE;
- v) **Advocacy and Stakeholder Engagement:** To advocate towards an enabling environment for an improved electoral process;
To represent the interest of member organization with key stakeholders, such as NEBE, other government bodies, development partners/donors, and other relevant electoral stakeholders;
- vi) **Research/studies and Knowledge Management:** To conduct research/studies to inform advocacy for electoral reforms as well as to inform programming implemented by members;
- vii) **Documentation/Communication:** To collect, organize, document, and share information related to electoral processes as well as prepare and disseminate same;
- viii) **Resource Mobilization and Sustainability:** To undertake resource mobilization to support activities of members, and to develop strategies to sustain the Coalition;
To develop appropriate governance structures/systems/policies to manage and sustain the Coalition;
- ix) **Cross-cutting objectives (Inclusion—Gender and PWDs, IDP):** To improve the participation of women, people with disabilities, and IDPs in the electoral processes

3. What kind of structure

What kind of structure-the arrangement of people and tasks to accomplish organizational goals-is available to discharge at lower levels – regional and zonal?As it is clear from the mandates and objectives, a large portion of the activities of CECOE should be performed by member CSOs operated throughout the country. Then what kind of structure needs to be in place to reach and coordinate the activities of over175 member organizations.

There is a one-fit-all approach for organization structure. In the CSOs structure, associations are membership-led, which means that its general assembly is the highest decision-making organ. In terms of structure, some associations have a board and an executive director (with staff) in addition to the General Assembly. Others might have an executive committee led by a president/chairperson, vice president/vice chairperson, secretary, and treasurer/finance head without having a separate management or secretariat. The latter structure is usually adopted by youth, and professional associations, while most CSOs adopt the former. The law does not prescribe a particular form of structure but requires that the Memorandum of Association shall define the structure of a CSO.

With the view of understanding the structure of selected CSOs an attempt was made to contact staff of CCRDA, EWLA and EHRC.

Domestic CSO experience

The CCRDA is an umbrella organization, having over 336 members that operate throughout the country. The CCRDA functions as a support providing NGO umbrella. Unlike other NGOs in Ethiopia, it does not implement any kind of program; but rather provides technical, financial and material support to development projects of members and partners. It provides its support from Addis Ababa to its members, and has no branches in other locations in the country.

To facilitate the work of CSOs in regions, CCRDA is implementing a chapter approach. According to the chapter approach, a host CSO selected from each region and a staff of that CSO serves as a focal person and devotes at least 16 hours in a month to coordinate the CSOs in that region and provide the service of CCRDA.

The Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association utilizes mainly volunteers to advance its objectives in the regions. Majority of the activities are carried out by volunteers. . It only has a limited number of staff in many of the regional capital cities. As EWLA renders free legal

aid services to women and girls the regional or lower level echelon women affairs department provide support and facilities like office space.

Collective effort would not be possible, and organizations could not grow and prosper, if a handful of staff did all the work themselves. In recognition of this fact, it is essential to divide up their work: Sub-dividing the work through the process of departmentalization and the process of subdividing shall cover sub-dividing work into departments and branches.

The law of the land allows the formation of consortiums. Article 56 of Proclamation 1113/19 has outlined an illustrative list of objectives of consortiums, which may include but are not limited to: support and coordinate efforts of CSOs the achievement of common objectives; facilitate sharing of ideas, information, and experience; build the capacity of member CSOs and support their resource. mobilization initiatives; enhance the ethical and professional standards of member organizations; articulate the voices of members and advocate for a better enabling environment for their work; conduct research and policy advocacy activities in the sectors in which members operate; and implement projects in collaboration with members.

Literature sources indicate that so many organization structures are available. How can one choose the best one? According to Du Brin A.w; most effective structure depends on certain factors. Among these factors are strategy, technology, size, financial condition, and environmental stability.

- i) **Strategy and goals:** An organization that has a strategy of working throughout a given country would choose a geographically dispersed organization that gives them maximum access to beneficiaries and citizens at large.
- ii) **Size:** As an organization grows and matures, it inevitably needs centralized controls and some degree of formalization. Yet when the organization becomes very large, it is necessary to develop smaller, more flexible units such as projects and task forces. These units help the firm remain adaptive, and they are found in every large organization. Large size and bureaucracy, however, are not synonymous. Some

small organizations, such might be bureaucratic because they are tightly regulated by laws of the land.

- iii) **Financial condition of the organization.** Size influences structure, and the financial condition of the organization influences both size and structure. Many large organizations have moved toward a flatter structure to trim costs. Trimming the number of corporate positions influences structure.
- iv) **Environmental stability:** When an organization faces an uncertain and unstable environment, it needs a highly flexible structure. Task forces and projects are often called into action to deal with a rapidly changing environment .Conversely, a more bureaucratic structure is better suited to dealing with more certain (stable) environments

4. Suggested Structure

Three consultative workshops on developing the strategic plan of CECOE with members CSO and other stakeholders were held at Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar and Hawasa. One of the agenda points was the structure of CECOE at lower levels. Almost all workshop participants asserted CECOE needs to have a structure at lower levels including regions, zones and kebeles.

The structure of CECOE consisted of the General Assembly, the Board, the Secretariat and the Auditor. This structure will prevail as it is. The consultant has no recommendation on these and the organizational chart of CECOE. With regard to the structure at lower levels at regional and local levels the following three alternatives are suggested for CECOE final decisions.

Alternative 1: Establishing regional branch offices: -This option is to have volunteers or paid staff in selected locations of the country. The branch office performs the tasks to facilitate the work and relationship of CSOs found in the region with the secretariat and the board. This type of structure has the advantages of:

- Simplify the management of member CSO from nearby;

- facilitates the expansion of the CECOE by identifying and accepting new members CSO that can reach to the grass root level throughout the nation
- There can be real and face to face communication with member CSOs.

Establishing a branch, however, has certain limitations for new organizations like CECOE. Some of the drawbacks include;

- It requires additional cost and financial burden in terms of salary of staff , office space and facilities,
- there is the duplication of physical facilities
- It require experience and motivated staff that can work with no supervision
- Control of branch staff may be difficult

Alternative 2: Outsourcing:-it is also part of the organization structure when other individuals or organizations perform part of your work .By outsourcing CECOE can reduce its need for employees and physical assets and their associated costs at lower levels . Outsourcing is not without costs and risks. Some of these are:

- work of CECOE may not be performed properly which may fall behind time or below expectation;
- Availability of competent person or organization at lower levels difficult if not impossible
- Follow-up and control is difficult
- confidentiality and security - which may be at risk
- lack of flexibility - contract could prove too rigid to accommodate change

Alternative3: Selecting Focal member CSO: - this alternative is to select a member CSO operating in a specific geographical location that can facilitate the activities of member CSOs and maintain relationships with the secretariat and board of CECOE. The number of focal CSO may be four to five based on geographical locations- central, eastern, western, northern and southern.

Selecting a focal member CSO has the advantage of access to a readily available network of other professionals engaged in the same mission work; reduce the risk of member CSO perception risk the perception of being forgotten; reduce the burden coordination and management from the center.

The selection of the focal CSO should criteria based including the following:

- Having constituency and geographical coverage to build collaborative relationships with different segments of the community with regard to gender, age group, ethnicity and vulnerability.
- Having adequate managerial and technical capacity to plan, monitor and coordinate activities of member CSOs.

To simplify the criteria for selection as Focal CSO, the following evidence shall be produced by the member CSO applied to be selected as focal organization.

1. **Legal status:** Proof of CSO legally establishment. Evidence of CSO complies with all legal requirements of its legal identity and registration with ACSO at federal or region level.
2. **History:** Date of creation and length in existence. Reasons and circumstances for the creation of the CSO.
3. **CSO mandate and policies:** the CSO shares similar service lines to CECOE; It's clear on its role.
4. **Governance:** the governing body and what it is charged with; the independent governing body exert proper oversight; availability of clear and communicated organizational structure.
5. **Constituency:** having a clear constituency; Is the organization membership based/or the CSO have regular and participatory links to its constituency; the constituents informed and supportive about the CSO and its activities; the CSO belong to CSO umbrella organizations and/or CSO networks in its own sector.
6. **Technical Capacity:** technical skills required? the CSO collect baseline information about its constituency; the CSO have the knowledge needed to serve its constituency
7. **Human resources:** the number and qualification of staff possess adequate expertise and experience to effectively and efficiently run the CSO.
8. **Managerial capacity:** having planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems in place.
9. **Administrative capacity.** Availability of facilities and equipment to handle logistical and procurement tasks; having financial systems and procedures in place?

The consultant recommended the third alternative; since it is largely practiced in CSOs and the ultimate ownership rests on member CSO. While implementing this alternative structure, it is essential to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the selected member CSO. The MoU, among other things should include clauses on:

- Specific tasks to be performed by the focal member CSOs which are cascaded from the objectives and strategic plan of CECOE.
- The means of communication, content and duration of reports
- Any financial or other support to be provided by CECOE to the focal CSO.

